

WKNA General Meeting

April 8, 2021

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

Submitted by Carolyn Homan, WKNA Secretary

Call to Order: Carol Doerfler called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and welcomed about 18 attendees, adding that it was great to see everyone again in person. Introductions were made around the room. Guests included Jesse Lippold Peone, a candidate for Salem-Keizer School Board who has been visiting neighborhood associations to get a feel for constituent issues.

2020-21 Budget, Rhonda – Expenditures include \$82 for sign holders, \$55 for the food donation barrel “wrap” and \$143.88 for the Go Daddy website fee leaving \$270 to spend by June 1 from the annual budget. The association may need to print more WKNA brochures with the remaining funds.

Approval of minutes – Kathy Lincoln moved to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2020, meeting, the last one held due to Covid restrictions. Art Mauer seconded. Motion carried.

Guest speaker: Carol D. introduced the guest speaker, Mayor Cathy Clark, who reprised her State of the City address that followed the theme that “Keizer Shows Up.” Through a difficult year in 2020 and the beginning of 2021, Covid, the ice storm and other challenges have been a lesson in neighbors taking care of each other. The City adapted quickly last March when the Covid lockdown happened and worked to get credible information on the city website about the pandemic and how people could know how they could make a difference. There were collaborations throughout the area throughout the pandemic and then the devastating fires late summer and fall. The City continued to direct people’s energies into positive action.

The City also had to figure out how to keep its own operations going while keeping staff safe and the public well served. She praised the management team for working together, communicating and pivoting as necessary, The pandemic has resulted in physical changes to the office layout that have made the environment safer. Online service additions have been made and after a computer hack, computer system upgrades have improved services to folks like contractors who can get information and service without losing job-site time.

In response to the wildfires, Volcanoes Stadium was opened to receive people forced out of their homes. The Chamber became a hub for volunteers and resources for those displaced. Then in November, voters approved a new Home Rule charter developed by a volunteer committee that had continued to work throughout the pandemic. The fall election also included three contested races for Council seat, drawing six amazing candidates who ran outstanding campaigns despite the restrictions imposed by the ongoing pandemic. The races brought out a lot of good ideas and all six candidates are valuable volunteers for the city. Council also has passed a values statement endorsing justice, equity, diversity and inclusion for all.

2021 brought the devastating ice storm. There’s still work to be done, she said, but city staff were at work the very next morning and Keizer had one of the first debris drop-off sites set up within hours. Then in early March came the incident involving former City Manager Eppley accidentally discharging a firearm in his office. Council approved an outside investigator and Eppley was ultimately fired after a full review. She said he has signed a settlement agreement. On Monday, City Finance Manager Tim Wood was named City Manager pro tem to serve until an interim, and eventually permanent, manager can be hired.

Keizer has an amazing management team and the city deserves quality leaders to take it into the future. The bottom line, she said, is that Keizer is strong, resilient and its people show up.

In Q&A, Rhonda Rich asked the mayor about the homeless situation and she updated the group on developments with the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance. She said it has a \$5.5 million award for a turn-key project and with agencies cooperating to share data, a lot more is known about the homeless population in the area. She said Redwood Crossing, a trauma-informed care facility for the chronically homeless, is full. The Union Gospel Mission’s new facility is to open in June. Simonka Place is doing some

remodeling in order to accept more people and the former Hillcrest facility has just sold and the buyers plan a residential facility.

ELECTION OF WKNA BOARD

Carol D. announced that Gary Blake would run the election, assisted by Rhonda Rich. Nominations were accepted for three officers: President, Vice President and Secretary; and four Board members. Kathy Lincoln announced she was not seeking re-election.

President: Kathy Lincoln nominated Carol Doerfler. By show of hands, Carol D. was elected
Vice President: Cathy Clark nominated Carol Phipps. By show of hands, Carol P. was elected.
Secretary: Carol D. nominated Carolyn Homan. By show of hands, she was elected.

Board nominations: Five people were nominated for the four positions, resulting in a runoff: Robb Witters, Gary Blake, Kris Adams, Art Mauer and Rhonda Rich.

Ballots were handed out and the meeting proceeded while votes were counted. Results were: Robb Witters, Gary Blake, Rhonda Rich and Art Mauer elected to serve on the Board.

REPORTS

Council Liaison – Councilor Ross Day had nothing to report.

Parks, Carol Doerfler, Carol Phipps – Carol P. reported on the city's work to update the Parks Master Plan. Consultants met with neighborhood association Boards to get feedback on priorities, WKNA's Board presented information about Willamette Manor, Wallace House, Palma Ciega, Sunset and Keizer Rapids. The consultants then presented highlights to City Council. The final report has not yet been presented to Council. Carol P. said she appreciated that the consultants really listened to what Board members had to say and reflected that back to Council. Carol D. said she would keep everyone updated on progress via the WKNA Facebook page.

Cummings School Clean-up – Carol D. said WKNA has "adopted Cummings School as a project, annually planting the reader board and other planters at the school and cleaning up the grounds by weeding, refreshing bark dust, etc. The annual grounds cleanup was canceled in 2020 due to Covid. Carol P. has replanted the reader board and planter pots this spring and a fall cleanup will be planned if Covid restrictions allow. Volunteers are welcome.

WKNA's Annual Report to Council – Carol D. will present this recap of WKNA activities at the April 19 Council meeting.

Roundtable comments

Carol D. noted the Volunteer of the Quarter award presented to Keizer Community Food Bank and Dennis Phipps, WKNA volunteer who picks up donations from the WKNA-sponsored food barrels at Copper Creek and Bi Mart. Also noted was Keizer First Citizen Award presented by the Chamber of Commerce to former City Councilor Kim Freeman and West Keizer resident Kim Freeman.

Jesse Lippold Peone, Salem-Keizer School Board member, encouraged everyone to vote in the May 18 school board election. There are 11 candidates for the four zones that have open seats. All residents vote for all the seats, no matter what zone they live in.

Upcoming meetings

April 12, 6 p.m. – Joint Council/Parks Advisory Board parks tour, leaving from Chalmers Jones Park at City Hall at 6 p.m. First stop Willamette Manor on 5th St., then on to Wallace House at Rivercrest and Jack street.

April 15, 6 p.m. – Traffic Safety Bike/Pedestrian Committee at City Hall

April 19, 7 p.m. – City Council meeting at City Hall; WKNA Annual Report presentation

May 4 and 6 – City budget hearings (virtual). Contact Tracy Davis for Zoom link.

May 13 – Next WKNA Board and General meetings, held at 5:30 and 7 p.m. at City Hall lobby Covid permitting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.