

HOW ACCESSIBLE IS KESEY SQUARE?

The fate of Kesey Square still hangs in the balance. Will Eugene City Council members vote to develop it or won't they? Will they improve it for the public to use or leave it without management? Meanwhile, community members have expressed interest in hosting events at the city square also known as Broadway Plaza, which was deeded to the public "forever" by the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency in 1971.

Many in the community — such as Save Kesey Square activist Gwendolyn Iris, local author and grant writer Jeff Geiger and civil rights activist David Oaks — have planned successful impromptu events in the past few months.

"Right now, if someone wants to volunteer to help Kesey Square, wants to make a genuine effort to help that space, who do they talk to?" Geiger asks. "Where do they go? [The city of Eugene] doesn't have a person or office to go to."

Currently, the only city web page for Kesey Square includes a map and the following one-line description: "Beautiful brick plaza in the center or [sic] downtown Eugene where the Ken Kesey statue is located." The site has no public calendar, phone number or contact person directing community members who want to host an event there. This might be because, as several city staff have told *EW*: There is no one on city staff tasked with managing the space.

"Saturday Market still handles the scheduling for Broadway Plaza," writes Colette Ramirez, the community event manager for the city's Cultural Services division. The public "can contact the Saturday Market to get an activity permit for the area."

Ramirez also listed fees for using the space — anywhere from \$10 for a "Non-Commercial Downtown Activity Permit Reservation Fee" to \$250 for a commercial event that charges admission. There is also a returnable cleaning deposit of \$100 for events expecting more than 100 people and a \$5 fee if you need amplified sound.

Kimberly Cullen, general manager for the Saturday Market, says interested parties should call 686-8885 to reserve the space. "We do manage an events calendar and anyone is welcomed to call our office and inquire about a date," she adds. "The calendar is currently not made public, but I will explore that idea!"

Cullen also notes that, depending on the nature of an event, people should look to reserve the square anywhere from two weeks to three months in advance.

The City Council will continue to discuss Kesey Square and "downtown improvements" at the council work session from 5:30 to 7 pm Monday, March 14, at Harris Hall, 125 E. 8th Ave. A public forum follows the work session at 7:30 pm.

— Alex V. Cipolle



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