



MINUTES
KEIZER CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION
Monday, May 8, 2017
Keizer Civic Center, Council Chambers
Keizer, Oregon

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Clark called the Special Session to order at 6:00 pm. Roll Call was taken as follows:

Present:

Cathy Clark, Mayor
Roland Herrera, Councilor
Bruce Anderson, Councilor
Laura Reid, Councilor
Amy Ryan, Councilor
Kim Freeman, Councilor

Staff:

Chris Eppley, City Manager
Shannon Johnson, City Attorney
Bill Lawyer, Public Works Director
Robert Johnson, Public Works Division
Manager
Tim Wood, Finance Director
Tracy Davis, City Recorder

Absent:

Marlene Parsons, Councilor

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Clark led the pledge of allegiance.

DISCUSSION

**a. Proposed City
of Keizer Parks
Fee**

Public Works Director Bill Lawyer explained that the Parks Advisory Board has recommended the implementation of a dedicated fee to provide sustainable funding for park operations and improvements. He reviewed topics that should be considered by Council and provided a staff recommendation. City Manager Chris Eppley added that staff wishes to keep the general fund Parks budget intact using a percentage rate and this fee would be a dedicated fund for parks in addition to that amount.

Mayor Clark explained that the outreach was done and input received so that an informed decision could be made and this meeting tonight was a continuation of the outreach and input.

Matt Lawyer, Keizer, speaking on behalf of the Parks Advisory Board, provided a history of the process and outreach which took place regarding the decision to pursue sustainable funding for the parks and the efforts made to determine if the citizens would support a parks fee.

Bill Quinn, Keizer, voiced objection to the fee, suggested that if the fee be implemented, the money in the Parks budget be moved to police. He urged that this be put to a vote for the citizens to decide.

Bill Criteser, Keizer, suggested that Palma Ciega Park be sold to reduce Parks maintenance costs. Mr. Lawyer responded that staff investigated this possibility and determined that there were one or two saleable lots but

they would be difficult to develop. Council made the decision that there was not enough potential revenue so chose not to sell it.

Jerry McGee, Keizer, explained that he had talked with a number of people about the parks and they are aware that good parks mean good property values and good parks reduce occurrences of petty crime. He noted that he thought there would be wide support for this fee but suggested that the fee: (1) not be part of the water bill, (2) be reasonable, and (3) be put it to a vote at a general election.

Eric Howald, Keizer, noted that when his daughter was younger he spent a lot of time in parks but not in Keizer because there was not a lot of variety and there are people in this same situation right now. He urged Council to consider them when they make their decision.

Hans Schneider, Keizer, urged citizens to look at the fee as an investment in the youth of Keizer and voiced support for implementation of it.

Garry Whalen, Keizer, explained that subject of better funding has been a frequent topic and currently Keizer parks are "on life support". He questioned how those living in multi-family units would qualify for lower fee levels, and urged that the ordinance guarantee that funding currently in place remain in place. He added that because of statewide measures, increasing property tax is prohibited so fees are the new way local governments are increasing revenues and voiced support for the fee noting that, properly structured, it will benefit the entire community.

Jesse Borghesi, Salem, representing the non-profit Salem Rugby Club, explained that the club typically plays their games at Claggett Creek Park and voiced support for anything that assists staff in providing adequate park facilities to the community. He noted that his organization is interested in working with the Parks Department to make improvements to Claggett and making the park the Club's 'Home Pitch'.

Rhonda Rich, Keizer, reminded Council that when Keizer Rapids Park was initiated she was told that maintenance would not be an issue because funds from Keizer Station would help maintain it. She voiced support for parks and noted the following points: She is (1) opposed to a parks fee but is willing to pay \$2 per month as long as it is revisited after one year, (2) opposed to incremental increases up to \$8, (3) opposed to collection via the water bill but would support a fee paid annually by property owners, and (4) supported the fee as long as it is used solely for maintenance, repairs, safety or replacement.

Allen Barker, Keizer, explained that the current Keizer Budget does not support parks at the level required. He voiced support for the annual fee, noted that expenses outside the control of the City outpace any increases received from higher property values, and that \$2 a month will not provide the needed funds.

Daniel Miedema, Keizer, spoke in favor of city parks and the fee to keep

them maintained and safe.

Darrell Richardson, Keizer, stated that he was not opposed to the fee but expressed concern that it would not stop at \$8. He voiced support for the annual payment plan, urged enforcement of the no smoking in parks rule and suggested that an adopt-a-park program be implemented.

Jim Taylor, Keizer, noted that parks are a reflection of a healthy community and right now they are suffering due to lack of funding and that is why the Parks Board explored a sustainable funding mechanism and developed the proposed fee. He voiced appreciation for the Council's responsible spending habits and urged them to adopt the parks fee.

Davis Dyer, Keizer, pointed out that it is the responsibility of everyone in the city to maintain their parks and therefore the \$2 fee is basic maintenance and should be implemented. He urged that the \$2 fee be adopted and that citizens be urged to donate more as they are able.

David Loudon, Keizer, Chair of the Parks Board, noted that the parks are getting to the point that the sprinklers will be shut off, lawn mowing curtailed and damaged play structures will not be repaired. He reviewed various improvements that have been done or that are pending and noted that \$2 will not maintain the parks; \$4 would allow parks to be maintained and improvements made. He voiced support of the parks fee.

Mayor Clark read the City of Keizer Mission Statement and noted that 'least cost' is not necessarily the cheapest option. Following discussion regarding a popular vote vs. council implementation of a parks fee. Councilors agreed by consensus to consider implementation of a parks fee.

Discussion followed regarding the cost of a special election, the delay involved if the matter was put off until the next general election, annual fee vs monthly, method of billing, public safety needs, combining the parks fee with a public safety fee, whether or not the fee should be through ordinance or election and postponing the decision on the parks fee until the public safety fee has been addressed.

Mayor Clark moved that the Keizer City Council direct staff to come back with a fee mechanism for \$4 per month per household that would be structured so that the prioritization would not cause a person to have their water turned off for failure to pay the fee, that those funds would not supplant in any way the general fund allocation according to budget policy, and the fee would be attached to the Keizer billing structure in place to incur no additional cost to residents. Councilor Herrera seconded.

Councilor Ryan offered a friendly amendment to collect the fee from the commercial utility accounts as well as households. Mayor Clark and Councilor Herrera accepted the amendment.

Discussion then took place regarding the option of having the fee increase

incrementally; setting it up at the beginning or revisiting the ordinance in the future, placing a cap on the escalation, and how increases in the fee would be addressed. Mr. Lawyer added that with any fee there is a time lag in getting the program up and running and one year is not long enough to show much action or accomplishment. Mr. Eppley urged everyone to understand that the first year will be spent in getting the program established and the following years will have improvements.

Mayor Clark offered a friendly amendment that there be: no increase for a minimum of one year, an \$8 cap, and a reporting requirement from the Parks Board and Parks Department on what was done with the funds. Councilor Herrera accepted the amendment.

Discussion followed regarding an option in electronic bill pay of donating to the parks fund, consideration of discounts for seniors and low income families, implementing the fee at \$8 to cover the cost of a separate billing, developing a mechanism for determining eligibility for potential discounts and postponing this decision until public safety has the same public forum and Council discussion.

Mayor Clark offered a friendly amendment to include in the ordinance language that says that the Finance Department will use the programs and policies currently in place for senior and low income clients. Councilor Herrera accepted the friendly amendment.

Further dialog took place regarding how the fee would be calculated for multi-family units and whether or not senior living apartments would be exempt.

Councilor Ryan offered a friendly amendment to require senior living apartments to pay the fee. Mayor Clark did not accept the amendment.

Mr. Lawyer clarified that in his staff report the term senior living referenced independent senior living apartments like Emerald Point, not assisted care.

Councilor Ryan moved for an amendment to include the senior living apartments (not assisted living) in the fee. Councilor Herrera seconded. Motion failed as follows:

AYES: Ryan (1)

NAYS: Clark, Reid, Freeman, Herrera and Anderson (5)

ABSTENTIONS: None (0)

ABSENT: Parsons (1)

Discussion followed regarding how to determine discounts in apartments. Mayor Clark suggested staff explore how other cities have addressed this and perhaps Council can readdress the issue after the research has been done. Councilors Anderson and Freeman noted that they were in favor of directing staff to come back with an ordinance but they were both opposed to the incremental increase.

The following motion including friendly amendments was voted upon:

The Keizer City Council direct staff to come back with a fee mechanism for \$4 per month per household that would be structured so that the prioritization would not cause a person to have their water turned off for failure to pay the fee; that those funds would not supplant in any way the general fund allocation according to budget policy; and the fee would be attached to the Keizer billing structure currently in place to incur no additional cost to residents. The fee would be collected from the commercial utility accounts as well as households. There would be: no increase for a minimum of one year, an \$8 cap, and a reporting requirement from the Parks Board and Parks Department on what was done with the funds and the ordinance would include language indicating that the Finance Department will use the programs and policies currently in place for senior and low income clients.

Motion passed as follows:

AYES: Clark, Reid, Ryan, Freeman, Herrera and Anderson (6)

NAYS: None (0)

ABSTENTIONS: None (0)

ABSENT: Parsons (1)

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Clark adjourned the meeting at 9:06 p.m.

MAYOR:

APPROVED:

Cathy Clark

Debbie Lockhart, Deputy City Recorder

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor #1 – Laura Reid

Councilor #4 – Roland Herrera

Councilor #2 – Kim Freeman

Councilor #5 – Amy Ryan

~ Absent ~

Councilor #3 – Marlene Parsons

Councilor #6 – Bruce Anderson

Minutes approved: 06-05-17