



THE AMHO NEWS

The News Publication of
The Association of Mobile Home Owner's

Vol. I Issue 5 2nd Quarter 2008

Editor: Randy J. Gibson

AMHO TO HOLD FIRST ANNUAL MEETING:

AMHO will be holding its first annual meeting on July 19, from 10:30 am to 12 noon, at the Carriage Club Estates 13320 Highway 99 S. Everett, Wa. 98204

On the agenda will be:

Organization update

Treasurer's Report

Polling of members on legislative priorities for the 2009 legislative session and Board elections

"Please be a part of setting the direction of this vibrant State Wide Organization." Says AMHO's Organizing Chair, Kylin Parks. "Let's all come together and share victories and concerns regarding our Manufactured Housing Lifestyle Choice."

Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP, if possible, to kylinparks@yahoo.com- or for information call 425-772-5174

Attendees are advised that parking is limited, so carpool if you can.

"And wear your AMHO T shirts" Parks added.

AMHO T shirts will be available at the meeting for \$10.00 each.

Refreshments will be served.

AMHO IS GROWING!

The number of manufactured housing communities with AMHO members is growing. At the last count there were AMHO members in 54 manufactured housing communities across the state. These communities are:

Alpine Park, Bowman Hilton, Canyon Heights, Canyon Terrace, Carriage Club Estates, Cascade Mobile Village, Cherrywood, Coach Country Coral, Colonial Estates, Manufactured Homes Park, Columbia Terrace Estates, Country Aire Manor, Countrydale, Crestview, Crystal Pointe Estates, Eagles Landing, Foxchase, Glenwood Estates, Golden Rose, Hidden Glen, Hidden Village, Kariotis Park, Kingsbury East, Kingsbury West, Leisure Estates, Leisure Manor, Little Mountain Estates, Lone Cedar, Mariner Village, Midland Meadows, Milair Court, Millar Villa, Mobile Country Club, Mountain View Estates, Mullen Hill Terrace, Pantera Lago Estates, Pine Terrace, Rio Verde Senior Community, Riverside Villa, Royalwood Mobile Home Estates, San Souci, Sans Souci Mobile Estates, Seashore Villa, Skyway Mobile Home Park, Sonary Crest, Summerville, Sunny Creek Community, The Ridge, The Squire, Town & Country, Village Green, Waller Road MHP, Whispering Firs, Wonderland Estates, Young's Mobile Home Park.

Big Thanks to Jim Dean, AMHO's First President!

Jim Dean, who was one of the masterminds behind the formation of AMHO has resigned.

Jim is very warmly thanked for his many contributions, particularly his work in the initial formation and organization of AMHO. Jim will continue to be a member of AMHO and may even find time to go fishing now!

Vice President Jerry Huffman has assumed the duties of President in the interim.

Board elections will take place at the July 19 annual meeting after which new officers will be appointed.

AMHO'S Kylin Parks to Attend National MOHA Convention

At the last year's meeting of the National MHOA in Minnesota AMHO's Kylin Parks was asked to join as a member of its Board, representing Washington. In that capacity she will be attending this year's national convention set for October 3rd and 4th to be held again in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

The National MOHA is not the same organization as the Washington State MHOA, although they are affiliated by similar causes. AMHO is a member of the National MHOA.

STATEWIDE: Snohomish County, County Council Orders Reprieve for Mobile Home Parks

Snohomish County has made it temporarily harder to redevelop in a bid to save Affordable Housing

In an effort to preserve some of Snohomish County's last available affordable and senior housing the County Council stepped in to make it difficult for property owners to redevelop any of more than 50 mobile home parks. The council unanimously approved temporary zoning changes for existing mobile home parks in unincorporated areas of the county. The council declared an emergency so the rules could go into effect immediately.

The move buys policymakers six months to head off what they called a crisis in affordable housing. The pace and scale of mobile home park closures in the county is growing, sending thousands of people scrambling to relocate, council members said

"We've had quite an outcry from the residents of these parks essentially being forced out," County Council chairman Dave Somers said. "When people are being essentially evicted daily, we thought we needed a time out for a long-term strategy."

Three mobile home parks in the county face closure this year, including Mariner Village in south Everett, Penny Lane near Snohomish and Manor Heights in Lynnwood. The three have 230 mobile homes, with the most -- 165 spaces and about 250 people -- at Mariner Village. Members of the lobbying group representing mobile home park owners condemned the surprise vote by the council last week. They vowed to work to reverse the council's action.

Property values for these parks likely took a hit because of the council's change in the rules, said Ken Spencer, executive director of the Manufactured Housing Communities of Washington, an Olympia-based group that represents 500 mobile home park owners.

"We don't think this is a proper way to address the problem of affordable housing," Spencer said. "The council is trying to solve it by imposing the burden on one class of property owner. Affordable housing is a society-wide problem. We should all share the burden in solving it."

Spencer said. Private mobile home park owners have bankrolled affordable housing for decades, Park owners have watched their land increase in value as the region boomed, and redevelopment as apartments, condos or shops would prove more lucrative than collecting rent from mobile home tenants.

Under the county's previous zoning rules, mobile home Park owners could apply to redevelop their land depending on what land-use zone the property was in. Many mobile home parks in the county are on land zoned for commercial or high-density residential housing.

The council's decision puts a new zoning classification on mobile home parks. In order to redevelop, property owners now must apply for a rezone through the county hearing examiner and the County Council.

Some tenants felt the vote means the council was listening to their concerns. A year ago, mobile home advocacy groups pushed for a moratorium on mobile home park conversions.

"Hopefully, it's going to encourage people not to put their houses on the market and sell at panic prices," said Russell Carter president of the Mariner Village Mobile Home Park tenant's organization. Mariner Village, a 165-space seniors-only park in south Everett, is planned to close at the end of August if residents can't come up with \$25 million to buy the park from its current owner. "It gives us some hope that things are going to turn around," Carter said.

The council asked for County Executive Aaron Reardon's office to create a work plan by June 25 that analyzes and recommends improvements in the county's stock of affordable housing.

County Councilman Mike Cooper sponsored the emergency rules.

"This is the first important step to making sure that our seniors and our low-income people in this county have a place to live that they can afford that does not, quite frankly, require taxpayer subsidies," Cooper said.

Portions of this story are from The Herald of Snohomish County

Thurston County: Tumwater draft ordinance

The General Government Committee of Tumwater City Council is considering the implementation of a mobile home park overlay. AMHO members have been active in getting people to city hall to urge the council's action. The General Government Committee approved the proposed ordinance by a vote of 3-0. The proposal will now move to the full Tumwater City Council for its first hearing there on July 15.

Thurston County:

Hidden Village Owners' Association Receives Funds:

The homeowners' association at the College Street Mobile Home Park (aka Hidden Village Owners' Association) in Lacey just received word that it has been awarded \$995,000 from the state's Housing Trust Fund to help with the acquisition of the park. This money along with \$212,000 that the homeowners' association had already received from Thurston County will go a long way towards helping them meet the purchase price for their 20 space community. The Hidden Village Owners' Association has received help from Ishbel Dickens, staff attorney at Columbia Legal Services and from RCAC, a California non-profit with a lot of experience in financing. Full stories on these two exciting developments will appear on this website and in the next issue of The AMHO News.

Parks Still Closing Despite County's Efforts

Portions of this story from The Herald of Snohomish County

Residents of Mariner Village Mobile Home Park face an Aug. 31 eviction deadline, and already the seniors-only park in south Everett is turning into a ghost town.

Some residents are giving up and moving out, said Russell Carter, president of the park's homeowners association. Some are taking their mobile homes with them, while others are selling them for pennies on the dollar or leaving them behind.

"They're tired of living with the ax hanging over their heads," Carter said. "Many of them have medical conditions and it's just a very unfortunate situation."

Carter said 45 of the park's 165 spaces are now vacant or have homes that are about to be moved. Residents are trying to buy the park from its owners. Though the asking price per space dropped to \$178,500 from \$198,000, residents still can't muster the money needed, Carter said.

The Snohomish County Council is working to prevent scenes like the one at Mariner Village from repeating itself for thousands of seniors and low-income people across the county.

The council in April slapped emergency zoning rules on about 50 mobile home parks in unincorporated areas of the county. The move temporarily made it harder to redevelop any mobile home parks into condos or shopping centers.

Mobile home park owners plan to lobby the County Council to reverse the decision, said Ken Spencer, executive director of the Manufactured Housing Communities of Washington, an Olympia-based group that represents 500 mobile home park owners.

"We want to change their minds and make it voluntary," Spencer said. "We don't like it. We don't want it."

Otherwise, the county is encroaching on property rights and hurting property values, he said.

The council wants to hear whether the county should adopt permanent zoning rules to prevent mobile home parks from redeveloping, County Councilman Brian Sullivan said.

Sullivan and other council members say there is a crisis in affordable housing. As more mobile home parks close in the county, thousands of people are sent scrambling to relocate.

Three mobile home parks in the county face closure this year, including Mariner Village, Penny Lane near Snohomish and Manor Heights in Lynnwood. The three parks have a total of 230 mobile homes.

Two messages left last week with Dick Beresford, an owner of Mariner Village, were not returned.

The problem isn't unique to Snohomish County. The city of Tumwater also is considering adopting zoning rules for mobile home parks similar to Snohomish County's, Spencer said.

Tenants of mobile home parks want the county rules to stay in place, Carter said.

The council's vote April 27 added a hurdle to redevelopment of mobile parks. Under the county's previous zoning rules, landowners could apply to redevelop their land depending on what land-use zone the property was in. Many mobile home parks in the county are on land zoned for commercial or high-density residential housing. When the council slapped a temporary new zoning classification on all mobile home parks in unincorporated areas, it forced property owners to apply for a rezone through the county hearing examiner and the County Council.

County's Efforts – continued from page 3

A raft of policies to further help mobile-home-park tenants and property owners is expected to be considered in coming months, including possible tax breaks for park owners, Sullivan said.

County Council Hears From Residents Regarding Redevelopment Moratorium

The Snohomish County Council conducted two public hearings to receive feedback from citizens regarding the council's recent action placing a temporary zoning change on existing mobile home parks. The changes restrict the redevelopment of parks.

Around 200 people representing a number of the county's manufactured housing communities were in attendance at the first meeting and around 100 attended the second hearing one week later.

Numbers of AMHO members attended, as did members of Save our Seniors Housing (SOS), and residents of Mariner Village, a park in Snohomish County that is being closed for redevelopment. Attendees told the council about the plight of manufactured housing community residents. The repeated message was, when our parks go we have no place to go.

Among those who spoke was Diane Navicki who told the council of her experience when Ronna Estates was redeveloped. She lost her home which she had just finished paying for and \$45,000.00. "I lost my 'American dream' of home ownership," said Navicki.

A resident of the Royalwood community park in Lynnwood expressed concerns that seniors and disabled people displaced by the park's redevelopment, "could become street people." Another, physically disabled senior, resident of another Lynnwood park, told the council that becoming homeless was just what would happen to him if he became displaced by his park being closed and redeveloped. A longtime realtor spoke and decried the closing of parks. A number of park properties owners and their legal representatives and the parks owners association also attended.

Prior to the beginning of the first public hearing, a group of owners and their representatives were overheard by the AMHO News remarking (of the zoning action) as "outrageous". As reported, the park owners have vowed to fight the zoning restrictions.

The owners and their representatives' remarks in general took the form of seeming to side with residents empathizing and expressing that they too are suffering, specifically they cited increasing operational costs and sinking profits making it difficult for them to continue to maintain the parks as viable businesses and urbanization and rising property values putting pressures upon them to redevelop to other land uses.

One park owner told the council; that the residents "having no place to go is not my problem." The executive director of the park owners association (Manufactured Housing Communities of Washington) Ken Spencer suggested that the county should "Search for funds and build manufactured housing"—on land that is- "out far away and cheap."

During their remarks to the council the owners and their representatives generally targeted the Growth Management Act and County zoning practices as the real culprits in their view. One remarked that the mandates of the GMA, the current economic scene and the county's zoning actions are together creating "a no win situation." Councilman Brian Sullivan remarked that he and others at the county and state levels of legislative government have been working on solving this issue for five years.

He said that the Council is now forming committees, particularly a sub committee of County Executive Reardon's Housing and Homelessness Policy Over-site Committee. That committee will be comprised of park residents, park owners, developers, realtors and county officials and administrators. The sub committee reportedly will be made up of Councilmen Sullivan and Cooper, Mike Stanger who is a county planner, Deanna Dawson from the Executive's Office, Ken Spencer, of the Park Owners Association, John Woodring, park owner from Westburg MHP, a developer and park residents - AMHO members Kylin Parks and resident Diane Navicki.

These committees are to meet to discuss and study the manufactured housing communities' situation and then present solutions to the council. Referring to the committees Sullivan said; "I look forward to solutions."

The second hearing was held on Wednesday June 25 where the same messages were heard by the County Council which, on the whole, seemed somewhat unmoved by the testimony of the community owners.

King County: Will Wonderland Never Cease?

That's the expectation of mobile home park's rejuvenated residents!

Submitted by AMHO Member Judith White, from The Maple Valley Reporter.

The mood is merry inside the wood-paneled clubhouse. People sing along to folk songs the man in the corner strums on his guitar. A young girl dances. An assortment of appetizers and cakes sit nearby.

It's a party at Wonderland Estates Mobile Home Park. A celebration and thank you to all those people who helped the park stay what it is today. A park for seniors 55 and older on Maple Valley Highway, no longer the future site of 100 homes.

"We're all just ecstatic we have a place to stay," says Mae Breeden, 62, who with her husband Art, 67, has lived at Wonderland for eight years. "The stress is gone about it going to be sold. We're just happy."

Wonderland became the fourth King County Housing Authority-owned park last November. The authority bought the park for \$8.4 million.

A light has gone on at Wonderland since the purchase. The darkness has been extinguished. The darkness that began in June 2006 when residents discovered their park was up for sale, and did not brighten when they learned the owner had submitted applications to King County to turn the park into 100 homes. Before the purchase, residents had until this August to move out.

Art Breeden remembers the fear and intimidation in the clubhouse during the park's first residents' meeting, just after the discovery of an online advertisement listing the park for sale.

"You could cut the fear with a knife," Breeden recalls. "But by the grace of God we made it. In the long run we made it. I plan on being here the rest of my life."

Long run is right. It took a year and a half for residents to secure Wonderland as their own. Efforts started with pancake breakfasts, and included help from Manufactured Housing Community Preservationists, a Washington non-

profit organization that purchases, renovates and then operates mobile-home parks as low- and moderate-income housing. Renton Housing Authority even offered 19 acres in Fairwood in exchange for Wonderland.

"If it isn't made out of paper and green they didn't want it," said Doug Hobkirk, executive director for Manufactured Housing Community Preservationists (MHCP).

Hobkirk shares the residents' joy that Wonderland was saved. Before the King County Housing Authority offer, he says, "the lights were going out."

MHCP is helping manage Wonderland, along with Donna and Randy Cleveland.

The park is now safe from redevelopment, but the work is not done. There are 45 empty lots to fill, vacant homes to remove, and sewer, electricity and water upgrades

to make. Not to mention road work and remodeling. Not many improvements have been made since the 1960s, when Wonderland was built.

The park is in the "it-doesn't-look-so-flashy stage," says Tim Walter, director of asset management for King County Housing Authority. "There's a tremendous amount of work involved," Walter says.

Walter expects the major work to be finished in about two years. Meanwhile, the Housing Authority is scrambling to secure permanent funding to pay for the work.

Wonderland's residents are doing work of their own.

"People are starting to take care of their yards, fixing their places up," Art Breeden says. "It's beginning to look like a home now."

With decks, awnings and decorated lawns, Wonderland's mobiles look anything but mobile. Breeden has become resident lawn mower.

"We do a lot of helping people out," he says. "The best thing that's come out of this is we've all become friends. We look out for each other and check on each other."

Continued page 6

Wonderland – *continued*

Wonderland's residents have new neighbors to check on. Wim, 77, and Peggy, 66, Van Hemert moved in just a few weeks ago from Wisconsin. More faces will be appearing as Wonderland gets ready for new residents.

Some of the people on the waiting list are former residents who want to move back. But some who moved out are happy where they are.

"I'm sorry for the ones who did move out," Mae Breeden says. "They're happy where they are, almost everybody I've talked to. It's not like they're real unhappy about it, but they could have stayed here and not have had their homes moved."

Lavonne Kofmehl is happy where she is — in a Highlands apartment with cheaper rent than Wonderland.

Kofmehl, 72, moved out of Wonderland in December, after King County Housing Authority purchased the park.

She was back at Wonderland for the party May 17. She's visited several times.

"I do miss the people here, and the community," she says. Kofmehl lived at Wonderland a little over two years.

What happened at Wonderland is happening at mobile home parks across the country, as the desire for land and development increases. But not all park residents have been as successful at staving off redevelopment.

"In order to make change, a number of people have to do it, they have to bind together," says Tim Charnley, son of Wonderland resident Don.

Bind together is certainly what Wonderland's residents have done. In addition to fighting for their own park, they've lobbied for state changes. Tim helped them along the way.

A sign propped outside Wonderland Saturday reads, "We Stopped Senior Park Closures."

Wonderland's residents stopped unwanted changes at their park. Many wanted changes are planned. But none of those changes involve the name. For the first time since the redevelopment proposals began, Wonderland is starting to actually feel like a Wonderland.

"We can't change it after what they pulled off," Hobkirk says.

Peggy Van Hemert wishes she could have helped in the fight. She's happy to call Wonderland her home.

"It's such a wonderful place," she says.

AMHO Tours Communities in Eastern Washington.

AMHO representatives, Kylin Parks, Jerry Huffman and Frank Cheeney, recently took to the road and toured through Eastern Washington manufactured housing communities to make residents there more aware of the threat of loss of their communities they may be facing. The AMHO tour followed the Attorney General's Office 'Roadshow' tour whose purpose was to educate community residents, managers and owners about the new landlord tenant laws regarding parks that are going into effect.

The AG's tour and the AMHO tour visited Spokane, Tri-cities and Yakima. AMHO visited 18 parks in Spokane and parks in the Tri-cities and Yakima. AMHO's Kylin Parks said that over 100 people attended a meeting in Spokane.

Parks said she was amazed at how unaware mobile homers in Eastern Washington are about the threats they face. Parks said the perception in Eastern Washington is that community sales, closures, and redevelopments are a problem west of the mountains "where the land is all full up." The AMHO tour strove to make residents aware that the same threats to their communities and chosen lifestyle exist in Eastern Washington.

At some communities both of the AG staff and the AMHO representatives were met un-cordially by managers and owners. Said Kylin Parks, "They tore down our posters as soon as we put them up. The AG's Office people got to see how it really is out there in the real world."

One of AMHO's strategies is to create and organize regions within the state. To this end, Randy Chapman of Mullinhills Terrace, a manufactured community in Spokane, stepped up to be the Regional representative for the Spokane area. A regional meeting forum is planning for August.

OPINION

On Human Rights; Safe Affordable Housing Is A Basic Human Right!

By Randy J. Gibson

Shelter, housing is a basic of life. Everyone must have shelter. It is a basic to survival.

As far back as 1948 no less than the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized that shelter is a basic human right. The UN adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 17 – 2 of that declaration says; “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property”. Article 25 –1 of that declaration says; “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

I do not think it too far fetched to say that the issue of manufactured housing preservation, the preservation of safe affordable housing, is a human rights issue.

If we have not already, those of us who are involved in the manufactured housing preservation movement need to recognize that we are not just crusading to preserve manufactured housing, we are actually crusading for human rights!

We who live in manufactured housing must recognize –if we have not already- that we are not just being done an unfairness, an injustice, our very human rights are being violated!

We must make it clear to those who would do away with manufactured housing communities that in doing so they are violating human rights, no less as declared by the UN.

We must impress upon our elected officials that preservation of manufactured housing is preservation of a basic human right. And we must impress upon them that as our elected leaders, their duty above all others is the preservation of human rights!

AMHO News Seeks Member Reader Input

The AMHO News is a news publication and too an open forum, for its members and manufactured community residents. The AMHO News will welcome submissions of story items commentary and opinion.

The guidelines are simple: No outrightly slanderous statements and no unverifiable material. Personal experience stories are particularly wanted.

Questions comments or material submissions should be directed to

Randy J. Gibson randvic@aol.com or phone 425-742-4354

JOIN AMHO!

AMHO is fast becoming a listened to voice for residents of manufactured housing!

AMHO membership is \$12.00 per year

Yearly membership fee is based upon the month in which you join; January \$12.00. February \$11.00 etc.

Joining AMHO is easy! Simply fill out the information below and with payment send it to:

AMHO MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP

Your Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Mobile park community you are a resident of:

Does your community have a Residents Association?

If not would you like AMHO's help to form one?

Send to: AMHO
17408 44th Ave W. #40
Lynnwood WA 98037
425-741-0016 –Frank Cheaney



