

## **West Keizer Neighborhood Association General Meeting Minutes**

May 8, 2014, at Keizer Civic Center

Submitted by Carolyn Homan, secretary

**Introductions** -- President Rhonda Rich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed approximately 19 people to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room. Among those attending were guest speakers Tanya Hamilton from Keizer United; Mary Jo Emmett, of the Community Garden at John Knox Presbyterian Church; Nancy Morgan with Keizer Food Bank; and Ian Dixon-McDonald, Marion Polk Food Share Community Garden Program Director.

**Approval of minutes** -- Rhonda asked for approval of minutes from the April 10, 2014 WKNA General Meeting, which had been emailed to members and copies of which were also available at the door. Ron Freeman moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Clint Holland seconded. Motion carried.

**Budget report** -- Rhonda reported \$454.67 in expenditures from the 2013-14 budget. City budget hearings are under way, with meetings tonight, next Tuesday and possibly next Thursday. The first meeting was Tuesday, May 6th. The sessions will be televised but they are not up yet on K23.

WKNA initially requested \$500 but increased it to \$900 in be in line with Greater Gubser's request. The decision to increase the request was approved at the May 1st WKNA Board meeting. The increased request was justified in order to do a mailing, which will be helpful in light of hearings planned around Master Planning for Keizer Rapids Park and the Big Toy siting. Rhonda estimated expenditures of \$100 for the website, \$100 for copies and \$700 for a mailing.

The City Budget Committee will recommend to Council, which will take up the proposal June 2.

**Law Enforcement Report:** Eric Bandonis, deputy with Marion County Sheriff's Office stationed out of Keizer Police Dept., shared a reminder from KPD to drivers to slow down as they travel through neighborhoods where the speed limit is 25 mph. He said there's a link on the KPD website for reporting speeders.

Bandonis shared information on "protecting our kids" posted on the Sheriff's Office website at [co.marion.or.us/so/probation/protect](http://co.marion.or.us/so/probation/protect). He acknowledged that the topic of sex offenders is sensitive, but the information valuable in protecting the community. He cited an article posted on the website on sex offenders written by offenders themselves that includes information about what they look for in victims. Bandonis noted that abusers usually are not strangers to their victims but rather are family members or friends.

In an update on Parole and Probation, he said the case load increased by 7 more clients from April to April. The past three years case loads had been falling. The county's 40 parole officer carry a load of 53.2 clients each. He urged anyone who knows someone on parole and thinks there is a violation issue to email him at [ebandonis@co.marion.or.us](mailto:ebandonis@co.marion.or.us) or at 503-540-8022.

Rhonda directed people's attention to copies of an article from the Statesman Journal, "Keizer Police Use Bikes to Connect with Community, May 2, 2014, regarding Keizer's new bike patrol. Sgt. Bob Trump, Keizer's Community Response Unit/Training Coordinator had emailed Rhonda that the Keizer Police Dept. has implemented regular bike patrols at Keizer Rapids Park. Sgt. Trump also encouraged the WKNA to bring any other CRU issues to his attention.

### **Guest speakers:**

Keizer United – Tanya Hamilton invited people to attend a fundraising event Monday, May 12, in support of Keizer United, a community support group formed in 1996 that once received city funds but now relies on its own fundraising. KU supports Youth Peer Court, Mid Valley Literacy Center, SE Keizer Community Center and community gardens. The Peer Court is a "great program," where youth evaluate the misdemeanor cases of fellow teens. The program is losing \$5,000 in county funding, she said.

Mid Valley Literacy is located in Keizer. The SE Keizer Community Center is at the Mennonite Church. Volunteers serve a hot meal weekly and have activities for the kids. Keizer United provided money for

tools for Rickman Community Garden, an activity that connects community with healthy outcomes, she said.

The May 12 fundraiser features Capitol City Theater, a family friendly entertainment group, a live auction and more. Tickets are \$20 a person.

Food insecurity panel -- WKNA Vice President Carol Doerfler introduced three speakers: Nancy Morgan, Keizer Food Bank; Ian Dixon McDonald, Marion-Polk Food Share (MPFS); and Mary Jo Emmett, Keizer Community Garden at John Knox Presbyterian.

**Keizer Food Bank:** Nancy Morgan said the food bank started in the 1980s at John Knox Presbyterian Church when the pastor had no resources to help people who were coming to him for food. She started volunteering when she retired and at the time, "if we had 10 families, we thought we were busy." Service then was limited to Monday evenings and eventually they added service on Thursday mornings.

Several years ago, the food bank outgrew its space at John Knox and moved to roomier accommodations at Faith Lutheran church, nearby on River Road. Service is offered from 6-7:30 p.m. Mondays and 9:30-11 a.m. Thursdays. The operation is serving 281 families a month this year, down a bit from 323/month last year, which is encouraging. Nancy said their "goal" is to go out of business.

They try to serve families with as adequate a box as possible with food to last three to five days. Fresh produce is often available, as is frozen product. One Thursday a month they deliver to shut-ins. Currently 14 families are on the delivery list. "It's as much a social service as it is for the food because these people are alone," she said.

The food bank has a "wonderful" connection with the garden she said. "It's wonderful to see a representative come in with produce picked that same morning." The Keizer Food Bank is part of the local network supported by Marion Polk Food Share and while produce from MPFS is "appreciated, it's not as fresh" as that from the community garden.

Donations from home gardeners are welcome. Nancy said volunteers generally open at 8 a.m. on Thursdays and 5 or 5:30 on Mondays and will gladly accept donations. She said there's a pretty consistent staff of 25 to 30 volunteers for each shift. As in many volunteer efforts, she said that "when you do this, you take away more than you give."

Mary Jo Emmett, who helps organize the Community Garden at John Knox, said that when the food pantry started, it was an internal effort. Then it became the church's main mission. Eventually a lot of community members volunteered who were not members of John Knox. She said that Nancy's husband, the late Paul Morgan, was instrumental in reaching out to other churches to support the effort and 8 years ago, it became the Keizer Community Food Bank. St. Edward's Catholic Church, **Clear Lake (??)** United Methodist, Calvary Baptist downtown and Faith Lutheran all help out.

Community food drives, such as the events sponsored by Curves, Tony's Comics, Uptown Music, Keizer Elks and others, all help support the food bank. Mary Jo said it's been a wonderful focus for the community.

**Marion Polk Food Share Community Garden Program:** Program Coordinator Ian Dixon-McDonald first gave an overview of what Marion Polk Food Share is and does. It is a Regional Food Bank affiliated with Oregon Food Bank that works through a network of local food pantries, such as the one at Faith Lutheran. MPFS is a hub and a large warehouse where USDA foods and other large donations from processors, grocers, farms and a food rescue program called Fresh Alliance are collected and distributed.

The MPFS network has 99 partner agencies and moved 9 million pounds through its warehouse last year to serve 40,000 individuals a month. Those individual service numbers include duplicates, he said. MPFS also provides food to community meal sites such as Union Gospel Mission, Salvation Army, etc.

Food Share is not a government agency, Dixon-McDonald said. The food it provides is supplemental to federal programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Food boxes provide a 3- to 5-day emergency supply. Some families don't qualify for federal assistance but may find themselves in need of an emergency supply at some point. Statistics show that one in five families at some point during the year needs to access emergency food.

To help encourage self-sufficiency and healthy lifestyles, MPFS has through various partnerships started to look at other ways to assist families. These programs include community gardens, nutrition education with Head Start and others, cooking classes so families getting assistance know what to do with the food they receive.

Farming projects have been started to get more healthy food into the system, he said. This is being done both by growing on farms MPFS manages or on land farmed by others. One project involves 200 acres adjacent to Mill Creek Correctional facility. The land produces crops such as sweet corn, squash and broccoli through contract with a farmer, who sells some of it to make the operation pay. The program brought in 300,000 pounds of produce last year. MPFS shares outside the local area, through the statewide Oregon Food Bank network, if there is excess.

Another program aimed at self-sufficiency is job training, Dixon-McDonald said. "The key to long-term lessening of emergency food needs is employment." So MPFS turned parts of its operation into training programs – secretarial, warehouse and kitchen jobs, fork lift certification, etc. People are being successfully prepared and have gotten jobs, he said.

The Community Gardens program has been under way since 2006. The program aims to improve self-sufficiency, connect kids with their food supply and provide education around nutrition, healthy eating and food preservation. Plus, the gardens produce fresh fruits and vegetables for the food bank. There are 53 gardens throughout the two counties, 27 in Salem-Keizer, with 900 families participating. Many of the gardens only serve low-income households, Dixon-McDonald said. Some gardens are at schools. The gardens produced about 20,000 pounds last year in the two counties. MPFS supports the network with supplies but there are only two staff so tending the gardens is about partnerships and volunteers, he said.

MPFS has a Youth Farm at Oregon School for the Deaf. A plant sale will be held this Saturday from noon to 4 p.m., 999 Locust Ave. This teen program offers a small stipend to work at the farm but it's also another job training program. The youth learn agriculture skills and also business skills because they run a booth at Saturday Market and organize a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program, which costs \$175 for the season. Clients receive a box of assorted fresh produce weekly for the seasonal fee.

Community Garden at John Knox: Mary Jo Emmett explained that the garden started about the same time the food bank moved to Faith Lutheran. A large field at the church was no longer being used for sports so a member suggested a garden. Keizer United and Marion Polk Food Share provided grants to get it started, build a tool shed, etc. They also got a grant from Sunrise Rotary toward a fence to help prevent "unauthorized" harvest by passersby. The sod field was cut into 12 plots, which required a lot of soil amending for successful production. She and her husband took over garden coordination in 2011.

Volunteers from MPFS, Willamette and Corban universities have all helped at some point. Gardeners are asked to donate to help pay the church's water bill. Of the 12 gardeners 9 are Keizer residents and 6 are within WKNA. They are up to 18 plots, with two grown exclusively for the food bank. There's also a blueberry planting area.

They encourage gardeners to be better stewards. "It's all an outreach ministry of the church," she said, emphasizing that it's "great to see things grow." She encouraged people to stop by.

In answer to a question about gleaning, Dixon-McDonald said that Salem Harvest, formerly known as the Gleaners, is a partner of MPFS. Participants keep half of what they pick and donate the other half to MPFS to share with others.

Members thanked the speakers for their good work for the community and attending the meeting. Approximately three bags of groceries were donated by the WKNA members present and were given to Nancy Morgan for the food bank!

#### **West Keizer parks reports –**

Update on KRP Community Build playstructure: Ron Freeman reported that at last night's Community Build Task Force meeting, the group voted to recommend to the Parks Advisory Board that the project be delayed until June 2015. If the parks board agrees, the recommendation would then go to City Council. The reason: The group won't know until July whether some grants are successful, putting a September 2014 build in jeopardy. The delay allows extra time to pull together the Master Plan for the newly extended Urban Growth Boundary areas of the park and more time to raise funds. Ron said task force

members also felt June is a better time of the year to build the structure because kids will be out of school and will be able to use it all summer long. The parks board will meet next Tuesday to discuss the recommendation.

In answer to a question about the timing, Ron said the process of Master Planning the entire park, as recommended by the Planning Commission, will allow more communication and input on siting of the Big Toy and other issues. The whole process will be less rushed, he said.

Rhonda noted that WKNA doesn't usually have Board or general meetings during the summer. This year, however, she will schedule Board meetings in June and July during the Master Planning process and will invite the general membership to participate in order to stay informed on the park planning process and decisions on the Big Toy siting.

Improvements at Sunset Park: Irrigation is to be installed in this park and Clint Holland reported that Robert Johnson, with the city's parks staff, has the piping grid laid out. Clint said volunteers are planning to start installation next Monday or Tuesday and that more help would be welcome. They'll be working in the afternoon to early evening. Rhonda asked him to let her know specific times and she would email the WKNA membership about it.

**Medical Marijuana Facilities Regulation Task Force** – Art Mauer said the group had recommended to City Council that the distance from a facility to schools be increased to 1,500 feet because of McNary's proximity to strip malls where students often hang out. The task force also recommended background checks on all employees, not just owners. The law required commercial zoning, so facilities most likely would be sited along River Road because that's where business is concentrated. A moratorium's in place until May 2015 to give the city time to develop policies but that could be lifted at any point.

**Tow Truck Parking in the City of Keizer** – The issue has come to Council and Rhonda said a public forum will be held Monday, June 2, to see if some regulations can be worked out to allow this. The WKNA Board discussed it at its May meeting and the five members present voted to oppose allowing the trucks to park on city streets.

West Keizer neighbor Jeff Kelder reported on his experience with a neighbor who was a tow truck driver working the night shift. He described the disruptions it caused (noisy CB radios, back-up signal beeping, truck size limiting driving sight views, etc.), including the man parking the tow truck in front of Jeff's house. Keizer reviewed parking ordinances to limit overweight vehicles in 2005 and that took care of it. But a new proposal came to council in April, which Jeff said amounts to City Council allowing truck dispatch centers in residential areas. He believes enforcement is the issue because the trucks are in clear violation of an existing ordinance. In answer to a question about how trucks parking on the streets came to be OK, he said he thought the city put a public notice in the Keizertimes but few saw it.

Rhonda said the June 2 forum will not be a public hearing, but "will be an opportunity for give and take" on the issue. She will get more information and get it out to WKNA members. The general consensus on the matter from those attending the WKNA meeting was to oppose allowing tow truck parking in residential areas. Rhonda urged Jeff and any others interested to "mark your calendars" and attend the June 2 meeting. "The more people who come to share their opinions, the better."

**New business** – Rhonda noted that WKNA member Kathy Lincoln is new to the Traffic Safety/Bikeways/Pedestrian Committee. Rhonda said one important issue is getting sidewalks along Delight Street, at least from Dearborn down to Cummings Elementary.

Another traffic issue coming up is the Keizer Iris Fest Run and a bike ride, both on Sunday, May 18, which will proceed from River Road along Manbrin to Shoreline and on out Windsor Island. Rhonda said WKNA will be distributing information to residents along Manbrin and Shoreline about the events. Residents are being asked to park off street that morning, if possible.

**Next meetings:** The next WKNA general meeting is 7 p.m. Sept. 8 at the Civic Center. Rhonda will send out information about the park Master Planning meetings and special summer WKNA Board meetings, to which all WKNA members are welcome.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.