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Planning commission revokes variance for Riverside Home Park



Contributed photo/City of John Day

In a photo of space 23 at Riverside Home Park presented to the planning commission, one of the accessory structures was propped up by iron bars, which was not permitted by the city.

Two of eight affected units are occupied, but the owners will have the opportunity to bring homes up to code

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

The John Day Planning Commission has revoked a variance granted to Riverside Home Park in 2016 because of a failure to meet other code requirements.

The Class B variance allowed Riverside to place single-section manufactured homes that did not meet the

minimum size requirements in the John Day City Development Code, according to the staff report presented to the planning commission.

With the revocation, no new homes will be allowed that are not fully up to code. Of the eight homes installed under the variance, two are occupied, but the occupants will have the opportunity to bring the homes up to code, City Manager Nick Green said.

"The city is working with the owners toward an abatement agreement that is in the best interest of the park's tenants and John Day as a whole," Green said.

development code that would not otherwise be permitted, Green said.

"The code cannot provide standards to fit every potential development situation, so variances allow applicants to seek exceptions to code standards," said Green. "The variance process provides flexibility while maintaining the purpose and intent of the code."

Riverside was granted the variance, allowing property owners to bring in houses smaller than specified by the code, because it was seen as a way to address housing shortages, Green said. The units were still required to meet other code

Why the variance was revoked
Variances are modifications to the

See Variance, Page A16

OREGON LAWMAKERS UNHOLSTER NEW GUN CONTROLS

Proponents say proposed measure could reduce gun deaths and injuries, but opponents dislike one-size-fits-all approach

By Jake Thomas
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon's gun owners will face penalties for not securing their firearms when not in use under a proposal that's likely to be introduced in the upcoming legislative session.

State Reps. Rachel Prusak, D-West Linn, and Janeen Sollman, D-Hillsboro, shared at a legislative hearing Wednesday, Jan. 15, their proposal that they said would prevent gun deaths and keep firearms out of the hands of children and teens.

Speaking before a joint meeting of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, Prusak mentioned the 2012 Clackamas Town Center shooting that left two victims and the shooter dead. She said the guns were stolen from a friend's house where they were left unsecured.

"The goal of safe storage firearm bill is to change the behavior of the minority of gun owners whose careless actions lead to death and injury of others," she said. "It is meant to be a protection for the teen looking at suicide or the random person looking to steal a gun and use it for a crime."

If passed, the legislation would require gun owners to keep their firearms in a locked container or room and secured with a trigger lock when not being used. It would also require firearms to be locked or secured when transferring them to another person, with some exceptions such as target shooting. Violations of the law would be punishable with a \$500 fine.



State Rep. Rachel appears on a screen in a legislative hearing room used to accommodate overflow Jan. 15. The topic was a safe gun storage proposal she plans to introduce in the 2020 legislative session.

Oregon Capital Bureau/
Jake Thomas



The legislation would establish liability for injuries to people or property committed with a firearm that was transferred without first securing it. It would also hold gun owners liable for injuries caused by a minor who accesses their unsecured firearms. Gun owners also would have to report the loss or theft of a firearm within 72 hours or face a potential \$1,000 fine.

Rendering firearms 'useless'

Sollman, whose district includes Hillsboro and North Plains, said that the legislation would be her priority during the February session. She said she was responding to concerns from constituents and an incident in her district where a sixth-grade boy took his life with an unsecured firearm.

Calling the measure "common sense," she said that 75% of gun owners already secure their firearms.

Dr. Ben Hoffman, an expert on child injury prevention and pediatrician at Oregon Health and Science University, said that over 75% of suicide attempts with a gun lead to death. He said the suicide rate has increased nationally and is now the second leading cause of death for kids. In Oregon, kids are more likely to kill themselves with guns than in other parts of the country.

"This is an epidemic, and we need to do something about it," he said.

He said that locking up guns decreases the risk of self-inflicted or unintentional firearm injuries among

children and teens by up to 85%. He said that six states and the District of Columbia have safe storage laws and 14 states impose criminal penalties on adults when children access firearms unsupervised.

See Guns, Page A16

Gillam retires after 27 years of positive changes

Road department office manager recounts successes, including millions in grant funding

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

After 27 years of working as the office manager for the Grant County Road Department, Kathy Gillam will retire at the beginning of February.

Gillam has trained and worked with six roadmasters and raised millions of dollars in grant funding for projects. One of her biggest accomplishments, she said, was the transition from the old Road Department building in Canyon City to the new facility on Lower Yard Road.

"It's a little shack, I can tell you that, and when the wind blew, it was super cold in there, and in the summer, it was super hot," said Gillam about the old office. "That was my deal, getting out of there and getting another place."

It took several years to complete the project that started in 2004, which included a new office building, a shop with a mezzanine and a wash bay, a truck barn and a lunch/locker room for the Road Department. Aside from more space for equipment and a better building, the new location was ideal away from residential areas, Gillam said.

Gillam also focused on acquiring grants and securing state and federal funding for various equipment and projects.

"I'm usually looking for money before we spend it," Gillam said.

"You have to be diligent and know what you're talking about and what you're doing before you submit applications because you are competing with a lot of other counties, and it's a great deal for the county. We do get SRS (Secure Rural Schools) funds, but why wait until we run out of money instead of keeping it replenished?"

Gillam said the road department is currently looking great financially, but a road or bridge project can come up at any time and cost millions of dollars.

Maintaining roads at a proper level is important, Gillam said, because it minimizes the chances of having to replace the whole road, which costs much more than routine maintenance.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz
Kathy Gillam will retire in February after 27 years as the office manager for the Grant County Road Department.

See Gillam, Page A16

