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## **Affordable housing plan to be heard**

Gillette people will have the opportunity to hear information on the a proposed affordable housing plan at a meeting tonight.

A local housing committee, led by outside consultant Marty Shukert and made up of community members and city staff members, proposes to use \$1 million to finance infrastructure for developers who agree to build affordable housing.

The objective of the committee was to find a way to develop homes that “people making working wages can afford,” Shukert said.

Infrastructure, including streets and sewer, was the only cost that the city could control, Shukert said. By putting money toward infrastructure, the money is going for public improvements, he said. And the money is eventually paid back.

The money toward the infrastructure, about \$20,000, would become a second mortgage to be paid off when the first owner sells the home.

“This not a grant or a giveaway program,” Shukert said.

It would not be part of the original amount financed, so a \$150,000 home would be financed for \$130,000.

Eligible homes could have a maximum cost of \$150,000, including infrastructure.

If the program is approved, the city will take requests for proposals from developers and a selection committee will review applications. Then city staff and applicants will negotiate costs and responsibilities.

With the program, the city estimates about 50 owner-occupied workforce homes will be created.

Mayor Duane Evenson is in favor of the plan and said he doesn't see a downside to it.

“It is thinking outside the box,” he said.

And in the end, it is a win-win situation since developers don't lose money, taxpayers get their money back when the home is sold and Gillette finally gets some affordable housing, Evenson said.

Questions and comments from residents and the City Council will be answered by Shukert, who will be either available by video or phone conference at the meeting tonight.

If the City Council eventually approves the plan, the money would probably be allocated from the general fund, Evenson said.

If the plan moves smoothly through review, it could be presented to the City Council for approval at its Nov. 14 meeting. If approved it could be implemented around the first of the year, he said. By KELSEY DAYTON

News-Record Writer

€WHAT: City workshop on affordable housing.

€WHEN: 6 tonight.

€WHERE: Second floor Community Room at City Hall.