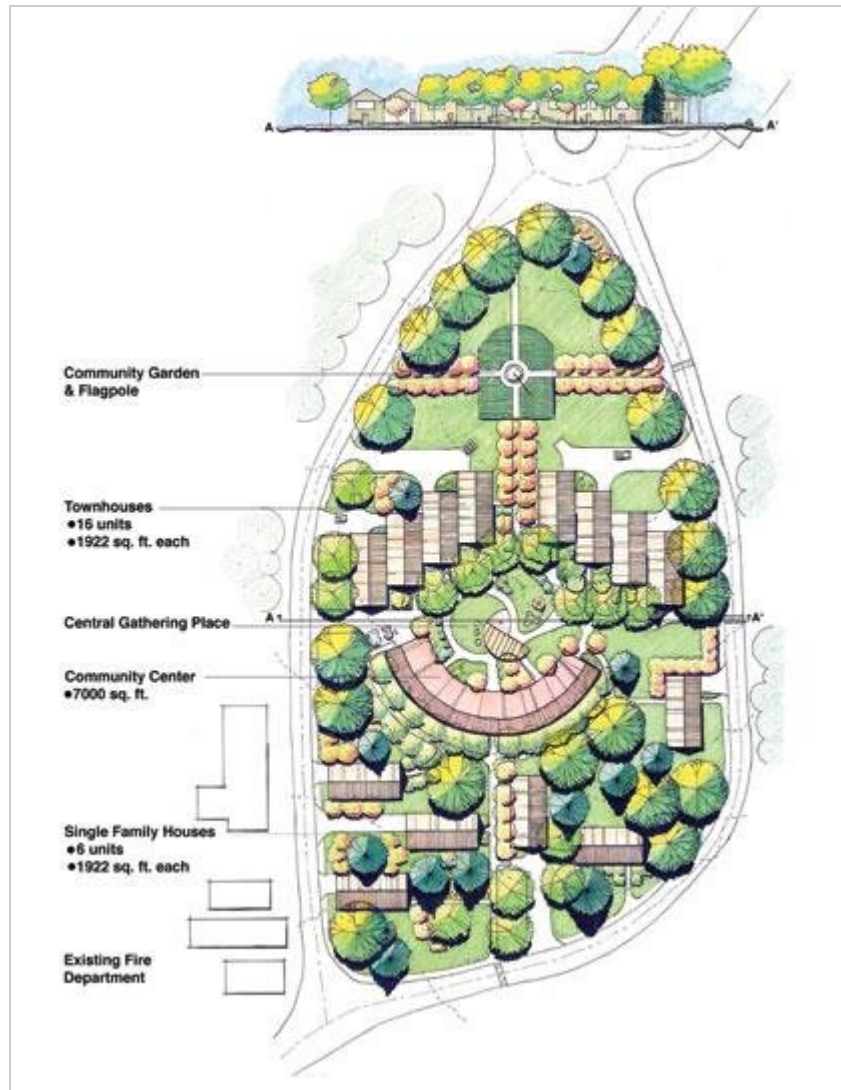


Tribe eyes project at old headquarters



A chimney pipe is thought to be the cause of the fire that caused significant damage to the home owned by Teia Brewer at 220 South 5th Street in St. Maries. Crews from Plummer and Fernwood helped St. Maries firefighters battle the blaze, which took several hours to extinguish. - Dan Hammes

By Brendan Giusti

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If you build it, they will come.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribal Housing Authority and the University of Idaho's Bioregional Planning department have been designing a sustainable housing development near Plummer dubbed "The Gathering Place."

The development, which became a class project, began as a way to share resources, according to Laura Laumatia, University of Idaho Extension Educator for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and graduate student in the Bioregional Planning program at the University of Idaho.

"We're really excited," said Ms. Laumatia of the new partnership. "It helped with a huge need in the community n housing."

The new project is in its infancy stage.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe recently received a \$500,000 grant from HUD to expand the existing sewer lagoon system on the site of the old tribal headquarters outside Plummer, according to Marc Stewart, a spokesman for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

"The key is get the infrastructure down," he said.

The partnership idea took shape in the spring of 2008 when the University of Idaho's Landscape Architecture 560 class developed several plans for the site of the former tribal headquarters building.

The class, comprised of eight bioregional planning graduate students and five landscape architecture students from Washington State University, developed preliminary sketches to present to the tribal housing authority.

The ideas were then displayed and opened up for public comment through a dot system n residents were able to place a red dot on concepts they didn't like, a yellow on things they could live with, and a green dot on ideas they loved.

The result became what's being called "The Gathering Place" n a preliminary blueprint for a planned community that incorporates residents' visions.

"I took that idea and sort of refined it," said Iris Mayes, University of Idaho graduate student in the Bioregional Planning department.

The site is the home to the old tribal headquarters, the old jail, and several houses built in the 1920s.

"It's just not possible to remodel them," Tammi Laninga, assistant professor in sustainable land use planning at the University of Idaho, said of the old homes.

The other buildings are a different story.

Students have suggested reusing the historic buildings that can be salvaged. The old jail could be used as a mail room, other tribal buildings could become little stores, and the firehouse could be turned into a community center.

The plans are preliminary visions for what could be. Tribal council has not yet made approvals to "The Gathering Place."

"It'll provide something for the tribe to work with," said Ms. Laninga of the ideas student's pitched.

The next step is refining the plans and rendering a 3-D model of the proposed development.

"I have been very excited to work on this project n to help the housing authority," said Ms. Mayes. "And to get to know more about the Coeur d'Alene Tribal government from the point of view of helping support a needed housing