

## LOCAL NEWS

# 1-year extension approved for \$35 million Liberty Lane apartment complex in Redlands

The project's developer asked the City Council for a one-year extension on its conditional use permit



Building Perspective (Building A along W. Lugonia Avenue)

The 80-unit Liberty Lane affordable housing project slated for the corner of Texas Street and Lugonia Avenue in Redlands is designed to assist veterans and their families, individuals with special needs or mental illness diagnoses, and low-income families. Delayed by a lawsuit, the project received a one-year extension from the City Council on Sept. 17, 2019. (Architectural perspective courtesy of A Community of Friends)

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By **JENNIFER IYER** | [jiyer@scng.com](mailto:jiyer@scng.com) | Redlands Daily Facts

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An 80-unit affordable housing project slated for the North Side and [approved by the City Council two years ago](#) was slowed by a [lawsuit](#) but is still moving forward.

Representatives of the developer for the proposed Liberty Lane apartment complex appeared before the council Tuesday, Sept. 17, asking for a one-year extension for their conditional use permit.

Councilman Paul Barich said the project was controversial thus “a lot of us would like to put this thing to bed, and get it done, move forward.”

Janelle Brown with Los Angeles-based affordable housing developer A Community of Friends said her group agrees.

The council, which can grant up to three one-year extensions, approved this first one unanimously on Tuesday.

The approximately \$35 million apartment complex, to be built on the southwest corner of Texas Street and Lugonia Avenue, across from Texonia Park, is intended to assist veterans and their families, individuals with special needs or mental illness diagnoses, and low-income families.

In October 2018, a [San Bernardino Superior Court judge threw out claims by Citizens for Equitable Redlands](#) that the city violated environmental laws when the council approved the project. The group was opposed to the project’s density and scale, saying it would not be compatible with the neighborhood of single-family homes and would bring aesthetic and noise impacts.

Since the ruling, A Community of Friends has been working on garnering funding from county, state and federal sources available for supportive and affordable housing projects.

“The exact timing of the project depends on how quickly we can assemble the financing and make up for lost time,” Mee Heh Risdon, the group’s director of housing, told the council on Tuesday. “It’s possible that we might need to come back for a second extension.”

Those sources have different cycles to apply for the money, the group’s president and CEO Dora Leong Gallo explained in an email.

“The project is not in trouble, it was just unfortunately delayed due to the lawsuit,” she said.

“If we are successful with that award, we believe that we can apply for tax credits in the summer of 2020,” Brown said. “So we do anticipate there to be movement within the next 12 months.”

The project remains the same as originally approved, with on-site property managers, security cameras, and support from county departments. Plans also include five two-story buildings with Spanish Mission-style architecture, a community building, playground and trails.

“The site is currently vacant and has been for some time,” Gallo said. “We believe a beautiful, well-maintained residential community will blend in nicely on that corner, adding to the aesthetic of the neighborhood.”

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## Jennifer Iyer

A lifelong Inland resident, Jennifer Iyer started working in journalism at The Press-Enterprise in 2000. She has written (and shot photos for) stories on wildflowers, camping with a dog, and many community events, and as a videographer covered wildfires and war games to blimp rides and camel racing from Temecula to Big Bear Lake, Twentynine Palms to Jurupa Valley.

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