

COMMUNITY

Stanfield council votes to rezone district property to multi-family

Housing Authority intends to purchase land for 40-unit complex

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
HERMISTON HERALD

Stanfield is one step closer to having a new, affordable multi-family housing complex in the city.

The Stanfield City Council voted unanimously to rezone a 12-acre parcel of property owned by the Stanfield School District from residential to multi-family residential at Tuesday night's meeting after a packed public hearing on the matter. The Umatilla County Housing Authority hopes to purchase the land so it can build a 40-unit complex off of Locust Street in Stanfield.

Housing Authority Executive Director Stan Stradley said the complex would benefit the community in many ways. He said a company is conducting a market study to determine the need for similar rental housing in the community. He said he expects to have the results from the market study next week.

"Our preliminary market studies show that there is a huge need for the housing in the area and a huge need for all different sizes," he said.

Stradley said the authority plans to build 12 one-bedroom units, 12 two-bedroom units, 14 three-bedroom units and two four-bedroom units in the 40-unit complex. He said the complex will look similar to that of the authority's Castle Rock Apartments in Boardman. A picture of that complex is available at the Housing Authority website at <http://www.umatillacountyha.org/housing-info.html#castle>.

"The exterior will be a little different, and the design will be a little different, but it will be very similar to what is on five acres up there," he said.

Stradley said the complex in Stanfield will be constructed on seven of the 12 acres available, and the property will also feature plenty of green space, basketball

courts, a community room with computers for resident use and an on-site laundry facility.

Stradley said the authority also maintains a strict no-crime policy. Residents, he said, are also heavily screened prior to moving in.

Councilwoman Pam McSpadden said she thought the complex would give people a respectable place to live where they didn't have to deal with other factors normally associated with low-income housing.

"It is new, close to the schools," she said. "To me, it is nice for the community to have that extra housing for people to live in which would bring good things to Stanfield."

Stradley said the Housing Authority is still working to purchase the property.

City Manager Blair Larsen said the project requires a traffic study and overall site plan. He expects another public hearing will be scheduled when the design and all of the preliminary parts of the project are completed.

Larsen said he supports the project as it would bring a variety of benefits to the Stanfield community. He said it would bring additional children to the school district, rate payers for water and sewer, customers for local businesses and additional residents who would be paying the \$5 public safety fee on their utility bills to compensate for police salary increases.

Stradley said he estimates that, at full capacity, the complex would have about 40 to 50 children who would attend Stanfield schools, which Stanfield Superintendent Shelley Liscom said would help immensely.

"Right now, we are down about 33 kids this year than we were at this time last year," Liscom said. "So even an increase of 40 kids is going to help us grow by seven (students)."

Liscom said the district receives approximately \$6,000 per student enrolled and attending school. She said that could equate to a couple hundred thousand more dollars flowing to the district.

"Right now, it would kind of offset what we have lost," she said.

Ward confident agreement with port 'on again'

Final document may be unveiled at commissioner meeting Tuesday

BY SEAN HART
HERMISTON HERALD

The Umatilla City Council had a short meeting Tuesday, but City Manager Bob Ward said the Feb. 17 meeting would probably be much longer, in anticipation of a finalized agreement with the Port of Umatilla to settle a long-standing zoning dispute.

City and port officials reached an "agreement in principle" to settle the dispute behind closed doors in December, but Ward said plans to unveil the

details in January were put on hold to revise the legal language of the document.

Ward said he is now "very confident" the terms will soon be finalized.

"The issue with the port has been sort of on again, off again, up and down, but we are on again," he said. "Once again, we are close to an agreement. We hope to have that finalized prior to the Port commissioners' meeting next Tuesday. That will sort of kick off the deliberation."

Two port commissioners and two City Council members participated in the process late last year that led to the initial agreement, which effectively halted a hearing before the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals.

The dispute originated last spring when the Umatilla Planning Commission

denied the port's application to build an industrial warehouse on property a city map depicted as being in an industrial zone, after city officials determined the zoning designation had been inadvertently changed from residential when the map was created. The port appealed the decision to the City Council, which upheld the denial. Port officials then filed the LUBA appeal, which is currently on hold pending the local agreement.

In other council news: Mayor Dave Trott announced his council committee assignments and said he did not want to make many changes.

"I know there's been few actual committee meetings and the like in recent time," he said. "One of the things that is important is really time

and grade in terms of the committee assignments, and I'd like to give you the opportunity to get a little more familiar with that. ... We're going to try and get the committee's to have a few more things passed through them to get discussion and involvement, so I think that should be a good teaching moment and learning moment, as far as the workings of the city government."

Councilman David Lougee said he would like to hear occasional updates from the city department heads at the council meetings.

Councilman Roak TenEyck said complaints the city received about street lighting were valid as he had an incident in which he did not see a person in a crosswalk until he had already driven by.

CHURCH DIRECTORY



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Cirque Zuma Zuma performing at HHS

After sell-out seasons in Europe and an extended debut run in Australia, Cirque Zuma Zuma will perform at 7 p.m. Feb. 27 at the Hermiston High School auditorium, 600 S. First St. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$35 for adults and \$17.50 for children. They can be purchased at www.desertartscouncil.com, at the Hermiston Chamber office and at Hermiston Parks and Recreation office at City Hall.

Like its predecessor, Cirque du Soleil of Canada, this theatrical production is a synthesis of circus styles. Cirque Zuma Zuma fuses African culture with acrobatics, comedy and dance.

"Cirque Zuma Zuma embodies the mysticism, magic and excitement of a rich, earthy and tribal continent," Karen Bounds, event coordinator for the Desert Arts Council, said. "The music and percussion that highlight each act transport viewers to a exciting world of pure imagination."

The tradition of dance and acrobatics in Africa goes back more than 2,500 years. Cirque Zuma Zuma pays homage to this cultural tradition while revolutionizing ensembles with a fusion of circus acts, such as clowning, acrobatics, mime, contortionism with

an added layer of theatricality, culminating in a seamless, energetic and dramatic experience. In the past 10 years Cirque Zuma Zuma has toured internationally.

"The sheer athleticism those people have is incredible, each act appears effortless and at times inhuman," Desert Arts Council president Mary Corp said.

The production of Cirque Zuma Zuma is sponsored by Shearer's.

A new addition to the Desert Arts Season will be the play "Searching for Aztlan" April 17 at the Armand Larive Middle School Auditorium. "Searching for Aztlan," presented by the Milagro Theatre of Portland, is a bilingual play that takes the audience on a metaphorical yellow brick road of discovery about what it means to be Chicano in contemporary society. Tickets are not required, and donations will be accepted at the door. Proceeds will support free arts programming to children in the area. The final event of the season will be the Eastern Oregon Arts Festival on Main Street in Hermiston. Visit the Desert Arts Council on Facebook for updates. For more information call 541-567-1800, or visit www.desertartscouncil.com.



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