

Litke, Sam

From: desertlotus@bardenterprises.com
Sent: Friday, June 17, 2016 2:02 AM
To: Litke, Sam
Subject: COMMENTS FOR MONDAY JUNE 20, 2016 COW PASTURE HEARING

TO:
Sam Litke
Senior Planner
Keizer City Hall
930 Chemawa Road NE
Keizer, OR 97303

SUBMITTING: Comments re: Keizer hearing, Monday, June 20, 2016 regarding property use at Chemawa, Verda & Dearborn -- pasture land right next to Claggett Park, Keizer. Specifically, to reconsider an application for a Comprehensive Plan map change

Permission to build 3-story [3 level high] apartment complex [revised plan includes a reduction in the number of dwelling units from 120 to 112} where the cow pasture now is.

Following the hearing, the Keizer City Council will approve, approve with modified conditions, deny, or remand [send] back to the Hearings Officer for further review.

MY CITIZEN POSITION:
That the Keizer City Council:

1. DENY map change, and, subsequently, DENY revised building plan for the (now) 112-unit, 3 story apartment complex.
2. That any future use of this property be according to zoning for this space that does not permit buildings of this type and size.
3. That there ought to be no changing of zoning for said "cow pasture" space without absolutely clear-cut evidence of benefit, not solely to sellers but to the COMMUNITY.
4. With understanding of the rights of individuals to dispose of private property, but also singling out the responsibility of the officers of the city to its inhabitants, not just to render no harm by their actions -- in this case a zoning change and resultant permission to build a structure not shown to be suitable to the proposed area -- but also, to protect their happiness, safety, and general welfare and by doing so now, that of future residents as well. For, once something of this magnitude has been approved and set into motion, it can never be undone. As Les Zaitz (brother of Lyndon Zaitz, publisher of the Keizer Times) wrote: "As society gets more hemmed in, such open space will become increasingly precious. Once it's gone, there is no getting it back." [Keizer Times, "PRESERVE INSTEAD OF DEVELOP?" Opinions Jun 20, 2014]

FINAL COMMENTS:

Following citizen input where the overwhelming majority of hearing attendees spoke AGAINST this proposal (at one meeting NO ONE spoke in favor), the proposal was soundly **REJECTED** two years ago by the Keizer City Council -- unanimously, in a 7-0 vote -- and is now being resubmitted with mere minor changes.

This appears to be an attempt to make come true the saying, if at first -- or second or third -- you don't succeed, try and try again. That commercial projects will eventually be carried out with enough persistence, in complete disregard of the wishes of the citizenry if need be, and that to "grow" the cityspace at any and ALL costs, it is the job of officials, as practical purveyors of progress and business-minded visionaries, to hold to the doctrine of development first, last, and always... even at the dear cost of the people coming last.

There are many issues of interest and concern regarding re-zoning for sale of this property, issues that have not been sufficiently addressed (if at all) including such things as air quality, noise, space intrusion, aesthetics, historical significance, alternate use possibilities, natural preservation, park enhancement, etc.

Yet, I conclude with these words of the previous long-time mayor of Keizer, which sum up just a single but MAJOR **irreconcilable** issue (caps, underline, and bold for emphases). Contained within the statement (in paragraph three) is a possibility ripe for unwrapping and serious consideration:

“MAYOR LORE CHRISTOPHER was among those believing [developer Mark] Grenz greatly downplayed the potential impact the proposed apartments would have on traffic. A roundabout is **already** planned at the current four-way stop at Verda and Chemawa **due to high traffic volume.**”

“The reason why we’re doing the roundabout is it’s a major thoroughfare,” Christopher said. ‘The impact will be significant. **Any three-level building is significant.** They (Herber family members) are entitled to their inheritance. But the decision is my fiduciary responsibility. **I knew Rosalie Herber well. This would not be what Rosalie wants. I think **those impacts aren’t minor.**** You can’t mitigate 120 apartments, you can’t mitigate 240 cars.

“I would wish you well,” the mayor added. ‘If you want to divest yourself of that land, that is something Keizer could look at. **We have never paid millions for park land, but it certainly is an option.** They have 14 lots they can develop. **What you’re proposing is too significant. It’s **too much impact on those neighborhoods.**** Would I want to live by three-level apartments? Not on your life. And neither would you, Mark.”

[Source: Keizer Times article, "APARTMENT PLAN GETS NIXED," by Craig Murphy, Sep 5, **2014**]

Respectfully submitted,
Ardith Oakes,
Keizer resident

(Additional reading, "Cow pasture editorial," in e-mail to follow...)

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From: desertlotus@bardenterprises.com
Sent: Friday, June 17, 2016 2:02 AM
To: Litke, Sam
Subject: Additional reading, "Cow pasture editorial"

Submitted by: Ardith Oakes
Please read with comment letter e-mailed 6.17.16

Editorial: "THINK TWICE ON COW PASTURE"
Written by Lyndon Zaitz, July 11, 2014

People are passionate about green, open spaces, especially in an urban setting. That passion was on display at a hearing in June about zoning and other changes at private property many affectionately call 'the cow pasture.'

The property sits on the west side of Verda Lane between Chemawa Road and Dearborn Avenue. It has been a family farm for decades and the heirs don't want to continue the operation; they are seeking the zone changes to prepare a sale of the property.

More than 100 people packed the city council chambers on June 12, a majority of those who testified before Hearings Officer Cynthia Domas were against development of the property. A proposal calls for more than 100 apartments in several three-story buildings. An argument made against a development that size was the increased traffic in a corridor that is already failing according to traffic studies. A roundabout at Verda and Chemawa is to address that issue.

The city should listen to the people, take a step back and consider what could be lost forever if that property is developed into a large residential complex. The property's owners desire to sell is a rare opportunity for the city to reshape the core of Keizer and preserve a large greenspace that can be enjoyed by thousands of households for years to come.

San Diego has Balboa Park, Chicago has Grant Park, New York has Central Park—all exist because civic leaders had a vision and created oases in the middle of an urban setting. Keizer can join other cities by buying that property and making it part of Claggett Creek Park which sits just to the west.

Some may say that Keizer already has a large park—Keizer Rapids—which many want to develop into a destination place. Keizer Rapids Park has its role to play, it will eventually have many amenities that will draw people from the region. Yet, Keizer Rapids Park's location is still a mystery to a sizable number of Keizer residents—many who never visited or even know where it is. With the boat ramp, the amphitheatre, the disc golf course, the dog park and eventually sports fields and the big playground, Keizer Rapids Park will be an amusement park for a myriad of interests. But, it is off the beaten path.

An expanded Claggett Creek Park would be hard to miss. The existing farmhouse is not up to code for public uses and would have to be razed; the farm buildings would be torn down, too. That would leave a large greenspace beside one of Keizer's high traffic routes.

After the city purchased the land and added it to Claggett Creek Park, improvements would not have to be grandiose. A parking lot would be needed, pathways from the bluff to the creek could be constructed and would be a good project for an Eagle Scout or a community group.

If the property is sold and developed, it is lost forever. This is a chance for the people and leadership of Keizer to contemplate the benefits of a large park in the center of Keizer, what it can mean for the neighborhoods around it and what it can mean for the value of those neighboring households.

City bodies such as the Planning Commission and the city council cannot dismiss the desires and concerns of the people. Development is the be all and end all; there will be many opportunities for development after the Urban Growth Boundary is expanded.

Does the city council have the vision and the political will akin to the developers of Central, Balboa, and Grant Parks? Let's hope so.

—LAZ *

*Lyndon Zaitz, Keizer Times publisher