

Downsizing in Truckee an expensive endeavor

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

When the housing market crashed about a decade ago, one of the results was a trend toward downsizing. The phrase “tiny home” emerged, people scaled down to smaller homes, RVs became potential retirement properties, and an overall tendency toward living within or below one’s means began to take shape. Here in Truckee/Tahoe this trend toward living small has been presented as one of many potential solutions to our housing issue, but it is up against a series of obstacles in the form of ordinances and fees that are still catching up.

More than one year ago, *Moonshine Ink* spoke with a couple who had moved to Tahoe with the dream of living small, tiny, that is. In February 2016, Sean and Tara Flanagan were exhausting all possible avenues to find a home for their 140 square foot tiny home on wheels. Now, after more than a year of moving from place to place, researching tiny home regulations, and speaking in public forums on the subject, their wheeled tiny home is gone, and Sean and Tara are living in a 450 square foot home in Carnelian Bay. Sean said they are in the process of drawing up plans for a tiny home of their own that is on a permanent foundation, and built A-frame style to help accommodate snow load requirements.

“The main constraint that we’ve encountered, or at least the public has seen as a constraint, is that we require any home on a single-family lot to be on a permanent foundation,” said Yumie Dahn, associate planner for Truckee. “Tiny homes, generally we just see them as – if they’re stick built and on a foundation – they’re just like any other home. If they’re on wheels, then they’re considered RVs or mobile homes and would need to be in a mobile home park right now.”

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