

WKNA General meeting
March 10, 2022 7 p.m., Keizer Civic Center
Submitted by Carolyn Homan, Secretary

Call to Order: 7:10 p.m., Carol Phipps, filling in for Vice President Rhonda Rich

Welcome – Carol welcomed about 25 attendees, including guest speaker Mayor Cathy Clark and City Council liaison Laura Reid.

Minutes from Feb. 10, 2022 – Art moved approval as submitted; Carolyn seconded. Motion carried.

Budget – Carol said Rhonda Rich had submitted a budget report showing \$66.93 left in the \$550 budget for the year with expenditures of \$483.07. Recent expenses included a one-year renewal of the website and costs to print newsletter copies.

Guest speaker – Carol introduced Mayor Clark to share a recap of the past year and a vision for the coming year. Going into 2022, Keizer is at a peak, she said because its people have worked hard to move the community ahead and that momentum will continue in 2022. She complimented the WKNA newsletter and highlighted some of its contents. The partnership with Cummings Elementary School was a lead-in to discussing Keizer’s great schools. Improvements at McNary High thanks to the city-approved bond measure are amazing and include career tech programs like diesel mechanics and culinary and digital teach – all professional grade. Despite students dealing with the stresses of the pandemic and the bond-funded construction, McNary’s graduation rate is No. 1 in the district.

WKNA’s push for traffic safety prompted Police Chief Teague to back two proposals – a speed table at the crosswalk to Cummings School at Cummings and Delight streets. It will need to be engineered, priced out and included in the street improvement plan, but Public Works Director Bill Lawyer is working on it to bring to Council. The other proposal is for a four-way stop at Dearborn and Shoreline, also doable.

Other street projects outside West Keizer Neighborhood include the Wheatland corridor package for the stretch from River Road to the city limits, which is in line for construction dollars. A plan to make Verda Lane a “complete street” – one that is safe for all modes of travel – is yet to be designed.

Keizer’s water system required a major fix recently when the well at Behr Park failed. The city used \$400,000 in American Recovery and Prosperity Act funds to dig a new well and install new filters for the metals that make Keizer’s water so discoloring. She said Public Works is doing a great job with the Master Plan for these projects to maintain a high quality water system.

As for Parks, the Master Plan update will be adopted March 21 by Council. The parks fee has resulted in staff sufficient to maintain the city’s 19 parks, including recovery from last year’s devastating ice storm, and add needed improvements in many parks.

In city administration, a new City Manager was just selected, closing the book on a “difficult situation” created when the long-time manager accidentally discharged a firearm in his office. She said the incident led the Council to send a message to all employees that “we give everyone the same opportunity to work through the Human Resources process.” The former manager’s 17

years of service to the city were acknowledged, as well as the work done to assemble a high quality team of employees. New manager Adam Brown will start the end of April and “Keizer has landed on its feet again,” Clark said.

She also outlined work being done by the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance to address critical needs in rural and urban areas to serve the homeless population. Housing affordability and supply also are critical issues. For Keizer, changing the Urban Growth Boundary it shares with Salem is a serious issue that will have to be addressed. Separating the Keizer/Salem UGB is complicated and the Mayor said she’s not sure it would work. Meanwhile, the Cherry/River Road Overlay District that was recently created made all commercial land contained in the district mixed use, so that housing could be added above street-level businesses.

The business community in Keizer has added several new opportunities despite the pandemic, including Chic-Fil-A coming to Keizer Station. She said the Chamber of Commerce has provided many resources to help businesses weather Covid and she’s hoping this will be a good year in which we can prosper together. Volunteerism remains strong in Keizer, she said, describing the city as a welcoming, caring community that lands on its feet and moves forward.

She answered several questions from the audience, including one concerning the Chamber of Commerce plan to hold Keizer Fest in August at Keizer Rapids Park. She said the event permit request has been submitted and that requires a site plan, safety and parking plan as well as other details.

She said the American Recovery and Prosperity Plan funding from the federal government is filling in some gaps toward long-term stability for the community.

Carol thanked the Mayor for sharing her vision of the state of the city.

REPORTS

Council Liaison, Laura Reid – Given the Mayor’s detailed report, she had nothing to add except that she can be WKNA’s liaison to pass on items of concern to Council.

Community Library, Kris Adams liaison – Kris is WKNA’s representative to the Library Board, which meets the same time as WKNA’s general meeting. She was unable to make it to the WKNA meeting tonight.

Food barrels, Dennis Phipps—He said the food bank is in need of food and cash donations. Contributions at the WKNA-sponsored collection barrels at Bi Mart and Copper Creek Mercantile have been down of late. Keizer Community Food Bank assistant manager Judi Leichty said that need has increased in recent weeks with many new families coming in to get food assistance.

Cummings School, Carol Phipps -- She is planning a work day in early April (date TBD) to replant the Reader Board planter, do some weeding and maybe refresh the bark dust.

Traffic Safety – Carolyn reported that the safety suggestions backed by Chief Teague at WKNA’s February meeting were passed along to the Traffic Safety Bikeways Pedestrian Committee by Rhonda Rich. The committee also is looking into the possibility of installing some new speed limit signs that are highlighted by LED lights to make them more visible.

Planning for 2022

Carol noted that a Palma Ciega Park Clean Up, held in cooperation with the city's Parks Department, is being planned for later this spring. Details to come.

WKNA also will continue to pursue traffic safety issues throughout the neighborhood,

The John Knox Community Barbecue that had been held each August may make a comeback this year after it went on hiatus during the pandemic. Neighbor Mary Jo Emmett reported that the event had become a community event because many of the church's members live outside the WKNA area and they have other partners who use their building, such as a Latino congregation. She wants to pursue a partnership with WKNA to help rekindle this event as a way to bring people together. WKNA invited her to a future Board meeting to discuss details.

Keizer Fest at KRP – Chamber of Commerce President Bob Shackelford presented information on why the Chamber wants to move the Fest (originally the Iris Fest) to August (better weather) and KRP –to have a permanent site that is less disruptive than the current location on Cherry Avenue, which has interrupted operations for the Keizer Elks and area businesses. He urged anyone with questions or concerns to contact Keizer Chamber. The event is planned for the second week in August., Thursday through Sunday.

Upcoming meetings;

March 12 – 9 a.m.-noon, Keizer Community Center Cleanup

March 17 – 6 p.m., Traffic Safety Bikeways Pedestrian Committee Meeting, City Hall

March 21 – 7 p.m., WKNA Annual Report to City Council

April 7 – 7 p.m., WKNA board Meeting

April 12 – 6 p.m., Parks Board Meeting, City Hall

April 13 – 6 p.m., Planning Commission Public Hearing. See City website

April 14 – 7 p.m., WKNA General Meeting, Shane Witham, City Planning Director guest speaker

April 23 – Soggy Day in the Park cleanup at Keizer Rapids Park

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.