

WKNA General Meeting

Jan. 11, 2024 7 p.m.

At Keizer Civic Center

Submitted by Carolyn Homan, WKNA Secretary

About 16 people in attendance, including speaker Jenny Ammon, Keizer Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator

Call to Order: Carolyn called the meeting order at 7:05 p.m. (Rhonda and Carol D. both absent)

Minutes from Nov.9, 2023 – Robb Witters moved approval; Art Mauer seconded. Motion carried.

Budget Report, Carolyn– She shared Rhonda’s report of a total of \$804.84 in expenditures (\$124.50 for 250 copies of newsletter; \$61.99 for printer ink; \$29.56 for lanyards; \$19.48 for brochure box for city lobby and paper; \$37.83 for NTMP copies; \$324.49 for brochures; \$26.99 for brochure boxes; \$180 for 5 yard signs), leaving a balance of \$395.16 from the city-approved budget. From that WKNA will need to pay about \$250 for the website fee, leaving about \$100 left to spend.

Election of Officers -- Carol Phipps conducted the annual Board elections, noting that if none of the 7 Board positions was contested, the slate could be approved in one vote. Carolyn nominated Rhonda as President and Robb as Vice President. Carol nominated Carolyn as Secretary. As Board members, Carolyn nominated Carol Doerfler and Art Mauer. Carol P. nominated Gary Blake. Robb nominated Carol P. The slate was then elected unanimously. Carolyn then turned the meeting over to Robb as newly elected vice president

Guest speaker – Robb introduced Jenny Ammon, Keizer’s Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator, to talk about Environmental Technical team programs for 2024. She began with a discussion of stormwater, what it is (water that runs off roofs, roads, etc., and into storm drains and then into area creeks and rivers, as opposed to sewer system water that flows into the treatment plants). Keeping stormwater as pollutant free as possible is the goal and the City works on public involvement toward that goal through education and compliance. Haley Seth is Keizer’s Environmental Compliance Coordinator.

One program under way since May is the Vegetated Stormwater Facility effort. These basically are planting strips that feature native plants to help filter stormwater before it hits the storm drains. The city has four sites – Willow Lake, Lacey Street, Seburg and Appleblossom – which were chosen after citizens brought issues to Environmental Tech’s attention.

In 2023, a streamside plant program was begun to work with streamside landowners in Keizer to plant native trees and shrubs to help slow down pollutants such as oil and soil. Plantings also help recharge groundwater by slowing water and allowing it to seep in rather than run off. The program began, as most all do, with data collection. The department needed to know how much shade there was over Claggett Creek and Labish Ditch. Shade cools the water and improves the environment for fish and other water creatures. They found that a lot of the unshaded areas are on private property, so letters were sent to landowners inviting them to participate in planting natives along their sections of the streams. Four people volunteered the first year and one last year. She is hoping to enlist 5 more this year.

A Lunch and Learn program (conducted via Zoom on third Wednesdays) has helped educate the public on various related topics. Programs have included Raingardens at Home; Native Plantings (in cooperation with Marion Soil and Water Conservation District); Urban Beavers and Water Quality (in cooperation with City of Gresham) and on Jan. 17 it will be about Urban Conservation Programs and Involvement Opportunities.

Our River Campaign is a program helping connect Keizer residents with the Willamette River. Ammon grew up near the Mississippi River and people there were always on or in the river to fish, boat, swim, etc. She didn’t find that connection here and wanted to do something to reduce the barriers. The department has worked with the City of Salem and Marion SWCD to actively connect residents through skill building like learning to kayak, a fishing program and tree planting efforts.

Another new effort is conducting a tree inventory. The department conducted a pilot last year and hopes to expand this year by recruiting volunteers to help. The ice storm of a few years ago did a lot of damage and the city had no inventory of tree numbers and species. The need to know what trees do well in various settings (like hot parking lots, streamsides, street scapes, etc.) And they need to know what trees are growing in case of disease outbreaks (the Emerald ash borer is an approaching threat, for instance.) The top 5 trees in Keizer are maple, pear, oak, birch and ash.

The final piece in the department's education and outreach efforts is stewardship. Their Trashy Tuesday events are a centerpiece. Trash is a major pollutant, in waterways, she said, and this is an area where public involvement can make a difference. Trashy Tuesday involves trash collection work parties organized the 4th Tuesday of the month from June through September, each at a different Keizer park. Another trash collection opportunity is the Adopt A Street program. Both efforts are valuable outreach efforts in the cause to keep Keizer's stormwaters clean.

In her Call to Action, Ammon asked for volunteers to help plant streamsides, encouraged anyone who knows a Claggett Creek streamside landowner to encourage them to contact ammonj@keizer.org to get involved in that planting effort, if folks are interested in assisting in VSF plantings to reach out to sethh@keizer.org, join the Our River events and campaign [@OurRiverWillamette](https://www.facebook.com/OurRiverWillamette) on Facebook, sign up for the volunteer training this spring to prepare to help with Keizer's tree inventory, plan to take part in a Trashy Tuesday or sign up for Adopt A Street.

REPORTS

City Council Liaison -- Both Laura Reid and Kyle Juran attended the meeting. Councilor Reid urged everyone to go to Keizer's website and provide feedback on the Strategic Plan draft. Comments will be accepted at least through Jan. 26. Councilor Juran noted Council's discussions about adopting a franchise agreement and Right of Way ordinance that could change fees paid by various utilities. They are addressing utilities such as telecommunication businesses that don't pay fees currently.

Food barrels, Dennis Phipps – The 2023 totals collected via the WKNA-sponsored barrels at Bi Mart, Copper Creek and Keizer Fire District were down from 2022 but were steady throughout the year: Bi Mart 1,408 pounds; Copper Creek 1,582 pounds and \$580 cash and Keizer Fire 260 pounds. Meanwhile, he said Keizer Community Food Bank served a record 177 families at its most recent distribution. Councilor Reid suggested the possibility of adding a QR code to the side of collection barrels to facilitate cash donations.

Cummings PTA, Amber Zimelman, parent liaison – At the Jan. 9 meeting, guest speaker was from Safe Routes to School. On Feb. 7, Cummings will participate in a Winter Walk+Roll to School event, similar to last fall's Ruby Bridges Walk to School. Parents, other family members and neighbors are invited to take part. The walk will leave at 9 a.m. from the Delight Street entrance and follow the same route as Ruby Bridges, south to Cummings, west to Rivercrest, north to Dearborn and back down Delight to school. In conjunction with the walk, the PE teacher is doing lessons on pedestrian safety and Cherrriots also is providing instruction on how to ride the bus. Also at the meeting, a representative from Salem-Keizer School Fund provided information on this organization that collects donations and uses its funds to offer grants for district staff or programs. Donations can be directed to a specific school and will stay with that school. Cummings School's pie sale fundraiser is coming up and they also are considering a Chuck-E-Cheese fundraiser

Keizer United, Carolyn -- The Jan. 8 meeting was a newsy one. When one attendee shared her recent experience with a scammer, others shared similar experiences and several organizations offered resources to help. As a result. Keizer United plans to focus on scam protection at its April meeting. The guest speaker this month was from Mid Valley Garbage and Recycling Association. She said changes are coming to local recycling in July.

Parks – Palma Ciea: In Gary Blake's absence, Robb said he knows Gary continues to help keep the park looking tidy by raking leaves and removing trash.

Willamette Manor: Carol P reported that the hillside planting WKNA did last fall is looking good. Tagging continues to be an issue in this park, but the City was out within a couple of days to clean up the most recent bout.

Wallace House and Sunset: Dennis reported that the water is high at both parks but they are in good shape.

KRP soccer fields – Carolyn said Adam Brown reports that construction will begin in March and that fundraising for a paved parking lot and the equipment building are under way. The city will be reaching out to state and federal government sources. Rep. Kevin Mannix's outreach coordinator, Kimberly Castro Monroy, said Rep. Mannix would ask again for funding during the upcoming short legislative session. A request made last year was turned down.

Traffic Safety Bikeways Pedestrian Committee -- WKNA Board members will be at the committee's joint session with City Council at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 18 where the redraft of the Neighborhood Traffic Management plan will be discussed.

In answer to a question, Councilor Reid said the city probably would not take on lowering speed limits within the city. ODOT still controls limits on arterials and most of the rest of Keizer's streets are already at 25 mph. Another question addressed the number of dump trucks on the streets, Robb suggested taking that issue to the Traffic Safety committee to have them pursue it.

Planning Commission, Robb – He is now a member of the commission. At the Jan. 10 meeting, Shane Witham, Planning Director, shared his work plan for the year, including the changes to code that may come up.

Little Library – No report but Carolyn said children's books are always in demand.

St. Edward's Community Dinner – Robb and his family, Carolyn, Dennis and his sister all attended the Thanksgiving dinner to help seat guests and clear trays. It was a rewarding experience and the Board may pursue another opportunity to help with this monthly dinner event.

City Committee Meetings

Jan. 18, 6 p.m., TSBP meeting, City Hall

Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m., joint TSBP/City Council meeting

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West Keizer Neighborhood Meetings

Thursday, Feb. 1, 7 p.m. WKNA Board Meeting

Thursday, Feb. 8, 7 p.m. WKNA General Meeting, City Hall – Speakers from Liberty House and Simonka House; Eric Bandonis, Marion Co. Parole/Probation Deputy

March 14 – Shane Witham, Community Development Director

March 20 – State of the City address – Joint NA meeting hosted by Northwest Keizer NA

April 11 – Joint NA Candidate Forum hosted by WKNA

May 9 – Neighborhood Watch Program/Police Chief Copeland

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.