

WKNA General Meeting

Sept. 9, 2021 7 p.m.

At Keizer Civic Center, 930 Chemawa Road NE, Keizer, OR

Submitted by Carolyn Homan, WKNA Secretary

Call to Order: Carol Doerfler called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and welcomed about 16 people.

Approval of minutes – Gary moved to approve the minutes of the May 13 meeting as submitted; Art Mauer seconded. Motion carried.

2020-21 Budget, Rhonda – Rhonda reported that \$95.35 has been spent on more brochure boxes, leaving a balance of \$454.65 of the \$550 2021-22 budget OK'd by the City.

Guest speaker: Carol D. introduced the guest speaker, Interim City Manager Wes Hare, who gave some of his background as a City Manager in Albany, Oakridge and Baker City, Oregon. After retiring from Albany, he served a stint as Interim City Manager in Toledo, Ore., before coming to Keizer this summer. He's also done work in international development to promote local democracies, including trips to Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Japan and Tanzania. He explained what the job of a City Manager is, highlighting the kind of day-to-day responses to city affairs that can range from disputes at a dog park to meetings with county commissioners. The job equals whatever issues or problems crop up. He also offered details of how cities are organized in Oregon (set up as corporations).

The city is working with a consulting firm to choose the next permanent City Manager and he and City Council will meet with the firm Sept. 27 to review the qualifications sought in a new hire. One consideration is having a citizen advisory panel to provide feedback. He's sure there will be opportunities for citizen and neighborhood associations to provide input but how much public involvement will be sought hasn't been decided.

Another key issue right now is deciding how the city will use more than \$8 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the federal government. The funds have to be spent by 2026. He said the Council has talked about reforming the city's long-range planning group to talk about the best ways to use the funds. The city might cooperate with the county on some regional needs. Housing and infrastructure can take up a lot of money quickly. He advised anyone with input on selection of the city manager to share them with Council – and that includes the neighborhood associations.

Among other current issues: 1) Hiring new police officers. Keizer is down four and will bring on a lateral transfer in a week and another transfer by first of the year. The 2) A local nonprofit has been contracted to upgrade and maintain the Little League ball fields.

3) The Council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity work group has been disbanded. They recommended forming a new advisory group and will look to add citizen members. The Council also adopted a list of official "recognition" months, per the Library of Congress, starting with Hispanic Heritage Month in September.

He concluded his remarks by noting that Keizer has a low tax rate, which was intentional, but that in turn means limited resources for its size. It also has a very small area. Roseburg, for instance, is a similar population but is 8 square miles, compared with 7 square miles here. And Keizer has limited room to grow, given the shared Urban Growth Boundary with Salem.

His contract with Keizer is to run from 6 to 12 months, and the expectation is that it will run closer to the full year.

In Q and A, he explained that the ARPA funding is intended to help cities recover from losses stemming from the pandemic. Keizer lost gas tax revenue, for instance, and some of the ARPA funds could be used for transportation. Other uses might be for police salaries (emergency personnel have worked overtime hours). One goal is the make the city services more accessible electronically. Housing is another big issue.

Carol thanked him for his presentation

Andrew Kronser, new principal of Cummings Elementary – Carol introduced him and he presented his background and how he's been adapting to his new school. He previously was at North Marion.

REPORTS

City Council Liaison – Councilor Elizabeth Smith was unable to attend. Carol reported that there are openings on two city committees – three on the Parks Advisory Board and two on Traffic Safety, Bikeways, Pedestrian Committee. Anyone interested should fill out the application form on the city website. Applicants are then interviewed by the Volunteer Coordinating Committee, which makes selections to fill the vacancies.

Parks Board, Carol D. (reporting for Carol Phipps) – The Parks Master Plan is under revision and should be done in October.

The shade sails at the Big Toy in Keizer Rapids Park had to be taken down. Older children were climbing on play equipment and then jumping onto the sails, damaging them and creating a liability issue for the City. City staff have had to remove the sails.

In a positive development, young artist Isabella Biondi has painted art work of butterflies on the bathroom wall at the Big Toy. Kids can pose in front of the mural and have their picture taken, which makes them look like they have wings.

The splash pad at City Hall is closed for the season.

Parks, Dennis Phipps – Palma Ciega has a picnic bench now. A crew of volunteers (Matt Lawyer and a McNary leadership group) also recently did a cleanup at the park, removing some of the brush and trash in the lower area.

The teeter-totter at Willamette Manor has been fixed.

The exercise station at Wallace House has been installed. There still are some piles of tree debris from the ice storm along the walking path in the upper area.

Food Donation barrels, Dennis – He said food donations are in an end-of-summer slump. The food bank's Judi Liechty said they served 57 families that day. She said numbers are starting to rise again. Dennis reported 188 pounds in June, 438 pounds and \$126 in July and 315 pounds and \$40 in August. The first year the barrels were out, over 2,000 pounds of food were donated.

WKNA Newsletter, Carolyn – The inaugural edition of WKNA Today newsletter was email in mid-August. Copies also were placed in various brochure boxes around the neighborhood. She said the goal is to publish quarterly and asked neighbors to send any suggestions for topics or other feedback to Carol D. or Carol Phipps. This edition was written by Carol P., Carolyn and Robb Witters and laid out by Robb.

Traffic, Carol D. – This is an ongoing issue and WKNA is continuing to pursue it at various committee and Council meetings. Traffic and speeding, as well as noise issues, are problems through many neighborhoods. She said WKNA will launch a campaign in January and keep at it until we get a reasonable response from the City. We will use the fall months to strategize. We're considering placing signs around the neighborhood to solicit those with concerns about traffic to come to WKNA meetings and urge more to attend Council meetings, as well. Council notices when people show up with concerns.

Carolyn noted signs she saw in a Portland neighborhood recently, put out by Portland Bureau of Transportation: "Portland – It's Time to Slow Down." It's possible the signs are tied to back-to-school, but there were many of them emphasizing the issue.

Round Table

In general comments, former West Keizer resident Darrel Richardson said the last concert of the season will be held Saturday at the KRP Amphitheater.

Patty Tischer noted the Keizer Fire Dept.'s annual 911 ceremony will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the attack at 7 a.m. Saturday. She also said the Gubser Neighborhood Association is now meeting on the second Tuesday at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Robb put in a plug for the October WKNA speaker, County Assessor Tom Rohlfing. Rhonda advised people to visit the city's website to the Keizer Community TV link where you can watch council and other committee meetings without having to go in person.

Michele Roland-Schwartz reported that the Keizer Arts Commission will hold a ceremony to dedicate the story poles in front of City Hall at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 18.

Carol said WKNA heard a presentation last week from Matt Lawyer, representing the Parks Board, and Marion Co. Commissioner Colm Willis regarding installing a soccer field at Keizer Rapids Park. The Board agreed to support the project, which would benefit a large group of kids who currently don't have a turf field that is required by the Oregon sports authority. The support is conditioned on several concerns that have to be addressed, including parking.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Next Meetings

City Council Parks Tour, Monday, Sept. 13. -- Starts at City Hall at 5:30 with visits to Claggett Creek, Bob Newton and Palma Ciega parks.

Traffic Safety, Bikeways Pedestrian Committee – 6 p.m. Sept. 16, City Hall

Next Board Meeting of WKNA: Thursday, Oct. 14 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall prior to the General Meeting

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