



Laurel Hill Valley Citizens

N E W S L E T T E R

Neighborhood Potluck & Meeting

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

With Featured Speaker, Mayor Lucy Vinis

at Comfort Suites Hotel, corner of Brackenfern at 3060 E 25th Ave.

Potluck begins at 6:30, Meeting starts at 7:15

Come enjoy visiting time with your neighbors and share some good food. Please bring a main dish, side dish, appetizer, or dessert for the potluck meal. Labeling your dish with the ingredients will allow those with allergies to know which dishes are safe for them to eat and will be much appreciated. Also, please bring a serving utensil for your dish. The neighborhood organization will supply plates, cups, napkins, and flatware.

Mitch Hider will bring his ukulele and begin our meeting with a song. After introductions from all present, Tom Bruno will provide an update on the Capital Hill development. Mayor Vinis will present a general update on the activities of our city government and the progress that is being made. She will also touch on the proposed elected city auditor ballot measure.

In addition, Bonny Bettman McCornack will give a presentation on behalf of the committee sponsoring the elected city auditor ballot measure. As this newsletter goes to the printer, the city council has not yet decided whether to place a competing auditor measure on the May ballot. If they do, our speakers will likely address that ballot measure as well. Finally, we have asked our city councilor, Alan Zelenka, to present an update on the latest from the council.



Capital Hill PUD update

by Tom Bruno

The hearing that was scheduled for January 10th was delayed by the PUD applicant. The city has rescheduled the hearing for March 7th at 5:30pm. The Capital Hill PUD Response Committee, comprised of LHVC and Fairmount Neighbors Association members, have diligently prepared a response to the development. Both the LHVC and FNA boards have sent formal letters opposing the Capital Hill PUD proposal by citing a number of problems with the proposal. The basis for our recommendation is an extensive analysis by the response committee and contracted technical specialists in law, forestry, geotechnical engineering, and traffic engineering. The issues uncovered by this analysis include the following:

- The proposed PUD divides the 13.63 acres into 34 lots (with up to 38 dwelling units), with many lots' buildable portion located on steep slopes, which would be vulnerable to increased geological instability;

- The proposed PUD requests the logging of up to 466 trees (over 50% of existing trees), increasing landslide potential and exposing trees in Hendricks Park and along the Ribbon Trail to wind-throw or other damage;
- The proposed PUD jeopardizes safety and emergency services' response time throughout the existing roadways and the proposed new private PUD street;
- The proposed PUD would be located within the area of the South Hills Study (SHS) which has been adopted by the City of Eugene to encourage preservation of trees and vegetation within ridgeline areas for parks, open space, and connecting trails, like the Ribbon Trail. The SHS states: "this area constitutes a unique and irreplaceable community asset."

The full report from the response committee will be placed in the record for PDT 17-1, and we will present substantial evidence that the Approval Criteria contained in EC 9.8320 are not met and that the proposed PUD would have dangerous, damaging, and irreversible impacts on our entire community.

Short Term Rentals (STRs), Airbnb, and Vacation Rentals by Owner (VRBO) in the Laurel Hill Valley

by Tom Bruno

STRs are rentals of a residential property (e.g. house, condominium, room, garage, apartment, etc.) for less than 30 days with a maximum occupancy of 5 unrelated adults, or one family. A subset of these -Airbnb - can take the form of an owner-occupied home renting out one or two rooms, or a whole space which is not owner-occupied. The Airbnb site in the Laurel Hill Valley shows roughly 20 active rentals, a number which does not differentiate between owner and non-owner occupied rentals.

Many cities do not allow STRs in residential areas, but Eugene allows them without licensing or permitting requirements. The latest AirDNA data shows a rental growth rate of over 100% annually, with 800 Airbnb listings in Eugene. With that growth rate, and left unregulated, Eugene could have over 5000 Airbnb rentals within five years. The Fairmount neighborhood is already a hot spot for STR investors and their numbers have doubled in the last year. The Laurel Hill Valley can expect the same because it is also a very good area for STRs, just a little behind the Fairmount neighborhood on the growth curve.

In some cases, Airbnb owners are our neighbors who rent out a room in order to help make ends meet, and they strive to meet neighborhood standards. In other cases, especially non-owner occupied homes, short term rentals exist merely for the rents, as they can return up to four times the revenue of long-term rentals. In so doing, they can breed conflict with traditional owner-occupied residences over issues such as on-street parking, noise, congestion, and too many guests. Occupancy codes are often pushed and exceeded.

The City of Eugene encourages STR rentals to promote tourism, and then collects a Transient Room Tax (TRT) from STRs that is used to promote tourism, which in turn generates more demand for STRs. As transient neighbors replace long-term neighbors, STRs can diminish neighborhood relationships, drive up housing costs, and diminish housing stock, as professional investors convert owner-occupied homes into rental units, as seen in other cities with a long Airbnb history. Also, the city of Eugene relies entirely on a complaint driven process based on regulations intended for traditional owner-occupied residences, or long-term renters. Neighbors of offending STRs must take onerous steps to report and assist the city in order to bring the offending STRs into compliance. Bend, Portland, Newport, Salem, Seattle, and other cities have enacted regulations to address the conflicts and issues from their STRs. Adding similar regulations in Eugene should be considered.

Here's What You Missed, If You Missed The Fall Neighborhood Meeting

by Natalie Whitson

A lot happened at the November 2017 LHVC General Meeting, held at Northwest Youth Corps. Special guest Regan Watjus from the City Manager's Office gave a presentation about local resources for homelessness, ranging from warming centers, to bridging the gap, housing first, and homelessness prevention. Jim Wienecke, River Road Parks and Recreation District Chair; Dale Weigandt, District Superintendent; and two others gave an overview on how the Parks and Recreation District benefits the River Road area with dedicated funds for purchases and maintenance. The four were approaching all the neighborhoods to find volunteers who might work on a proposal to the City of Eugene asking for a feasibility study to see if Eugene should have such a district.

Tom Bruno gave an update on the Capital Hill PUD, and emphasized the importance of attending the January 10th City of Eugene presentation to the hearing official (this meeting is now moved to March 7- please attend!). Sheryl Kelly encouraged people to drive up to the proposed Capital Hill PUD site and see how narrow the roads are. Tom encouraged people to make donations to help cover the costs of the professionals involved in the case. (Contact info for Tom Bruno and treasurer Susan Ratzlaff is below.)

City Councilor Alan Zelenka spoke about the work of the City of Eugene Sustainability Commission, which includes homelessness, healthcare, climate change, and housing. LHVC meeting attendees also helped some in our community who are living on limited resources by bringing 139 pounds of food for the Food For Lane County food drive.

Last but not least, the Neighborhood Executive Committee elected new and returning members. Congrats to Jan Wostmann, Katie Dixon, Bill Blix, Kathy Frazer, Deborah Kelly, Tim Bradshaw, Mitch Hider, Richard Cundiff, Kaye Downey, Stan Dura, Lianne Gaunt, and Carolyn Murrow, who will serve on the 2018 Executive Committee along with LHVC Officers Sheryl Kelly (Co-chair), Tom Bruno (Co-chair), Natalie Whitson (Secretary), and Susan Ratzlaff (Treasurer).



Save the Date
Spring Neighborhood Meeting
Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Laurel Hill Valley Citizens Neighborhood Association Executive Committee Members

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*You're Invited to a Potluck Dinner
and Neighborhood Meeting
6:30pm, Wednesday February 7, 2018
at the Comfort Suites Hotel*



Policy statement: This is the official newsletter of the Laurel Hill Valley Citizens. Funds for the printing and mailing of newsletters are provided by the city of Eugene. Newsletters are produced by neighborhood volunteers and are free to residents and businesses of the neighborhood. Space is available for letters to the editor or articles from neighbors and will be published as space permits. The information provided and the views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the position of the City of Eugene or the Laurel Hill Valley Citizens.

All uncredited text written by the newsletter editor, Deborah Kelly. Illustrations are public domain clip art. Natalie Whitson is our talented proofreader. Please send articles, comments and concerns to dskharp@yahoo.com.

Laurel Hill Valley Citizens is Eugene's oldest neighborhood organization, chartered by the City Council in 1974. General Meetings are held quarterly to learn about and discuss issues relating to the quality of life in our neighborhood. The LHVC Executive Committee meets at other times to discuss and represent the interests of the neighborhood.

For more information see our website at www.lhvc.org or contact Sheryl Kelly at 541-912-5887 or sherylkell@comcast.net. You can also email LaurelHillValleyCitizens@gmail.com and we have a Facebook group. Just go to Facebook and type in Laurel Hill Valley Citizens.