

West Keizer Neighborhood Association General Meeting Minutes  
March 12, 2015

Keizer Civic Center  
Submitted by Carolyn Homan, WKNA secretary

Call to order – President Rhonda Rich called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at Keizer Civic Center and introduced Officer David LeDay from Keizer Police Department, who was filling in for Sgt. Bob Trump. Officer LeDay said that foot patrols will soon resume at Wallace House Park. Sweeps have been made of the lower park areas, closest to the river, to ensure that homeless encampments are not being reestablished. A question was raised about police activity in the area of Chemawa Road and Leeward last week. He said that it was a domestic disturbance that eventually drew eight patrol cars from various jurisdictions. He urged anyone with questions or concerns to contact KPD.

Rhonda thanked Officer LeDay and then welcomed some new faces among the approximately 22 people attending. She asked for introductions around the room. Among attendees were guest speakers Bill Lawyer, Keizer Public Works Director, and Mark Callier, president of the Greater Gubser Neighborhood Association and project coordinator of the Big Toy community build playstructure. Rhonda encouraged everyone to sign in so that they can be added to the WKNA email notification list.

Budget for 2014-15 – Rhonda reported that \$464.98 has been spent so far from the \$900 budget, leaving a \$435.02 balance. She projects spending another \$225 for printing, signs and logo design. At the WKNA's recent Board meeting, it was decided to ask for a \$500 for the 2015-16 budget, for the period beginning July 1. Rhonda will present the request at the city's May 5 budget meeting. Projected expenditures include \$100 for the website, \$200 for printing and \$200 for signs.

Board Vacancy – The WKNA Board still has a vacancy. A candidate has expressed interest but is still thinking about it. Anyone interested should contact Rhonda.

Presentation by Bill Lawyer, Keizer Public Works Director – Before beginning with an update on Keizer parks, street and water projects, he noted he's been with the City for about 25 years and has been Public Works Director about 2 ½ years. With regard to West Keizer parks, the Big Toy project at Keizer Rapids is the main thing. One person's idea for a "community build" project, brought to the Parks Board a couple of years ago, went on to become the current grass roots project – an approximately 15,000 sq. ft. structure that will be volunteer-built. The June 10-14 build will offer over 3,000 volunteer opportunities. He deferred more details to Mark Callier, project coordinator, who would speak later. He added that the finished product will be a destination playground, similar to one in McMinnville, and it will be a regional facility serving not just Keizer

In the parks budget for 2015-16, the No. 1 priority is \$11,000 to resurface the tennis courts at Willamette Manor Park in West Keizer. In the "good news" department, he said he just found out that there will be about \$10,000 in additional income from a cell tower

erected at Bair Park (north of Park Meadow between O'Neill and Wheatland Road N) and being leased by ATT. He had just learned that Verizon plans to "co-locate" on the tower, which will bring in \$800 more per month to the Parks budget. The funds will help replace about \$1,000 in rental income being lost at Keizer Rapids from the 2 acres of hazelnuts removed from the orchard area to make room for the Big Toy.

Bill said that the warm weather has brought an early start to parks mowing. Crews and volunteers also have been working on knocking down the blackberries next to the pathways at Keizer Rapids. They've also been working to control the ivy, but both are long-term efforts. In answer to a question about the poison oak at the park, he said the city does its best to spray along the trails but poison oak is hard to kill. In answer to another question about vegetation in the pond areas, he said he had never been asked about it. Mark Callier, who is with the Claggett Creek Watershed Council, said his volunteers are planning to plant trees along the south edge of the pond in hopes the shade will help control the invasive aquatic vegetation.

In answer to a question about improvements at Sunset Park, Clint Holland reported that he and other volunteers last summer installed irrigation there and reseeded it. Leaf accumulation caused die-back but he thinks the grass will come back, thanks to recent fertilization.

A question about kayak access at Sunset Park resulted in some brainstorming about ways to facilitate safely getting large kayaks and other vessels over the chain link fence at the park entrance. Mark Callier suggested installing vertical pipes at both ends with a "roller" pipe in between, which would allow a kayak to easily slide along it and over the fence. Bill said he would see that improvements are made.

Carol Doerfler asked about rumors of a possible sale of Palma Ceia Park, at the west end of Cummings. Bill said he's philosophically opposed to selling parks land, but acknowledged this park is problematic. Neighbors have usurped portions to use for garden plots, for one. In addition, it would be hard to improve, and even river access there is difficult. He said it's up to the Parks Advisory Board to consider the idea of selling it and make a recommendation to City Council. He cited the former Fernwood Park, behind Schoolhouse Square, as an example of a sale that made sense, because the property was so isolated.

Street improvements – He said the city will again do some resurfacing but doesn't have a final list of potential streets from Marion County, with whom Keizer partners on these projects.

A question was raised from two neighbors on Toni Ave. N about rain water that pools, mainly in a couple of driveways, following recent resurfacing there. Bill pointed out that there are no storm drains and installing a traditional system in Keizer would be very expensive. The city is mandated to reduce storm water and handles it two ways – evaporation and infiltration.

The state Department of Environmental Quality had some stiff rules regarding dry wells, or underground injection control systems. In the past, these could not be installed within 500 feet of a water well, and Keizer has a lot of private water wells, he said. That setback has been reduced to 125 feet, however, which allows the city to better deal with many low spots where water collects. Toni Avenue may be a candidate and he said he would follow up.

A question was raised about parking on the west side of Delight at the intersection with Chemawa, which can restrict traffic flow at this busy intersection. Bill said he has been waiting for Oregon Department of Transportation, which managed the Chemawa paving project, to sign off. He plans to stripe the area in question as a no-parking zone and take care of some other fine-tuning along Chemawa as well.

Another question involved a recent accident at River Road and Sam Orcutt Way. Bill said statistics only showed 3 injury accidents at the intersection in 10 to 12 years, but he has had the City of Salem (which controls traffic lights on River Road) add a 2-second delay so pedestrians have a head start crossing the street. Hopefully that will make it safer, he said.

Carol Doerfler asked about improvements to Delight street, which have included discussions of adding sidewalks to improve safety for school children walking to McNary and Cummings schools. Bill said widening the street from Chemawa to Cummings to provide walkways is in the works. Adding 6 feet on both sides is projected to cost \$700,000. But a recent, similar project on Sunset Avenue only cost \$170,000, so he said he needs to evaluate what makes sense and also needs to meet with the school district regarding the project. In addition, there are some grant opportunities, including Safe Routes to Schools, that might help fund the project. It will not happen in 2016, he said.

The roundabout planned at the Verda/Chemawa intersection has been delayed to 2016 but Bill said he is confident it will go through next year. He explained that it is a one-lane design but will accommodate Keizer Fire's ladder truck, as well as a 53-foot semi, even though it is not a truck route. He agreed that educating the public about navigating a roundabout is important but a roundabout was chosen as the most effective way to move cars through the intersection, which can experience 20-minute delays during morning and evening peak hours.

Water system update – Bill outlined water main replacements underway in areas along Rivercrest, Mandarin, Menlo, Marino and Toni avenues. Crews are replacing 50-year-old mains using poly wrapped ductile iron pipe, which has about a 100-year life. The contractor is making good progress on the project and doing a good job with minimal disruptions and thorough cleanup, he said.

Drinking water – Some complaints have come in about “stinky” water in some areas. This can be helped in some cases by replacing flexible tubing with copper piping. All of Keizer's drinking water is from wells so mineral content is inevitable. The city is rigorous

in testing for impurities, he said, with some sites tested monthly – above and beyond the federal standards.

He urged anyone with questions or concerns to call him. “I need to know!” he said. Information helps him trace problems. Callers may have to leave a voice mail (or an email) but he said he does respond to all messages.

West Keizer Parks reports –

Update on the Keizer Rapids Park Community Build Playstructure – Mark Callier, project coordinator, said about 500 people are working on the project but re-emphasized that 3,000 volunteers will be needed in all. Hazelnut trees were recently removed from a portion of the orchard at KRP to make way for the parking lot and Big Toy site. The resulting wood was donated to needy families via the “Red Suspenders” volunteers at Salem Alliance Church.

He shared a drawing of the structure, but noted that it is not current. Some features have been relocated and others are being added, including a volcano donated by the Salem Volcanoes baseball team. Callier has estimated that the play area will accommodate at least 90 kids at one time.

Current needs include people to call other volunteers and to solicit construction tools, such as power drills. The project will need 60 drills, since it will be put together with bolts and screws, not nails. The actual build will be a “manufacturing process,” he said, that will be broken down into individual tasks. Some people will be using circular saws, some will be using the drills, some will be painting or staining the composite wood pieces, etc.

Each of the five days will have three 5 to 5 ½ hour shifts. People can sign up for one shift, one day, all five days, etc. People are needed to check other people in. People are needed to help with food and child care. Keizer Fire Department is donating use of its commercial kitchen but people can even volunteer to prepare food and share it, Mark said. There will be a First Aid area and the Keizer CERT team will be involved.

The goal is to dedicate the playstructure right after the June 14 completion. That’s one reason the decision was made not to use the poured foam surface. In addition to the cost, that material takes about 2 weeks to cure. Using the engineered wood fiber now in the plan means kids can start using the playground right away. The change will allow planners to seek an accessibility grant to pay for the more expensive foam surfacing. Once funds are raised, the engineered wood fiber can be recycled to another use. Callier said that an organizational meeting will be held April 7 at the Civic Center and also at KRP. Consultants from the Leathers group that designed the structure will be here to help lay groundwork for the start of construction.

Anyone wishing to volunteer can go to the website -- [www.keizerbigtoy.org](http://www.keizerbigtoy.org) – and sign up. Ron and Kim Freeman are leading volunteer recruitment and Ron said the sign up

process has been made much easier. They plan to organize a call-a-thon to recruit people for any unfilled shifts and volunteers will be needed for the call-a-thon, too. All volunteers will get a T-shirt.

Ron said that if anyone knows of a church or work group that would like to sign up as a community service effort to let him know. Mark noted that they will do their best to keep groups together but they can't promise.

Mark said the community response has been tremendous, but donations still are needed. Forms were available for anyone wanting to fund a commemorative picket for the picket fence that will surround the structure. The Keizer Parks Foundation's Pinot for the Parks fundraiser will be held March 13, \$25 per ticket plus food and wine sales. All proceeds will benefit the Big Toy.

Rhonda asked Mark to share a bit about the Greater Gubser Neighborhood Association, which he serves as president. He said that this year's Miracle of Christmas holiday lighting event, which benefits Marion Polk Food Share, raised a record amount -- \$27,000 -- and was just 300 pounds short of the record amount of food ever raised. Their association plans a neighborhood garage sale on Aug. 1, inadvertently set for the same day as the traditional sale at McNary Estates. He said that Gubser plans to participate in National Night Out in August and will hold an event at Newton Park, with a general pot luck for anyone not associated with any other neighborhood group. Another effort they have started is code enforcement intervention. He said neighborhood representatives act as intermediaries in some neighbor-to-neighbor issues in an effort to facilitate communication and resolution without involving city personnel. He said they have stepped in 5 or 6 times a year and only twice have they had to turn the issue over to city code enforcement personnel.

The Gubser group uses a web communication tool called NextDoor, similar to Facebook, and he said it has been very effective. The association meets at 7 p.m. the third Thursday of the month.

Update from Keizer Fire District Citizen Advisory Committee -- Art Mauer and Davis Dyer represented WKNA at a recent meeting to discuss a planned bond request for equipment. Art said a bond measure seeking 14 cents/thousand of assessed valuation will be sought in November to fund equipment purchases, which will be phased in over several years. Mark added that the KFD is cutting back to 3 engines from 4 because the number of fire calls is dropping and the number of medical emergency calls is increasing. KFD is looking at different kinds of equipment -- smaller trucks, for instance -- to handle the medical calls more efficiently and less expensively. Rhonda said Chief Cowan will be at WKNA's September meeting to talk more about the measure.

Cummings School update -- Carol Doerfler, WKNA vice president, was commended for organizing an effort to plant pansies in the reader board planter at the school. Carol enlisted Board members to get and donate free pansies offered this spring by Egan Gardens.

Carol shared an email update sent by Lisa Sundseth, school principal (Lisa is unable to attend WKNA meetings because PTC meetings conflict). Among current events is a “Math Majesty” project to encourage kids to keep up with their math. When children get their work done, the “Math Majesty” appears and kids can add their name to a board in the hallways for all to see. Kids love it and math work has improved.

A home work club, which includes a sack supper for participants, has been instituted on Thursdays. So many kids signed up that the group had to move to the cafeteria from the library. Ten teachers have volunteered to help with the club.

In other news, the PTC has funded tablet devices for teachers; the playground is being resurfaced; and plans for full-day kindergarten are being put in place, including where to hold the classes.

Upcoming meetings and activities – Rhonda reminded everyone that the Adopt-A-Street cleanup will be held this Saturday, starting at 10 a.m. at Chemawa and Shoreline. Crews will pick up trash along Chemawa from River Road to KRP. Mark Callier noted that the annual City Hall cleanup also will be on Saturday, starting at 9 a.m. He added special thank-yous to Noah Jones of Highway Fuel for donating bark dust and to Wayne Thackery of Loren’s Sanitation for debris haul-off.

The next WKNA Board meeting will be 6 p.m. April 2 at Rhonda’s house. The next general meeting will be 7 p.m. April 9 at Keizer Civic Center, featuring an update on the community garden at John Knox Presbyterian Church and information from Jenny Meisel, with Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District, on landscaping with native plants to attract birds, bees and other wildlife.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.