

## **BEGIN OF TIMBER VALLEY, SUTHERLIN, OR.**

Before it became Timber Valley, it was Leisure Valley. There were dreamers who coveted the valley that is now Timber Valley SKP Park.

Carl Keck, former manager of SKP Park lived in Sutherlin at the time in the early 1980s when Fred Harrington was a local developer and “wheeler-dealer”. Mr. Harrington conceived of an elaborate and expensive development for the “super wealthy” (quote) to escape the dangers of the everyday world. Sutherlin’s city council first heard of the proposal on March 26, 1981 when “Jerry Garner, representing Fred Harrington, showed plans for 300 condominium units, a 160-bed nursing home, 9-hole golf course, par 3 golf course, 4 lakes and a commercial Center.” (From the Sun Tribune, the newspaper in Douglas County, Sutherlin, 1980s. copies available in the public library.) The newspaper went on say “\$28 million development would be advertised in urban area of New York and Florida with special emphasis on the security features of the project.... Leisure Valley (as they were calling it) would be entirely fenced and would employ a security force...to provide a secure retirement area for people in high crime areas. With housing units in the \$150,000 range, the project would aim to attract retirees with incomes of \$4000 a month or more. (In “purchasing power”, \$4000 in 1981 is comparable to over \$11,282 in 2020.) In 1981 can’t you imagine the council frothing at the mouth to get this influx of money?

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Bruce Daily, Sun Tribune editor, in editorial on March 26, 1981 writes: "the project...will offer safety to seniors who have build up a estate that they have to protect with bars on the windows and multiple locks on the doors. That 460 people can be found who are willing to trade the fear of living in New York with Puerto Ricans, Miami with Cubans, or Los Angeles with Chicanos for the serenity of a secure community in peaceful Sutherlin as almost a sure bet".

(This blatant racism is in print in the Sun Tribune of March 26, 1981.)

May 28, 1981, the newspaper reported that Sutherlin City Council gave "conceptual approval to Fred Harrington's "Leisure Valley Development." Of course, the project was outrageously expensive and Bill Moss an SKP on the search committee, remembers that Fred Harrington borrowed from the Land Bank in Seattle. He says when Fred died he still owed money to the Land Bank (and probably others) and so the little valley slept peacefully until 1988 when the SKPs discovered its potential.