

West Keizer Neighborhood Association General Meeting Minutes
Jan. 14, 2016

Keizer Civic Center
Submitted by Carolyn Homan, WKNA secretary

Call to order – President Rhonda Rich called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. at Keizer Civic Center and welcomed approximately 16 people, including guest speaker Mayor Cathy Clark. Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Minutes for November, 2015 – Ron Freeman moved for approval and Clint Holland seconded. Motion carried.

Budget for 2015-16 – Rhonda reported expenditures of \$100 for the new WKNA logo, out of the \$500 allocated for the year through June 30.

Celebrating 10 years of WKNA – Rhonda noted that it has been 10 years this month since the West Keizer Neighborhood Association was reactivated. She went through the minutes of the past 10 years to create an association history that includes information such as meeting topics and speakers, names of WKNA representatives to various committees and WKNA activities through the years, most recently the Little Library in front of the Doerflers' house at Rafael and Shoreline. The list of all WKNA Board members alone reflects 70 years of service, she said. She shared copies of the document.

Before election of officers for 2016, Gary Blake rose to thank Rhonda for her 10 years as WKNA president, saying that because of all her hard work, WKNA and Rhonda Rich are almost synonymous. He thanked her for her service and her work to make WKNA a viable organization that continues to make a valuable contribution to the community. The group gave Rhonda a standing ovation.

Election of the Board of Directors (go to www.westkeizerna.org for the bylaws) – The Board consists of 4 directors and 3 officers: President, Vice President and Secretary. All positions are for 1 year. Board members must be members of WKNA with their primary residence or business located within the WKNA boundaries.

Ron Freeman coordinated the nomination and election process, starting with officers. Gary Blake nominated Rhonda for president, but she declined. Rhonda nominated Gary Blake. There being no other nominations, Gary was elected by acclamation.

Carolyn Homan nominated Carol Doerfler for vice president, but she declined via her husband Martin (Carol could not attend the meeting). Gary nominated Rhonda and, given no other nominations, she was elected by acclamation.

Cathy Clark nominated Carolyn Homan as secretary. There being no other nominations, Carolyn was elected by acclamation.

For the four Board members, Martin Doerfler nominated Carol Doerfler; Cathy Clark nominated Art Mauer; Ron Freeman nominated Sarah Head; Kathy Lincoln nominated Clint Holland. Clint moved to close nominations. The four board nominees were elected.

As new president, Gary then took over the meeting. He thanked everyone for participating and emphasized the importance of WKNA continuing to be active in the neighborhood. A goal is to reach out and involve more neighbors to increase participation.

Guest speaker – Cathy Clark – Gary introduced Mayor Cathy Clark, who spoke on some of the accomplishments in Keizer in the past year. She has lived in Keizer since 1989 and got involved with the city through a task force on backyard burning, thanks in part to then-mayor Jerry McGee. She went on to become a budget committee member and then in 2006 ran for City Council at the urging of Jackie Moyer, who was stepping down. Cathy was elected, then re-elected in 2010. In 2014, she ran for and won her post as Keizer Mayor.

She praised Keizer's "responsible" budgeting and innovative staff who are "always looking for alternative solutions and more effective ways to do things." In her 10th year on the Council, she's "more optimistic than ever" about Keizer.

She cited examples of progress during the past year, including the Big Toy "1,000 volunteers 2 years in the making and we're not done." A grant is under way to add a new surface and Americans with Disabilities Act features. Other accomplishments include sand volleyball courts at Keizer Rapids Park the turf project at McNary High School. All these projects involved hundreds of dedicated volunteers proving that "Keizer can get it done."

In 2016, an issue to be addressed is Keizer's "vacant spaces." School House Square at Chemawa and River Road has been sold, she said, and new things are coming. Craig Murphy, with Keizertimes, said a new gym is to locate there.

Creekside, former home of the Albertson's/Haggen store, is a challenge, Mayor Clark said. The Albertson's/Haggen piece goes to auction in February. The rest of that center has another owner. She said that the city is a willing partner to help get the other spaces filled. She cited progress last year on River Road between Chemawa and Dearborn, with businesses such as Full Monty's and OSU Credit Union going in.

Area C at Keizer Station is another area of progress, she said, citing the Bonaventure care facility under construction. Two apartment complexes and retail package also are planned. Area A saw Gustav's, Chipotle, Red Wing, Maurice's, a yogurt store and Love Love Teriyaki all open in the past year, along with the Keizer Permanente facility. The latter brings highly valued middle and higher income jobs, she said.

She praised Salem-Keizer School District for taking a lead in job training, including the Career and Technical Education high school now open on Portland Road. She urged everyone to tour the facility if they get the chance.

In answer to a question, Mayor Clark elaborated on the recently announced homeless initiative, which will involve Salem and Keizer in collaboration with Marion and Polk counties. It's a complex issue, she said, but the effort hopes to make practical changes. She cited the Marion County Re-Entry initiative as an example of the kind of thing that might be done to identify barriers to success and find ways to help people be successful. The focus will be not just on homeless but the home insecure.

Mayor Clark said the Keizer budget is pretty status quo. No positions were added because the city will have to come up with more money to deal with a recent ruling on the Public Employees Retirement System. But overall, she said the state of the city is strong.

Neighborhood business:

Palma Ciega Park update – Gary lives near this park and got involved when the city raised the possibility of selling this property. The idea was set aside when it was learned the city may not own the property but Gary praised the City Council and the Parks Advisory Board for their openness throughout the process. The parks board and city want to make the park more usable and attractive and have asked neighbors to provide information on desirable amenities.

Gary said that if the park doesn't get used, the neighborhood may lose it. It was agreed that the park needs to be cleaned up, with removal of invasives and overgrown vegetation. Gary said neighbors would be willing to provide volunteers for cleanup with city guidance. Clint suggested the need to get the city's assurance that it will provide ongoing upkeep.

The group discussed some general amenity ideas, including those from the Palma Ciega Park master plan, dated 2008. Those included unpaved trails to the river, a seasonal dock, horseshoe pit, vegetative buffer for homes, viewing platform, picnic tables and portable toilet. Two main ideas discussed were benches on the upper level for viewing the river and picnic tables. An amenities survey was distributed and attendees were asked to fill it out and return it before leaving the meeting.

KRP Community Build Playstructure – Kathy Lincoln urged WKNA members to send letters or emails to Debbie Lockhart at the city in support of the Keizer Rapids Park/Big Toy grant that's being prepared. The state parks grant wants evidence of community support, so the more letters, the better. Rhonda said she got an email and would share it with the WKNA membership.

Ron Freeman said the committee met Jan. 5. The state grant, which seeks funds for a pour and play rubberized surface, connecting paths and restroom facilities for the Big Toy, was the meeting's main focus. He said the grant writers are recalculating the budget. Then the grant will come back to the task force before being sent on to the council. If the grant is successful, work could begin in the fall. Ron will continue as the WKNA representative to the Big Toy project.

West Keizer Parks update – Clint said there was nothing new to report. He praised the work of city parks supervisor Robert Johnson.

Clint said there are two vacancies on the parks board. Rhonda noted application forms available at the check-in table and also online. The committee meets the second Tuesday of the month.

Other business – Ron said the Keizer First Citizen banquet will be held Saturday, Jan. 23, at Quality Inn. Anyone can attend and he urged people to sign up through the Chamber of Commerce.

Upcoming meetings – The next WKNA general meeting is at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11. Tentative topic is emergency preparedness in the wake of a major earthquake.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.