

WKNA General meeting
Jan 13, 2022 7 p.m., Keizer Civic Center
Submitted by Carolyn Homan, Secretary

Call to Order: 7 p.m., Carol Phipps, vice president

Welcome – Carol welcomed about 20 attendees, including City Council liaison Elizabeth Smith and City Councilor Roland Herrera and Jenny Ammon, new Environmental Education Coordinator for the City. Introductions were made around the room.

Minutes from Nov. 11, 2021 – Gary Blake moved approval as submitted; Art Mauer seconded. Motion carried.

Budget – Rhonda Rich reported expenditures of \$186.35 since July 1 from the city-approved \$550 budget. Another \$180 will be spent in March for the annual website fee. The remainder will be spent on replenishing the stock of WKNA brochures.

Traffic Safety Discussion

Carol explained that WKNA Board members had distributed over 400 meeting notices to residents of West Keizer who live on some of the main streets and where complaints about speeding and other traffic issues have been noted (Shoreline, Sunset, Dearborn, 15th, 5th, Rivercrest, etc.) This meeting is intended to gather comments from residents to pass along to Keizer Police Chief Teague, who will be at the February WKNA meeting to discuss the issues and possible solutions.

Carol Phipps started the discussion by relating incidents she and her husband have encountered as they routinely walk their dog throughout West Keizer. Poor street lighting can be an issue, but speeding drivers are as well. There are still issues on 5th Street by Holiday Pool. Rivercrest is dark and no sidewalks in many places.

Among other comments:

Drivers ignore the stop at Cummings and Shoreline many times. Question was whether an education campaign on the need to follow traffic laws would help.

Several calls were made for traffic cameras – red light cameras, etc. to show infractions when police are not present.

Rafael between Shoreline and 15th sees a lot of speeders. Resident recounted recent accident where a speeder knocked a boy off a skateboard. The boy suffered a severely bruised arm. Apparently, police not called? But the area has a lot of kids getting off the school bus and it's a poorly lit area. Residents are concerned about the potential for more accidents given the level of speeding traffic and the complicating factors.

Sunset Ave. can be a "drag strip" at times. Drivers coming from River Road or turning off Rivercrest heading toward River floor it – it's a long straight stretch. Many cars are also very loud as they accelerate – can hear them even when they are blocks away from Sunset. Red light runners are also frequent at the Sunset/River intersection. A traffic accident was recounted and pedestrians and drivers are extra cautious entering River Road if they are familiar with that intersection.

Speeding –not much can be done unless police actually observe it but ticketing and consequences were seen as ways to cut down on infractions.

Google Maps is another element in the problems – it sends drivers to areas with higher speed limits and routes that are more direct, increasing traffic on “cut-through” streets like Manbriin or Appleblossom, etc.

Apparently, police recorded speeds on Shoreline for a week recently and found that 50% of drivers were speeding. That was deemed good or acceptable. The highest speed recorded was 65 mph (limit is 25). Possibility of a stop sign on Shoreline at the intersection with Dearborn (to make it a 4-way stop) to slow traffic on that long, unbroken stretch.

Residents asked about the possibility of lowering speed limits; of installing speed bumps or speed tables.

Visibility of walkers and bikers was seen as critical. Drivers need to be able to see pedestrians and bikers. Maybe a campaign to educate kids and other pedestrians is in order.

What about more bike lanes? Apparently, the Transportation System Plan does call for more bike lanes eventually.

Cummings would be an important spot to aid safety for kids who want to bike to school. There are no sidewalks on Cummings. The school has so much traffic because many parents drive their kids to school, in part because of safety concerns about walking and biking. The crosswalk there seems to be ignored too frequently by drivers on Cummings.

Issues have been taken to Traffic Safety Bikeways Committee and WKNA will continue to attend those meetings and monitor issues.

Councilor Smith (who is Council liaison to TSBP Committee) suggested more stop signs to slow traffic – such as was suggested for Shoreline. Maybe a stop at 10th and Rafael and/or 5th and Sunset? She also encouraged an education campaign for bikers and walkers – the city Facebook page could be used to help spread the word.

Carol thanked everyone for their attendance and comments and asked everyone to return for the February meeting to hear Chief Teague’s responses to traffic issues raised.

REPORTS

Parks, Carol P. – She attended the Tuesday meeting and said members were assigned monitoring responsibilities for Keizer parks. In West Keizer that is Palma Ciega, Sunset, Wallace House, Willamette Manor and Keizer Rapids.

Food barrels – WKNA has sponsored food donation barrels at Bi Mart and Copper Creek Mercantile to benefit Keizer Community Food Bank. Judi Leichty, assistant manager of the food bank, reported that since August, the barrels had collected 1,500 pounds of food, as well as substantial cash donations.

Cummings School – Carol P. said WKNA has been tending the Reader Board planter and other planters at the school. She asked anyone interested in helping out with the landscaping to let her know. A work party may be organized later in the year.

City council liaison report – Elizabeth Smith said she endorsed the idea of an awareness campaign around traffic issues discussed tonight. She said if WKNA puts something together with neighbors, she will help get it on the City website. All the issues will take persistence. It's a "complaint-driven city," she said. Rhonda noted it took WKNA 6 years to achieve a walking path inside the fence along Delight Street to protect children walking to Cummings and further north to McNary High.

Councilor Smith said Council is getting closer to setting up interviews for a new city manager. She praised Wes Hare, the interim manager, and also noted the welcome addition of new councilor Shaney Starr. The Community Diversity Engagement Committee has been formed and will begin meeting soon. The Chamber's First Citizen banquet will be held Jan. 22. She asked Councilor Roland Herrera to comment and he noted the new youth award being introduced this year. The award is named for former City Mayor Dennis Koho, who was interested in leaders of tomorrow. The award will be presented by McNary Principal Jespersen and Marion County Commissioner Danielle Bethell. Roland encouraged neighborhood associations to think about nominating citizens for these Chamber awards in future years as a way to diversify the candidate pool.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Carol P. explained the process and invited anyone who might be interested in serving on the Board to step up. The Board consists of three officers (President, Vice President and Secretary) plus four other Board members.

Carolyn nominated Carol Doerfler, absent tonight due to illness, to continue as President. Gary nominated Rhonda, but she declined.

Carolyn nominated Rhonda as Vice President.

Rhonda nominated Carolyn to continue as Secretary

Carol Phipps, Gary Blake, Robb Witters and Art Mauer were nominated to continue as Board members.

There being no other nominations, Carolyn moved the slate be elected by acclamation. Art seconded. Motion was approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Kathy Lincoln asked anyone interested to sign a petition seeking approval for the Keizer Community Library to join the Chemeketa Regional Library System.

Jenny Ammon, new Environmental Education leader for Keizer, said she hoped to reinstitute a community litter cleanup program. She's also working with schools on environmental education projects for kids.

Richard Walsh mentioned a couple of changes that should be made at Keizer Rapids – better maintenance of the "big lawn" area south of the Big Toy and extension of the paved trail into the wooded area. That was supposed to be paved all the way through the park but stops halfway, he said. That limits handicapped access.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m., at Keizer Community Center.

Guest speaker: Keizer Police Chief John Teague.