

March 2021 Update from Sara Lambert

The weather is sure big news these days. Snow fell here, and storms across the country are causing a lot of disruption. The news stories I like best are the ones showing people helping others in small or larger ways. While weather disasters can't be controlled, we can always find a way to help our neighbors.

We are at our best when we are determined to support each other and meet critical needs within our community. That's why I'm so proud that the membership of Sno-Valley Senior Center voted last year to support affordable senior housing right here. Since then a committee has been researching projects throughout the valley, talking to people about how to build, run, and finance affordable housing. Many possibilities have been discussed, including working with other agencies.

This month, your Board took another step on this journey. Architects Environmental Works have been hired to start work on plans for building housing on our grounds. Several firms were interviewed, and EW was chosen on the basis of experience planning other low-income housing.

We will also be partnering with local firms Ally Community Development and Kidder Matthew to help us understand the market and fundraising climate, and assist in applying for local, state, and federal grants. We'll be sending in first applications this spring.

If fast-track funding and plans fall into place, we might be able to begin construction next year! A more realistic timeframe would be to work on finding financing for the next year or two, with construction to follow.

We don't have exact plans and drawings yet. The most likely plan involves taking down the hazardous Re-In-Carnation Thrift Shop house, reconfiguring parking, and building to the north of our current facility. Our partners are researching building codes and funding rules to see if we can combine housing and a new thrift store.

Thank you for your support in this exciting adventure! This is truly neighbor helping neighbor in our community.