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Enumclaw City Council revisiting downtown pavilion plans

With elected officials also eyeing a new senior center or community center, the possibility of a bond measure on an upcoming election grows more likely.

BY RAY MILLER-STILL
Editor

The Enumclaw City Council took one more small step toward building a downtown pavilion, though anything resembling concrete plans are still a long ways away from materializing.

The topic was broached during the Feb. 14 meeting.

First, a little bit of history about these developments.

According to Michelle Larson, Enumclaw's parks and recreations director, the idea of a downtown pavilion has been circling amongst movers and shakers in the city for several years, at least since the city put out a 2017 community survey asking local residents what sort of attractions they'd like to see be added to their city.

The survey, which 183 people answered, showed more than half (57 percent) of respondents wanted to see one built, while more than a quarter (27 percent) said they'd "maybe" like to see one. Only 16 percent of respondents said they didn't want a pavilion developed.

The same survey also showed strong support (60 percent approval) for a summer spray park, and even more enthusiasm (63 percent) for more lighting to hold pedestrian-scale night activities.

Then, in 2019, local business owner Marilyn Nelson — responding to the council's "request for proposals" for downtown development — proposed developing said pavilion in the lot between Cole St., Initial Ave., Railroad St., and Stevenson Ave. (the same lot currently housing the Arts Alive! and Enumclaw Chamber of Commerce buildings).

Nelson envisioned a two- or three-story tall building that would house Arts Alive!, the Chamber, other retailers, and maybe even condos, next to a couple open-air covered structures and maybe even a small stage.

However, the plan was deemed economically infeasible, and was scrapped.

Discussion on downtown development came to a standstill until former Council member Hoke Overland brought it back to the forefront last summer, Larson said, forming a pavilion task force with current Council members Anthony Wright and Corrie Koopman; with the help of architects Jeff Dahlquist and Richard Flake, the task force came a very preliminary plan of what a downtown pavilion could look like.

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Hats and plants galore at annual Breakfast for the Birds



PHOTOS BY RAY MILLER-STILL

Dozens of garden enthusiasts gathered at the Enumclaw Field House for the Enumclaw Garden Club's annual Breakfast for the Birds, and event where folks can bid on various plants, garden accessories, and art pieces, as well as participate in the colorful hat parade. This year's parade theme was "Guess who's coming to breakfast in your garden", and the winner, pictured, was Laura Curnan.

Built to quilt

Enumclaw fabric maverick makes quilts for seniors in need

BY ALEX BRUELL
Reporter

As the winter temperatures were plunging a year ago, Janine Carpenter was getting seriously worried.

"I was asking seniors, are you warm enough, or what happens when the power goes out?" recalled the part-time employee of the Enumclaw Senior Center, who helps seniors find housing, transportation and other resources they need.

"Some of the answers were scary," Carpenter said.

By January 2021 — the first winter of the COVID-19 pandemic — Carpenter and Senior Center staff were looking for ways to help seniors stay warm without exposing them to the virus.

Meanwhile, since March 2020, Carpenter had been calling seniors who were stuck at home. That's how she started her friendship with Naomi Allen, a 90-year-old Enumclaw resident whose COVID-19 risk factors — age, diabetes, hypertension and heart issues — made it important for her to avoid getting sick.

Carpenter learned that Allen was an avid quilter from their conversations. So around a year ago, she asked if Allen would donate some of her quilts to the Senior Center. Allen liked the idea.

Thus began a one-woman quilting campaign.

Since January last year, Allen has churned out quilt after quilt for local seniors in need from her southeast Enumclaw area home and workshop. Allen hands the finished quilts off to Carpenter, and they're distributed to people through the Senior Center and occasionally Plateau Outreach Ministries.

"Neither one of us really know (where all the quilts go)," Carpenter

said. "But we do know that someone got to stay warm thanks to (Allen)."

After setting a goal in Jan. 2021 to finish at least two lap-sized quilts per month for the Senior Center, Allen says she's now donated close to 25, and she'll keep making them as long as they're needed.

"I have something to do when I get up in the morning, and at my age, I can't sit around and watch television all day," Allen, 90, said. "I know that it makes a difference for other people. And that's kind of what we're supposed to do. ... If you're doing something for somebody else, you aren't thinking about your own problems."

Raymond Ewing, 82, is one of Allen's quilt recipients. He works on an Enumclaw area farm taking care

of several horses, and lives happily out there in a 9.5-foot camper. He has a propane furnace, but said his quilt from Allen helps keep him warm at night.

A retired pianist and piano teacher, Allen was born in Kansas and moved with her family to California around the age of 12. She moved to Enumclaw 24 years ago.

Allen makes quilts for new babies at her church and for the births and weddings of her family members. Counted up, she has five children, 25 grandchildren, 43 great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren, she said.

"I made a baby quilt for all of them," Allen said with a laugh.

Crafting a quilt is time-consuming and demands attention to detail.

Quilters select colorful designs of fabric — such as cotton, flannel and wool — then measure, cut, iron and sew that fabric into a single layer, often using patterns which feature complex, repeating geometrical designs.

Typically, the fabric is then

sewn together with a middle layer made up of "batting," the fluffy white material which gives a quilt its thickness and warmth, and a bottom layer of fabric which is typically of a simpler design. Binding is then sewn around to complete the "quilt sandwich" and protect its seams.

Allen says she's not an artist, and her approach to making the quilts is practical and unpretentious: "I can't draw, I can't paint, but I can make quilts. ... Basically, it needs to be useful."

But the end result of her work is tougher and longer-lasting than a blanket, and an artistic statement all its own. Quilts can take a lot of use if maintained well, and often outlive the people who make them, Allen said.

"It's nice to get something that keeps you warm, but it's also nice to get something that's pretty," she said. "And I enjoy it. It gives me a good feeling just to make the quilts."

And, as Allen points out with a laugh: "Even an ugly quilt will keep you warm."



PHOTO BY ALEX BRUELL

At her Enumclaw home on Feb. 22, Naomi Allen works on her latest quilt to be delivered to seniors in town. Her friend Janine Carpenter, in the background, talks to Allen regularly and helps deliver the quilts to the seniors who need them.

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