

West Keizer Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes

Feb. 9, 2017

Keizer Civic Center

Submitted by Carolyn Homan, WKNA secretary, as transcribed from tape recording of the meeting

Call to order – President Gary Blake called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and welcomed about 13 attendees, including guest speakers Matt Lawyer, Keizer Parks Advisory Board member, and Eric Bandonis, Marion County parole and probation officer. Gary encouraged everyone to sign in and introductions were made around the room. Rhonda Rich noted that the meeting was being tape recorded, in the absence of Secretary Carolyn Homan.

Approval of Minutes for Jan. 12, 2017 – Gary called for a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Colleen Busch moved to approve and Art Mauer seconded. Motion carried.

Board opening – Gary noted that there is an unfilled opening on the WKNA Board and asked for any nominations. None were received.

Budget for 2016-17 – Rhonda reported that there had been no new expenditures but that the website charge will be coming in from GoDaddy in the next month. That will be about \$100. The WKNA Board will soon be working on the budget for the coming year and also will be discussing how to use the rest of the \$500 budget for this year. She said we may be purchasing more brochures.

WKNA annual report for 2016 – Gary said the report was made at City Council Feb. 6 and the council has approved recognition for WKNA in order to receive funding for the coming year. Councilman Roland Herrera, attending the WKNA meeting as council liaison, commended Gary for doing a good, thorough job. Gary thanked Rhonda for preparing information for the presentation.

Guest speaker Eric Bandonis, Marion County parole and probation officer housed at Keizer Police Department – He explained that he deals with “general” clients, not sex offenders, mental health or domestic violence clients. He reports to WKNA quarterly with statistics on parole and probation and how their cognitive interventions influence recidivism.

He currently has 44 clients, which is below the average of 56/officer. The sex offender officers have 64 clients/officer but he said two new positions will be on board soon, lowering that case load. The domestic violence officers have 56 clients/officer, thanks to another new position, which allows more time to do interventions, improve client skills, etc.

Current statistics show 48 fewer cases or a 1.3% drop from January 2016 to January 2017. He said they focus on cognitive interventions and work on skills to give clients the resources to make positive changes in their lives.

He also shared a reminder from Keizer Police Department's Sgt. Trump, who could not attend, to lock your car doors. There has been a rash of stolen cars the past few weeks in Keizer and officers think it is organized. Don't leave valuables in your car or leave your car running. He said '90s-era Hondas are a particular target (easier to break into).

He said bike patrols will be starting up again in late spring, particularly targeting the city parks. KPD has focused on homeless in the parks and the belief is that the problems have been reduced. He said that the police encourage anyone with questions to call.

In answer to a questions, Eric said that Marion County has 40 parole officers at offices in Woodburn, the Santiam Canyon and in Salem offices on Lancaster Drive and by the jail. He is the only parole officer housed at KPD.

He was asked if homelessness is a factor for probationers but he said probation officers basically don't tolerate homelessness because they want their clients to be stable, employed, etc. He also was asked if the probation program has any interaction with the bicycle co-op in Salem (Northwest Hub on Broadway). He did say some clients don't have transportation and can work at the co-op and "earn" a bicycle. Another question involved length of parole or probation. He said it depends on the crime and sentence. He said the term "parole" is a holdover from sentencing guidelines from the 1980s. Only about 2% of clients are parolees and they can be sent back to prison for parole violations.

He introduced Kieran Colahan as an officer in training, who probably will be joining the sex offender unit. Eric said he will be back at WKNA in May. In the meantime, anyone with questions can contact him by email or phone: ebanonis@co.marion.us or 503-540-8010.

Matt Lawyer, Keizer Parks Advisory Board – Gary introduced Matt Lawyer to discuss the "Move Forward" survey and initiative under way to gauge public support for Keizer's parks. He gave some history of his involvement with the Parks Board and the genesis for the survey. Basically, at his first Board meeting, a presenter told them how deficient the city is when it comes to parks maintenance. The issue evolved into the survey to solicit input on what to do about limited parks funding.

He said the city is at a crossroads in terms of its parks because of a low tax rate and increasing costs. The current budget is about \$336,000, coming from the general fund, supporting two full-time park employees to care for 19 parks comprising 240 acres. Statewide tax Measures 47 and 50 have stopped any additional tax revenue. Without new funding, parks will continue to deteriorate and decline and some may have to be closed, he said.

Keizer puts 2.5% of its budget toward parks. By comparison, he said Salem devotes 7%, or about \$8 million. Woodburn is 2/3 the size of Keizer and puts \$435,000 toward recreation and \$535,000 toward aquatics, plus \$900,000 for maintenance and operations. Albany has 15,000 people and an \$8.3 million parks budget. West Linn collects \$13.01/month and Bend collects \$28/month for parks.

West Keizer is home to five parks: Keizer Rapids, Palma Ciega and Sunset (both "undeveloped" parks), Willamette Manor and Wallace House. The question is how to make these facilities functional, replace broken items, mow the grass, etc.

Deferred maintenance is a major issue. He cited needed repairs in the Claggett Creek parking lot noted in 2015. The repair estimate was \$8,000. Work didn't occur until the next year and the delay nearly doubled the cost to \$15,000. Other examples include a repair to the play structure at Wallace House costing \$3,600. It took two weeks to find that money in the budget, he said. Tennis courts at Willamette Manor were repaired last year at a cost of \$11,000 but it took five years to budget that.

The skate park near City Hall needs major repairs, or complete replacement at a cost of \$650,000. He noted major repairs or replacement items at nearly every park, not to mention the lack of Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations throughout, except for the Big Toy. The community has done a lot through volunteerism but as parks age, the need grows.

The city budgets 2.5% of its general fund for parks and the council has traditionally increased that to 3% to support staff, equipment and maintenance. Revenues gathered through Systems Development Charges can only be used for new activities or amenities and the monies have to be matched, which is impossible given the current budget, he said.

The Parks board has created a \$10,000 matching grant program, which has helped fund some recent projects. Fundraisers, donations and sponsors have helped with major projects like the Big Toy. Revenue from the hazelnut orchard, two rental homes at KRP and the cell phone tower add another \$40,000. The parks also receive donations from Keizer Parks Foundation.

But it's not enough to keep up with needed repairs or to contemplate any new facilities, he said. The parks master plan would allow soccer or softball facilities at Keizer Rapids, but the city has no way to maintain any such improvements.

So the question is, what do people want? Maintenance; new facilities; or both? The survey is meant to gauge people's level of support.

Matt laid out the various support levels choices listed on the survey. He said the funds could be used for staffing, but maintenance and operations come first and then improvements.

The first option is the status quo. Next is a \$2/month fee, which would net \$343,200 a year; \$4/month, netting \$686,400; \$6/month, netting \$1,002,600; and finally \$8/month, netting \$1,372,800. At \$6/month operations could really start moving forward, he said. The \$8/month level would be "kind of a home run," providing enough funds to accomplish all the things under the first 4 options and complete the parks master plan.

Parks affect businesses, the safety of the city, home values. With well-maintained parks, property values rise, he said. Healthy parks and places like the skate park give kids a place to go and keep them out of trouble.

He played an informational video done by a McNary student and reiterated that the goal of a fee is to increase maintenance and operations. The top funding level would unlock about \$1 million in Systems Development Charges and allow the city to move forward with the Keizer Parks Master Plan. The information and survey are on line and he encouraged everyone to participate.

In question and answer, Carol Doerfler said people have asked her what's happened to the tax dollars Keizer Station was to have generated and she said people don't understand the restrictions on income due to the city charter and the statewide tax Measure 50 passed several years ago. Matt agreed that this is an issue and said he would take the issue back to the Parks Board to see if they can craft some explanatory language.

He also said that creating a Parks District, which could collect its own taxes, is an option, but that it would be cost prohibitive.

Rhonda asked whether there was concern that if the public favors a major fee, would the city reduce the 3% contribution from the general fund. Matt said the city manager has specified that any new fee would be "over and above" the 3% contribution. The language of the survey, which was vetted with city council, says the fee will provide "additional" support.

He also clarified that the fee is per dwelling unit. An apartment complex with 10 units would pay 10 fees. The fee does not apply to businesses, which he said are needed as sources of sponsorships and already do a lot to support Keizer activities.

Rhonda also expressed concern that the survey was kind of "big picture" and that all the funds might go to Keizer Rapids. Matt said the number one use of funds would be maintenance and he said the best way to prioritize a neighborhood's parks is to get as many neighbors engaged as possible. He asked WKNA to share the survey on its Facebook page and with neighbors. "We want as many

responses as possible.”

Davis Dyer asked whether, at the \$2 level of \$343,200 annually, it would be fair to say that eventually all the work at all levels could be accomplished. Matt said the problem is, it would take 25 years and after 15 years, you'd have to start over again with maintenance. That's why Keizer's where it's at now, he said – years of deferred maintenance, projects done on a shoestring budget and with a lot of volunteers. The city has been able to maintain as much as it has because of donations and volunteers. And, he added, \$343,200 is a best-case scenario because the city knows there are many people on fixed incomes for whom even \$2/month is a stretch.

He said March 15 is the survey deadline and they are working to get the word out. A town hall with sports groups is scheduled for Feb. 27, but he said only the soccer group has responded so far. He asked people attending the WKNA meeting to take surveys and share them. And he said an outreach effort will be held this Saturday, starting at 10 a.m. at City Hall, and asked anyone interested in being a parks ambassador to join them.

Completed surveys can be dropped off at City Hall or in the utility drop box outside.

Other business:

Willamette Manor tennis courts – Carol said she had contacted Robert Johnson about cracks in the newly resurfaced tennis courts. He is aware of the problem (created by the harsh winter weather) and is in touch with the company that did the work to handle new repairs.

SMART at Cummings School – Carol said the new coordinator is Ann Brightwell, who said they have readers but always need more. Hours are 9:30 to 11:30 daily. To contact Ann, email her at cummingsgetsmartoregon.org

Upcoming meetings: The next WKNA general meeting is 7 p.m. Thursday, March 9. Chief Teague will be the speaker.

The next Adopt-A-Street scheduled for Feb. 11 has been canceled because inmate work crews have been working on Chemawa in recent weeks.

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.