

March 18, 2013

Dear Honorable Representatives,

I am Kate Rambo and I am asking you to support HB3007 for many reasons.

Please read the following story of Saunders Creek Homeowners Cooperative. This is a true course of events and is why I am asking you please support this bill.

I was the mobile home park manager of Anchor Mobile Home Park, now Saunders Creek Homeowners Cooperative, for nine years. Within those nine years as manager, I showed the park to many possible buyers. Each one of the possible buyers wanted to eliminate many of the mobile homes in the park because the park is old and many of its residents are on fixed incomes and are elderly. Because of this the homes are in disrepair. There is no way for the folks on fixed incomes to afford to pay a rent increase or to move. And, if the homes were to be condemned the tenants would be homeless as the homes are too old to move. The tenants would have had to walk away from their homes with no place to go which would leave them homeless. I was very concerned because these people are my friends. Near this time Bruce Newman at Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) told me about a program that would allow the tenants to own the park themselves.

When I approached the realtor the owner had contracted about the tenants purchasing the park, the realtor made excuses like the tenants were not capable of running a co-op and besides the owner would not take any offer other than her price. I have since found out that the real reason the realtor would not entertain the idea of the park residents purchasing the park was that he would lose his commission.

As luck would have it I was speaking with the owner about other park business and asked her if she had a buyer for the park. The owner said no. The owner said the realtor would not return her calls nor was he sending any prospective buyers to the park. I confirmed that the realtors had not sent anyone to look at the park in over a month. The owner stated that the rent would need to be raised and she would be sending me the notices to hand out.

I asked the owner if the realtor had spoken with her regarding the people of the park purchasing the park. She was furious because the realtor did not advise her of the idea. The owner was extremely excited about the concept.

The job at that point was to have the owner hold off on the rent increase. The next big hurdle was to convince the folks in the park that for their own preservation of home they should form a co-op and purchase the park.

To convince the tenants, I explained about the experiences I had—had with potential buyers of the park. I also spoke with them about the rent increase. There was really no option for some of the people because it was their only hope of keeping their homes.

I planned a meeting for all of the residents so that Bruce Newman RCAC could explain the process of purchasing the park. Some tenants were terrified of losing their homes.

Together as a team, Casa of Oregon, Bruce Newman RCAC and I were able to put together a package that would save the park and allow low income people to live securely in their own homes and not be afraid.

Now the residents own the park. There is no more fear of losing their homes due to rent increases or a new landlord reconstructing the park.

Had I not asked the owner of the park if she was interested in selling to the tenants, 42 homes would have been lost and 42 low income families would be homeless.

To accomplish the sale and start up it took a lot of people, a lot of long hours to bring this to fruition.

The point I want to make is that had I not found out that the owner was willing to sell the park to the tenants, these families would be displaced and the realtor would be sitting someplace under a palm tree enjoying himself.

House Bill 3007 is very important for many reasons. Imagine the problems both the tenants of Saunder's Creek Mobile Home Owner's Co-op and the state would incur had the events not happened as they did.

By supporting HB3007 you are not only helping good, honest people preserve their homes and their way of life, but you are saving states money.

I urge you to please support this bill and help the low income help themselves.

Thank you in advance for your support in this matter.

Kathryn Rambo