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Sunnyside Orchards:

Developer pulls Stevi subdivision

JAMIE OGDEN
Staff Reporter

Developer Gary Ince withdrew his application for subdivision approval of the controversial Sunnyside Orchards No. 2 on Thursday.

The subdivision drew fire from neighbors two weeks ago when presented to the Ravalli County Planning Board.

In the wake of neighbors' concerns, the board tabled their decision on Sunnyside to clarify legal questions.

On March 7 the Planning Board voted to accept the subdivision, but deliberated for nearly two hours prior about the validity of the property's designation as a minor subdivision.

"I just wanted to stop and think about things for a bit," Ince said in an interview Thursday.

He may resubmit at some point, but not in the same configuration, Ince said.

"We got advice from Land Services and when we did it that way it created a lot of controversy," Ince said. "I just pulled back because you could see all the grief those people had."

Sunnyside is northeast of Stevensville near the Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge.

The land was originally subdivided for the development of the Bitterroot Township in the early part of the century – a township that was never created.

Neighbors and representatives of the wildlife refuge had shared with the Planning Board concerns about corridor shrinkage, groundwater and stream pollution, the disturbance of migratory bird nesting sites and an increase dogs and cats in the area.

County faces forest payment choice

BUDDY SMITH
Staff Reporter

Last summer's fires turned an obvious fiscal decision into a more complex matter that could involve a whole lot of timber dollars, a county commissioner said.

Ravalli County, like 35 other Montana counties with national forest land, is set to gain significantly more revenue for schools and roads for the next year six years.

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 lets forest counties choose to be reimbursed for timber, recreation and grazing based on the state's highest three-year average from 1986 to 1999, rather than the traditional cut of 25 percent of national forest receipts.

Ravalli County stands to receive either $306,000 or $352,000 a year under the new method, compared with $89,000 last year, said Allan Thompson, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners.

Counties are determining how Montana will disperse its $7 million share of the federal funds.

Forest county officials like Thompson praised the act because they can better predict how much money to budget if they know from year to year how much they will receive. It bolsters timber sales receipts that have dwindled since Congress adopted the 25 percent fund in 1908.

But this year it's also possible that the county could gain big dollars under the 98-year-old way of doing business. That's because of an estimated 120 million to 150 million board feet of marketable burnt timber charred in last summer's fires in the Bitterroot National Forest, Thompson said Thursday.

"Take that times 25, you can come up with about $2.5 million dollars," he said.

Forest officials intend to remove the burnt wood to reduce the risk of a future catastrophic blaze, disease and to make way for new trees, the agency has said.

But Thompson said there are a number of variables to consider when expecting bigger receipts from more

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Musical magic

JENNIFER JONES – Ravalli Republic

Joseph, played by Hamilton High School junior Jamie Parnell, twirls around in his multi-colored dreamcoat during rehearsal Monday evening at Hamilton High School Performing Arts Center. "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" will be performed March 20, 22 and 23 at 7:30p.m. at the center.

"Joseph's dreamcoat" spun by 109 players

JENNY JOHNSON
Staff Reporter

A colorful musical is coming to a stage near you with the performance of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

The show features 109 Hamilton students and adult actors and musicians. Singing, dancing and extensive set designs highlight the musical, which will be shown March 20, 22 and 23 at the Hamilton High School Performing Arts Center at 7 p.m.

"It's incredible," said Gina Wilson, production director. "I think that this is a fabulous musical. People will be talking about it for a long time."

The musical is set in the Middle East – Canaan and Egypt – and tells the Biblical story of Joseph and his coat of many colors.

'People will be talking about it for a long time.'
- Gina Wilson, director

Joseph, who is played by Hamilton High School junior Jamie Parnell, is sold into slavery by his 11 jealous brothers. Joseph ends up saving Egyptians and his brothers from starvation, while making it into Biblical history.

With a papier-mâché camel, a huge pyramid made out of Styrofoam and a sphinx head that lights up and flashes, the set is one of the most extravagant Wilson has worked with, she said. Costumes are also colorful and ornate.

Hamilton history teacher Marion Mitchell makes a cameo appearance as the pharaoh, who is an Elvis impersonator.

The cast has been rehearsing after school and on weekends since January, Wilson said. And the set has taken just as

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JENNIFER JONES – Ravalli Republic

A few of Joseph's many brothers, played by freshman Tim Shonkwiler, left, senior Jeremiah Favara, right and freshman Pat Joiner, cry over their loss. Elaborate costumes and set designs sparkle throughout the play.

City denies county request to re-zone historic house

JAMIE OGDEN
Staff Reporter

The Hamilton Planning Board voted to deny the county's request for re-zoning of property they intend to buy in Fourth Street's historic residential district.

The eight-member board met Wednesday evening at City Hall in the presence of 20 neighboring property owners to consider the re-zone request, which would have changed the zoning of the home on 400 S. Fourth St. from "residential" to "public institutional" – a change that, according to neighbors, would open the door wide to potential uses of the property.

The choice to deny re-zoning effectively removes the city from the controversy between the county and concerned neighbors, who presented a petition with 35 signatures opposing the re-zone request to the board on Wednesday.

At the meeting, Hamilton Planner Rocky Sehnert cited a 1981 state law that allows government agencies to develop properties for public use regardless of existing zoning.

"It is nice that the county came forward, paid the money and asked for the property to be re-zoned, but it is not required," Sehnert said.

Ravalli County commissioners became aware of that law only days ago, according to Commissioner Betty Lund, giving them little opportunity to retract the re-zone request or hold a public meeting to alter their plans.

The county, according Lund, intends to use the home at 400 S. Fourth Street for Youth Court Probation offices.

With appointment of an additional district court

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Good morning to...

Bob Cole of Missoula. Bob works in the valley as a UPS driver and he loves muscle cars like his red 1967 Chevelle.

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Weather

High 44 Low 28 *Forecast*
Cloudy.
Yesterday
High 46 Low 28

Corvallis woman charged with felony endangerment

LISA BAUMANN
Staff Reporter

A Hamilton woman who allegedly abandoned a truck while it was in motion appeared in justice court Thursday on a felony criminal endangerment charge.

Rebecca Lynn Roberts, 19, was driving down Seventh Street in Hamilton Thursday afternoon when her boyfriend attempted to flee through the passenger side window, according to court documents.

She allegedly grabbed him and fell out the window after him, while the truck continued moving down the street. The truck stopped after colliding with a parked vehicle, documents said.

She then laid down in the middle of the street and began yelling, according to Deputy Attorney Mike Reardon.

In addition to the felony charge, Roberts is charged with failure to provide proof of insurance, a misdemeanor and a third offense, according to Justice of the Peace Nancy Sabo.

As Roberts cried in court, Sabo said her records show that Roberts has had a plethora of charges filed against her in the past year in justice court.

She currently owes more than $550 in fines to the court for previous convictions and is scheduled to be sentenced on Monday for misdemeanor charges stemming from a vehicle accident in December, Sabo said.

Reardon said Hamilton Police have been called out to Roberts' house five times since November for domestic disturbances and in one case officers were called out to an vehicle incident similar to this one.

Roberts also

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Road design rolls ahead

JAMIE OGDEN
Staff Reporter

Woodside Crossing business owners are still waiting for answers to how their businesses will be affected by U.S. 93 expansion.

Property owners met individually with design engineers last week to discuss options for highway access along the new roadway.

The meetings were sponsored by WGM Group, the contract design firm hired by the Montana Department of Transportation. They represent the last round of design input before the state moves into direct negotiations with property owners.

For Larry Hale, owner of Woodside Store, the meeting brought many options to the surface, but still no definite answers.

Hale said he has been involved in the highway project since 1993 and looks forward to knowing what will happen to his historic property.

"It seems like your recommendation just wipes me out," Hale told Jeremy Keene, design engineer for WGM Group.

"Well, that's not what we intended to do," Keene responded as they both looked over the map spread on a car hood.

Keene said the Montana Department of Transportation recognizes

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