

Homeowners get extensions to fix up property

By Tom Betz
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Two new owners of homes that have been on the unfit structure list were given an extension to show progress in the next month by the city commission on Tuesday.

The commissioners had asked Building Inspector and Fire Chief Brian James to meet with the two new owners and have them appear at the commission meeting to let the commissioners know what their plans are.

The two homes are at 223 E. First and 520 W. 16th. James said he had met with the two men and had asked them to come to the commission meeting. He said he had explained to the men what was expected to be improved at each home.

Mayor John Garcia asked Fred Russell, who had purchased the house at 520 W. 16th from Shirley A. Barnhart, what his plans were for the house.

Russell said with the remainder of the year he hopes to paint the exterior of the house, and to get the interior to where he can have utilities connected so he can live there.

He said he had been in the house during a recent storm and the only place where the roof leaks is the enclosed porch. He agreed the roof needs to be redone, but would hope to do that next spring with some other landscaping.

Mayor Garcia asked James where the home was in the city 90-day program.

James said it was expired and the city had come down to the demolition bid in August, but cancelled the bid when Barnhart said it had been sold to Russell. James said Russell presently lives in Kanorado.

Mayor Garcia asked what has been done since Russell became the owner.

James said nothing has been done at least from the outside. He said he does not know anything about the inside of the home.

Russell said he had some things happen so he had to move to Kanorado. He said his brother will help paint the house and he needs a little time to do it. He said he could be started by the beginning of October.

"We are aggressively working to get properties cleaned up," Mayor Garcia said. "We want to be as understanding as possible, but we want to see progress on these properties."

Russell said he knows the improvements need to be made, but he did not know the city process had gone as far as the demolition bid.

Commissioner Bill Finley asked Russell if he plans to move into the house.

"Yes," Russell said. "It needs a hot water heater and change some things on the utilities."

He said he was not sure about the structures in back but one is a garage and the other is like a lawnmower shed.

Finley said he was OK with giving Russell a chance to get some significant improvement does in the next 30 days.

"If I can push it," Russell said.

Mayor Garcia said since Russell has owned the home for nearly two months he should have 30 days to show improvement and come back to the commission at the first meeting in October.

Russell said he had concerns about tearing down the open face garage on the side because it appears to be holding up a room

on the property next door.

City Manager Doug Gerber said the city is looking for good faith improvements.

James asked Louis Garcia to tell the commissioners about his plans for 223 E. First, the house he bought from Sherry Bandel.

Garcia said he was at the meeting to ask for time to get the house worked on.

"It came up for sale," he said. "It was cheap. I sort of know what is happening. I have worked on some of the things on the list. I work at the prison in Burlington. I work on the house as much as I can. I know it needs more work and will keep going on the improvements. The windows are taken care of, but three need to be fixed. I have trimmed the trees and cleaned up the yard."

"Please give me some time to get the work done. I am from California. It might be my first property. Good things have been happening."

He said he was a general contractor in California, and he has taken out the walls and found the mold in the addition and taken that out. He said he plans to spray the whole house. He said he plans to do the roof and

has the shingles. He asked if a layer has to be taken off and James said there can only be two layers.

James said some improvement has been done.

Garcia said he called the police this weekend because he found a backpack with a gun in it in his shed.

Finley asked Garcia his plans for the house.

"My goal would be to move into it," he said. "It is in the air, but I am going to fix it up."

Dechant said the city has had people do a plan with James, and suggested Garcia work with James to have a plan.

Garcia said he hopes to get the roof done. He was sort of waiting for the meeting so he would know what the city expects.

Mayor Garcia said he would suggest Garcia get together with James and write out a plan.

"It looks like a good fair effort," Mayor Garcia said. "That is what we want. We are not here to tear houses down. We want them fixed up."

Special Olympics convoy on Saturday

The culmination of months of planning, running and riding will happen today and Saturday.

Last week, officers from Plainville, Stockton, Hill City and Hoxie participated in the Torch Run, raising awareness in the programs of Special Olympics in Northwest Kansas. They took the "Flame of Hope" from Hays, home of the Special Olympics Kansas State Basketball and Cheerleading Tournament and advanced the torch to Colby, home of the World's Largest Truck Convoy rally.

The Truck Convoy will start tonight with a community free-will spaghetti supper at 6:30 p.m. at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. People can then rock out to entertainment by "The Keys Truckers," and Taz's Fireworks will create the finale for the evening. At the supper, you can register to win a Lil' Tex Trager Grill (valued at \$1000), a 50 pound beef bundle or three (3) 25 pound beef bundles.

Saturday morning, the annual Northwest Kansas Truck Convoy will start for participants at either Mitten's TA in Oakley at 10:00 a.m. Central time or Wilken's Truck and

Trailer in Goodland at 8:45 Mountain time and both convoys will roll into Colby making their way to the Thomas Co. Fairgrounds.

The two convoys will meet in Colby, form a parade, travel through downtown and head back to the Thomas County Fairgrounds for lunch and awards. Officers from Thomas County Sheriff's Office and Colby Police Department will lead the parade by carrying the Special Olympics torch.

A minimum donation of \$100, a valid driver's license and proof of insurance are required to participate. Walk up registrations at both locations are welcome! For additional information, contact any of the committee members: Joe and Jane Mentlick (785) 443-1682, Tom Sloan (785) 675-8540, Jack Collins (785) 675-8375, Daryl Goetz (785) 673-4336, Mike Pipelow (620) 874-4177, and John Hinger (785) 899-5454. Complete event details and specifics about the Truck Convoy are at www.kssso.org/events.

All event proceeds will benefit athletes of Special Olympics Kansas.

Trooper assist 1,139 motorists over Labor Day

The Kansas Highway Patrol released its Labor Day weekend holiday activity showing one fatal accident and 1,139 motorist assists.

The reporting period for the holiday weekend ran from 6p.m. on Friday, Sept. 2, through 11:59 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 5.

The Patrol worked one fatal crash, which resulted in one fatality. The fatal crash was not alcohol-related.

The fatal was less than the two killed the year before. The number of alcohol-related crashes was two this year down from five last year. There were no alcohol-related deaths this year or last year.

Alcohol-related arrests were down to 37 this year from 48 last year. Speeding tickets were down this year with 1,149 given out this year compared to 1,250 last year. Speed warnings were down to 937 this year from 1,007 last year.

Adults seatbelt tickets were down to 322 this year from 600 last year.

Adult seatbelt warnings were down to 50 this year from 71 last year.

Teen seatbelt tickets were down to eight this year from 22 last year. Teen seatbelt warnings were up this year with three versus zero last year.

Child restraint tickets were down to 25 this year from 66 last year. Child restraint warnings were up this year to six with only two warnings last year.

The troopers assisted 1,139 motorists over the holiday weekend, but that was down from the 1,146 last year.

The KHP participated in the Special Traffic Enforcement Program, Drunk Driving, Over the Limit, Under Arrest, which ran in conjunction with the holiday weekend. The special enforcement campaign began Aug. 18, and ran through Sept. 5. The Kansas Department of Transportation provided a grant for the additional enforcement.

Temporary sewer pond ready



City Public Works Director Rich Simon said Tuesday the temporary sewer pond is about ready, and he hopes to have the pipe delivered on Monday so the project to drain and clean out the existing pond can begin later in the week. He expects the project to be done by early October.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

City OKs revised health retirement benefit policy

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of high school and have more years. He asked Volk how many might be in the category to retire in the next few years.

Volk said she thought there were five or six who would be in that category in the next few years.

Garcia asked if the other commissioners had any further questions or comments. Both Commissioner Chris Zimmerman and Commissioner Annette Fairbanks both said they were satisfied with the language and the grandfather clause for existing employees.

Dechant made the motion to approve the revised policy and include the grandfather clause to the end of 2012 for existing employees. Fairbanks seconded. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

In other business the commission:

- Approved a change order on the water improvement project adding 61 days to the Miller Construction Services contract and increasing the total from \$1,499,195 to \$1,503,602

(\$4,407).

- Approved payment of \$10,950 to Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates for the final payment on the water project planning and design. The total cost was \$367,000, and this was the final payment.

- Approved the first request for \$5,424 to be drawn from the housing rehab program for demolition inspections at 1528 and 1512 Center Ave.

- Approved a change in a gas well mineral rights where half of the royalty has been going to another person for the past 10 years. Now the total royalty will go to the city from Lobo Production. Gerber said the city has been getting about \$1,400 a year and that may double in future years.

- Approved an ordinance changing the number of city volunteer firefighters from a maximum of 17 up to a maximum of 20.

- Gerber mentioned the High Plains Museum had been successful in getting a traveling exhibit about "How we Work" to be here next year. He said he is getting good

comments about the wireless at Gulick Park that was a joint effort with Eagle Communications. He said it is an ongoing effort to bring power to the city shelters. He said the playground equipment has been completed at Chambers Park, and this was what Amy Thorson had written the \$25,000 grant to help purchase.

- Announced the city wide clean-up week will be Oct. 3 to 7. He said it was an incredible week last year. It was a ton of work he said, but all the city employees got involved. He said they hope it is as successful this year.

The commission recessed at 6 p.m. to take a tour of the city power plant with Rod Blake, plant superintendent. He talked about

the problems being faced with the Environmental Protection Agency requirement to put catalytic converter on the existing diesel engines. He said this could cost the city about \$750,000, but he was not certain all eight diesel engine would pass the required tests.

Blake said the real problem with this is the EPA regulations are seeking to eliminate something that "might" be in the city power plant emissions in the future, but are not there now.

He said he would be coming to the commissioners in the next few months and felt it was good they came to see the power plant before so they had a frame of reference.

The commissioners adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

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\$160/person/day (lunch included) or \$500 for all three days (lunches and dinners included) Call 855-330-1493 for more info or to sign up! (Book by Sept 21)

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Dr. Bruce Kornfeld has been providing Dermatology services at the Wray Hospital since 1996, and the Wray Hospital is proud to have had such a long relationship with him. He is a graduate of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center's School of Medicine and completed his Residency in Dermatology at Fitzsimons Army Medical Center while serving in the US Military. Dr. Kornfeld has been Board Certified since 1988 by the American Board of Dermatology and currently is part of the Dermatology and Laser Center in Fort Collins. He sees patients in the Specialty Clinic at Wray Community District Hospital every other month. To make an appointment to see Dr. Kornfeld in Wray call his office at 1-800-542-2001.

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