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New developer eyes Beach

BY CATHY JETT / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Tania Shand was looking to buy a house in Washington when a long-vacant 1878 Second Empire house caught her eye.

It took her two years to track down the owner and convince him to sell. Now the process of restoring that property and researching its colorful history has inspired a new, second career.

Shand, who retired from the federal government last Dec. 31 after 25 years, has founded Beyond Category Development. It's a mixed-use developer of sustainable homes and communities in Washington and Colonial Beach, a town where she owns and is retrofitting a 1,000-square-foot cottage.

Beyond Category Development will hold a launch event from 1 to 1:45 p.m. Sunday at the cottage, which is at 211 Second St. It will be followed by a reception from 2 to 3 p.m. at the historic Bell House Bed and Breakfast at 821 Irving Ave.

Shand said that she knows firsthand what impact revitalizing a house can have on a community. Not only were her neighbors on U Street in Washington glad to see that her family had brought the faded Second Empire house back to life, but people used it as an example of what could be done with another vacant property nearby.

Shand said that she's interested in having a similar impact in Colonial Beach, because the town has a beautiful, waterfront setting and a number of historic dwellings such as the Bell House, which was once Alexander Graham Bell's summer home.

It also has a revitalization comprehensive plan that she described as "very well-thought-through to bring economic development to the town."

"It's a great time to work with people who are bringing revitalization to the town," Shand said. "Can you imagine what a good outcome that can be?"

Revitalization can be done in sustainable ways that can save energy, create a healthier living environment and help preserve Colonial Beach's natural resources, such as the Potomac River and Monroe Bay, Shand said. She hopes to demonstrate that through the work underway at her cottage and at a two-story, energy-efficient house she intends to build on a lot she owns on Lossing Avenue.

Shand had a small addition to the cottage torn down and gave the remaining space an open floor plan. The materials that are being used are energy efficient and as natural as possible. She'll use Energy Star appliances in the kitchen, for example, and the house will be well-insulated.

"I want to show people the small things that you can do in an energy retrofit," she said. "It can be as simple as no [volatile] chemicals in the paint and insulating from the attic to the crawl space."

Other options would include using permeable pavers to keep storm runoff from going into the river or bay, and choosing kitchen cabinets that are made without formaldehyde so they don't off-gas.

Shand would eventually like to put information about her company's projects on her website, [beyondcategory](#)

[development.com](#), in hopes that it will spur people to think about sustainability when they tackle home improvement projects.

Shand is also interested in looking for additional opportunities to retrofit historic homes in Colonial Beach or build something new there. She's noticed that the town has a number of grandparents, for example, but no store where they can buy clothes as gifts for their grandchildren.

Another possibility might be developing a mixed-use building using green materials for the local artist community. She would probably rent or sell those properties.

"I want to work with the community," Shand said. "I don't want to do things that folks won't appreciate."

Cathy Jett: 540/374-5407

cjett@freelancestar.com

WANT TO GO?

WHAT: Launch event for Beyond Category Development

WHEN: 1–3 p.m. Sunday

WHERE: Event starts at BCD's project at 211 Second St., Colonial Beach, and continues nearby at 2 p.m. at the historic Bell House Bed and Breakfast, 821 Irving Ave.

LINK: <http://news.fredericksburg.com/business/2014/10/04/new-developer-eyes-beach/>