

# MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2019

ATTENTION – LOCAL NEWS FOR PHOENIX, OREGON



**CHRIS LUZ, MAYOR**

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## In this edition of the Mayor's Newsletter:

- **IMPORTANT INFO ON BACK PAGE REGARDING WILDFIRE PREP**
- **Welcome to New Councilors Robert Crawford and Angie Vermillion**
- **Updates from the Planning and Public Works Departments**
- **Remodeling of Sushi & Bento and El Comal Taqueria**
- **Volunteer Spotlight – Lyla Heigl and Phoenix High School Highlight**

On January 7<sup>th</sup> the City Council welcomed newly elected councilors Angie Vermillion and Robert Crawford. Jim Snyder was also elected after serving as an appointed councilor. Jim was appointed as Council President for the third time, so he will continue in that position. Angie will act as the liaison to the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce and Robert will assist with Parks and Greenway liaison duties. I appreciate the confidence that the citizens of Phoenix have placed in me by re-electing me as your Mayor. As always, please contact me with your questions and suggestions. Thanks.

Angie wants citizens to know that “As a longtime Phoenix resident and business owner, I am committed to help bring Phoenix to a better future. As your City Councilor I will do my best to listen to your needs, goals and desires for Phoenix and be a responsible and accountable representative for you.”

Robert's message – “I will bring a fresh perspective, as a committed citizen, who will listen and make thoughtful decisions. I look forward to working together, continuing to build on the City's improvements that will attract families to call Phoenix their home. I am excited for this opportunity to learn and grow and embrace this new challenge. I look forward to serving you on Phoenix City Council.”

Jim wants to let you know that: “My overall goal is to represent your ideas and desires in order to facilitate policies that ensure our city is the place you and your family will be proud of and continue to be where you want to live, raise your family , and enjoy your retirement.”

City Council and the Mayor are volunteer positions. Please join me in thanking City Councilors Sarah Westover, Terry Baker and Council VP Stuart Warren for their continued service to our community. They each have two years remaining in their terms. The entire council also serves as Phoenix's Urban Renewal Board of Directors.

## Citizen Involvement in Development Activity: by Evan Mackenzie, Planning Director



**Taylorred Element's Phoenix townhome project at Oak and HWY 99**

Lots of people take an interest in development in and around town. The City has rules and regulations that apply to virtually all new development, including giving public notice in some (but not all) instances.

City staff is bound by the language in the City's Comprehensive Plan and implementing regulations contained in the Land Development Code and other adopted ordinances. This language provides the guidance for all new development in the City, so that any developer wishing to initiate a project has a clear understanding of what is required in order to gain approval. These documents provide a road map so a developer can design a project that meets all applicable approval criteria, and get approved.

City staff is not given discretion to approve or deny a development proposal based on our like or dislike of the project. If a proposal clearly meets all of the applicable approval criteria, it is our job to see that it gets approved. If not, it is our job to see that it does not get approved. More often than not, City staff will work with an applicant to modify a proposal to meet the approval criteria rather than issuing a denial.

The rules exist to ensure that your City staff, as well as your elected and appointed officials, do not act arbitrarily or capriciously in approving or denying development proposals. When it comes to development proposals, this means that sometimes a proposal that is universally reviled must be approved, while other projects that have community support are denied.

How can citizens get involved in a meaningful way? First, it's helpful to understand what rules apply to a proposed development project. What is the property zoned? Does the zoning allow it? What are the development requirements for that type of project? Does it meet them?

Once the rules are adopted, we don't get to argue over how "good" or "bad" the rules are. Staff's job is to evaluate a proposal against the applicable rules, and if it meets them, staff will either approve it, or recommend the Planning Commission do so. If City staff gives a developer a hard

time, it's not because we don't like the project (or the developer), it's because the proposal is in some way inconsistent with the requirements. Conversely, staff may recommend the Planning Commission approve a project that the neighborhood doesn't like, because it clearly meets all of the requirements. We are able to condition an approval on meeting certain requirements, but ONLY if those requirements are clearly necessary for the project to meet a code requirement or mitigate an impact that conflicts with the code.

If the Comprehensive Plan and the Development Code are not meeting our local needs, they can be changed. City staff regularly updates the Plan and Code for compliance with changes in State law, and to address identified issues. Because such updates can be expensive, time-consuming, and require coordination with multiple state agencies, the code is not updated every time an issue is identified. The individual elements within the Comprehensive Plan must be updated every 20 years; amendments to the Land Development Code may occur two or three times a year and typically cover multiple code sections to maximize efficiency.

The City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code (LDC) are available online.

**More info from Evan - Phoenix is Growing!** - The City of Phoenix, working with other jurisdictions in the Rogue Valley, was assigned two Urban Reserve Areas on the east side of Interstate 5. These areas are intended to accommodate the City's commercial, industrial and residential growth over the next 50 years. When fully annexed and developed, Phoenix and Medford will be literal neighbors, sharing a common border.

Growth into these areas is a complicated matter. The City can use regional data to support expansion northbound for commercial land – there are no other large commercial/industrial areas with direct access to Interstate 5 in between Eugene and Redding. However, the City can only use local growth data to support additional residential growth. The City is in a bit of a catch-22 regarding residential growth: because there is very little vacant land for new development within our existing Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), we have had very little development for the last decade. Because we have not had much development, we are not “growing,” and can't justify the need for more land. The City is working on several updates to our Comprehensive Plan that will give us some justification for expanding, but we can't say how much of the land east of I-5 will come in at a time, or when.

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**Phoenix Plaza Civic Center** is open weekdays 10-12 and 1-3 and evenings for Council, Committee and Commission meetings. It's available for event rentals and community events. The Civic Center is home to quarterly blood drives in partnership with the Red Cross. Our next drive is Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. You can register to give blood at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) with the sponsor code PhoenixOR. Join our mailing list to stay up to date on other community events that we'll be hosting! Join our mailing list at [phoenixciviccenter.org](http://phoenixciviccenter.org). For rental inquiries or more info on the Civic Center, contact Brelyn at 541-535-3037.

## **“PHOENIX PLAZA BIOSWALE PROJECT” by Ray DiPasquale, Public Works Director**

Patrons and visitors who have utilized the newly constructed facilities at the Phoenix Plaza on Main Street may have noticed the “unfinished” look along the east side of the new parking lot. There is a good reason for this condition as the Plaza project was constructed in stages to accommodate the challenges associated with the site development program. As part of the initial construction that included the driveways and parking lots, a stormwater management plan was developed to address water quality and stormwater detention requirements for the anticipated full build-out condition. The deep ditch along the east side of the parking lot was preliminarily shaped to address construction of the parking lot and Plaza facilities. A second facility was constructed at the south end of the low area adjacent to the wetlands near First Street to detain runoff prior to the discharge point into the pre-existing wetlands. These combined facilities - water quality treatment swale at the upper end of the system and a detention basin at the bottom end – were always planned to be addressed with formal landscaping once the major site development components were completed.

We are now at a point where the final design of the finished landscaping program has been completed, and we expect to have the work accomplished over the next few months to create a finished product. Landscape amenities will include a variety of plant species used to assist with the water quality treatment in the upper meandering swale area, and a mixture of upland and wetland species in other locations throughout the project. Special attention to plant selection has been made by our consulting Landscape Architect (KenCairn Landscape Architecture) to include pollinator friendly species and to complement the installed plantings included with the Plaza project.

Other amenities in the project include a segmental block retaining wall, a series of compacted fine graded stone walking paths, wetland viewing areas, and small in-stream stone check dams. We previously installed improvements in the Plaza site drainage system to direct the natural spring waters to different locations along the finished bioswale to allow for a constant and controlled flow of water into the facility. This consistent spring water flow will be supplemented with a surface irrigation system to promote the long-term health and vitality of the installed plantings.

We could not have approached the overall Civic Center and Phoenix Plaza project without a strong cooperative relationship with our project partners. Rogue Valley Sewer Services (RVSS) and the KenCairn design team have been working with the City to develop the plans, obtain permit approvals, and – in RVSS’s case – provided a financial contribution to the phased project. RVSS committed \$60,000 to the stormwater management facilities and the porous paver parking lot as a means of promoting Best Management Practices in addressing runoff and water quality issues.

We look forward to having the Bioswale and Detention Basin phases of the project completed this Spring, with the Public Works Department participating in construction activities as needed. Upon conclusion of the warranty period for installed improvements, the Department will take over the annual maintenance activities for the facilities. Once the site is ready for public access, we will be pleased to offer public outreach sessions in conjunction with RVSS staff to discuss the improvement and educate interested parties on the advantages to the City and the surrounding ecosystem of having this project in place.

## Remodeling of Sushi & Bento and El Comal Taqueria

Continued success has led to the expansion and remodeling of two restaurants at the Ray's Shopping Plaza - Sushi & Bento and El Comal Taqueria.



**Sushi & Bento** - Brian Kim has 20 years of experience in the sushi business. He opened the Sushi & Bento restaurant in October of 2016. Brian offers a menu with over 100 selections from Tempura and Classic Rolls to Teriyaki, Bento Boxes and affordable High School Specials. One of the diners recently commented on Facebook "OMG! Best sushi we've found in almost three years living here...Phoenix is lucky to have him."

Sushi & Bento recently closed for two weeks for remodeling. The restaurant's dining area was expanded, new flooring installed, new tables and chairs purchased, and the décor was updated. Sushi & Bento recently received their license to serve wine and beer. The new bar area is a perfect spot to enjoy glass of wine while watching Brian work his sushi magic.

Sushi & Bento is open from 11am to 9pm Monday – Friday and Noon to 9pm on Saturdays. Please come by the shops at the Ray's shopping center and check out Phoenix's only sushi and bento restaurant.

Volunteers at the food bank at the Phoenix Community Center want to thank Brian for his contributions to the food bank.

**El Comal Taqueria** - Flavio Martinez and his sister Luzmila own El Comal. The restaurant is located just south of Angelo's Pizza.

Business is booming at El Comal! They are doing so well that construction crews are busy working on expanding the business to almost double its current size. The restaurant is currently closed for major remodeling. Flavio is looking to re-open in March with a new look and feel. "I noticed that all the restaurants are the same. I wanted to do something unique, authentic," Flavio says. "I use fresh tomatoes, tomatillos, everything fresh as far as possible. We cook our own beans, make our own chips."

Phoenix is blessed to have great Mexican restaurants to dine at. Please be sure to keep it local and check out La Tapatia, Los Tres Portrillos, Amigo's and El Comal.

**Join the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce**

**\*\*\* Contact 541-535-6956 for Chamber of Commerce membership opportunities. \*\*\***

## Volunteer Spotlight – Lyla Heigl

In this edition I'm going to spotlight Lyla Heigl who serves on the Board of Directors for the Armadillo Technical Institute.



Lyla and her husband, Lyle, (that's correct – Lyle and Lyla) moved to The Valley in 1979 and then to Phoenix in 2000. She worked as a substitute teacher in California before working full time after earning her Oregon Teaching Certificate.

Lyla has a long list of volunteer activities. Her highest interest in volunteering involves teaching reading. "My passion is in increasing literacy. I'll do anything from tutoring to helping with field studies and GED prep. I loved helping to get the Little Free Libraries established". Lyla is a Friend of the Library and formerly volunteered with the Chamber of

Commerce, Parks and Greenway Commission, Garden Club and the Discovery Corner School of Early Learning. She currently serves on the Phoenix Urban Renewal Budget Committee. Lyla helps to coordinate reading activities at the annual Dog Days of Summer event. You can meet Lyla when she works as the greeter for the community dinners at the Phoenix Community Center.

Lyla and Lyle love spending time with her their three children, 11 grandchildren and six great grandchildren. On behalf of all of us I'd like to say thank you to Lyla for her service to our community.

## Phoenix High School Spotlight

**PHS Family Fun Night Thursday Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> 6-7:30**(Dinner provided) - All students and families are invited to a fun-filled night at PHS. This is not a formal event, this is an event to get students and their families together to celebrate and have fun. Families can choose the event/s they would like to participate in. Events include: Bingo, card games, board games, movie and popcorn, trivia, scavenger hunt, and physical activities (basketball, volleyball and/or dodgeball)

## Phoenix-Talent School Board proclamation of appreciation



Seven of our neighbors volunteer their time as members of the Phoenix-Talent School Board. The Phoenix City Council approved of a proclamation to honor and thank the board members. At a recent school board meeting, I was honored to present a certificate of appreciation to Board Chairman Nate Shinn and the School Board members. On behalf of all of us, I'd like to thank

School Board Chairman Nate Shinn, Vice Chair Dawn Watson and members Sara Crawford, Craig Prewitt, Lori Ghavam, Richard Nagel and Shana Vos for their dedication to our schools.

## Public Safety and Our Police Department



- For the Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> council meeting I have agendized a proclamation to honor the admirable service provided by the Phoenix Police Department and officers nationwide.
- Police Chief Bowker reminds you to note the serial number of your bikes. Stolen bikes are frequently found at camp sites on the greenway. Lock and store bikes properly.
- Let's welcome our new police clerk – Jonelle Thorpe. Welcome aboard.
- If you see something say something. Police dispatch = 541-776-7206

My fellow Phoenix residents, please join me by “going blue”. I have seen more and more blue light bulbs at homes in Phoenix. Thanks.

**The Phoenix Community Center Clothes Closet** is open on Saturday mornings from 9am to 12pm. Gently used clothing, especially for men and boys is badly needed. 501C-3 receipts are available.

**Jackson County House Veterans NOW** - At a recent community dinner, I had the pleasure of meeting Kevin Knapp and his wife, Candace. Kevin is the Jackson County House Veterans NOW representative. Kevin wants to let you know that he wants to connect with homeless veterans, their families and to landlords that can help. They need rentals. Veterans can call 541-774-4322 and landlords can call 541-774-4307. Many thanks to Kevin for his efforts to help our Veterans.

**Phoenix Financial Update** – Our auditors and Finance Director, J.C. Booth recently reported that our financial status is strong. The next budget year starts on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Blue Heron Community Garden** plots are available. Contact Sandy Wine at 541 631-1865, or 541 512-1349, or email [sandrajwine@gmail.com](mailto:sandrajwine@gmail.com).

**Jackson County Fuel** – Bill Jenett invites you to hear BLM fire specialist, Shannon Downey, speak about reducing wildfire, “The New Abnormal”, on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 6pm at the Phoenix Grange.

**Phoenix Branch Library** – Branch Manager Jody Fleming is asking for book donations. 501 W. 1<sup>st</sup> St.

**The Jackson County Master Gardener's Assoc., is hosting a “Spring Community Garden Tour Day” on June 1st 9am to 3pm.** Participating Community Gardens in our area include Ashland, Central Point, Talent, Eagle Point and Phoenix's Blue Heron Community Garden, at the Blue Heron Community Park. Each of these gardens welcomes the public to take a tour on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**The City of Phoenix and the Phoenix Urban Renewal Agency has (4) four vacancies on their Budget Committees.** The committees meet as necessary during the year and at a minimum must meet each spring to review the budget proposed by the City Manager. If you are interested in serving your community or need more information contact Kimberlyn Collins, City Recorder 541-535-1955 ext. 303, [kimberlyn.collins@phoenixoregon.gov](mailto:kimberlyn.collins@phoenixoregon.gov)

## **IMPORTANT - Please read and share the following information. Thank You!**

Taking steps to prevent wildfires from threatening life and property in Phoenix is my highest priority. We live in a densely populated area so our homes and businesses are ultimately only as fire-proof as our neighbor's home or business. It is extremely important that we all work together to reduce the chance of a wildfire hurting Phoenix. We never want to say that we could have done more after an emergency.

The Phoenix City Council, our City Manager and staff will be meeting soon to formulate a game plan regarding ways to protect Phoenix from wildfires. The discussion will include working with property owners around the perimeter of Phoenix including private property owners, the railroad and Jackson County. There needs to be a defensible perimeter around Phoenix which means that fire fuels in critical areas must be cleared to the greatest extent possible.

Within city limits we need to work together to help keep Phoenix safe. This link is a great source of wildfire defense info: <https://www.farmers.com/catastrophe/wildfire-defense/>.

### **Steps to protect your home or business:**

- Properly thin/prune trees and shrubs within a “defensible space” around your property.
- Stack firewood away from any structures.
- Keep embers out - Screen attic, roof, eaves and foundation vents, and periodically check them to ensure that they are in good condition.
- Screen or wall-in stilt foundations and decks; screens should be 1/8-inch or smaller metal mesh (1/16-inch mesh is best).
- Clear roof, deck and gutters of leaves and other debris.
- Mow grass and weeds to 6 inches or less and remove dead or dying trees and shrubs.
- Clear combustible debris from around your property. Create a “defensible space”.
- Check chimney screens to make sure they are in place and in good condition.

Proper preparation can really make a difference. Thanks for doing your part and being a responsible neighbor.

As always, Phoenix says thanks to your City Council Members: Jim Snyder – President, Stuart Warren – Vice President, Terry Baker, Robert Crawford, Sarah Westover and Angie Vermillion.

**Gas prices keep falling. \$2.53 at the Shell station at the Petro Truck Stop. Costco \$2.49, Fred Meyer \$2.53, Arco on HWY 62 \$2.53, Astro on HWY 99 in Medford \$2.59.**

All the Best,



**Chris Luz – Phoenix Mayor**