

## BOWDEN, continued from Page A1

“Staff believe this revised alternative addresses the concerns of both the hearings officer and the city engineer and staff supports this alternative,” a memo in Monday’s council packet read.

City staff recommended the hearings officer decision be overturned.

That’s just what happened Monday, with a 6-0 vote.

Farrow said afterwards he was surprised the project was denied initially.

“We thought previously we had everything taken care of,” said Farrow, who was not part of the effort in 2008 to change the zoning for the property. “We wished it had been accepted (last month), but we met with city staff to make it beneficial for everyone.”

With the approval Farrow, who also recently did the Aldine Meadows subdivision on McLeod Lane, hopes to move forward quickly.

“We hope to start breaking ground in the winter, with buildable lots in the spring,” he said. “We’re hoping to have the first homes ready by the end of next summer or early fall.

We’re very excited. Keizer is a great place to be, with good accessibility to the north. Keizer needed good lots to build on.”

According to plans, the lots in Bowden Meadows will range in size from 5,000 to 10,856 square feet.

Councilor Brandon Smith noted a response from the Salem-Keizer School District talked about overcapacity issues at McNary High School getting worse with the subdivision.

“The staff report says the capacity is now at 105 percent and will rise to 107 percent of capacity,” Smith said. “Where do we draw the line? If there are a few more subdivisions, will we be up to 130 percent?”

Nate Brown, director of Community Development for Keizer, noted that was the school district’s criteria. He also noted SKSD can move boundaries to move students from one school to another, regardless of city limits.

“That is not a criteria for the subdivision approval since we have no way to correct the issue,” Brown said.

After similar questions from councilor Dennis Koho, city attorney Shannon Johnson reiterated what Brown stated.

“You can’t deny solely based on schools,” Johnson said.

There were several questions asked about stop signs to be put up in the area.

“The recommendation is to stop northbound traffic on Burbank,” Brown said. “Through traffic (on Trent) would continue.”

Smith was wary of the intersections not lining up.

“To not have stop signs seems like an accident waiting to happen,” Smith said.

Brown noted councilors had the option of adding more stop signs.

“If you’re convinced the additional requirements are good, you’re well within your ability to require as such,” he said.

Koho asked Farrow about adding stop signs.

“Would it cause heartburn if we had three stop signs?” Koho asked.

Farrow said he’d have to get back on that one.

“I’m not an engineer,” he said. “That’s why I pay one and you pay yours.”

Smith then asked the same question to Grenz, who said adding stops shouldn’t be a problem.

“That was our original proposal, so no, not a problem,” Grenz said. “Our client does not object. Your options are one, two or three. We wouldn’t have a problem with that.”

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“This never should have happened,” Murphy said. “It’s so senseless. This act deserves the extra 10 years because of its senselessness.”

Family members showed more compassion while also stressing the pain.

“Only evil can explain what you have done,” Brett’s grand-

ma Shelia Wahl told him. “I understand you have made peace with God. Jesus can forgive. If He can forgive, how can I not? But I will never forget the pain you brought to the family.”

Kim Wahl noted she was best friends with her sister Michelle, who came into the family as a foster child at age 11.

“This has left a big hole in my heart that such a special person is gone,” Kim said. “The domino effect of this single action is overwhelming, the impact it’s had on all of our lives.”

Sally Prinz, Michelle’s biological sister, also spoke.

“(Michelle) was always so kind and forgiving,” Prinz said. “I want to be angry, but I want to do right by her. I want to forgive and I do. But I don’t forget what they did. It has almost destroyed us emotionally...They were young and are forgiven by me. I hope they can be helped so by the time they have served their sentence, they can be something Michelle would be proud of at the end.”

Brett’s sister Dana called her little brother compassionate and empathetic.

“Brett was good at seeing people who needed stuff,” Dana said. “That led him to a group of people that maybe weren’t the best choice. He saw their hurting and was loyal to them. I don’t think you can judge a life by a month’s span.”

John Storkel, Brett’s attorney, said his client was on methamphetamine, robbing him of the ability to be compassionate.

“It’s not a justification or a defense,” Storkel said. “He wants to take responsibility for what he’s done.”

That was indeed the case as Brett spoke.

“I am sorry for everything that happened, the pain I caused, what I put people through,” he said. “My family has to live with something they shouldn’t have to. I was intoxicated, yes, but that’s no excuse at all. I take responsibility for what I’ve done. I’m not the person this crime makes me seem to be. I love my mom and miss her very much.”

Penn recommended Brett Pearson be sent to Oregon Youth Authority for the initial part of his sentence.

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## ADOPT, continued from Page A1

The family had a garage sale this summer with another coming up next month. They are also selling t-shirts.

“When you look at the numbers, this is a huge step of faith,” Matt said. “But it didn’t cross my mind that God wouldn’t come through. We know He can provide. There have been challenges, but it hasn’t changed our trust and faith in Him. He’s working out the details. When He’s ready, He will allow it to be.”

The Drahn’s have already seen some miracles. As part of the application process, they had to be honest about issues such as marital problems and Matt’s struggles with alcohol.

“He’s gotten the victory in that,” Matt said of God. “August 28 (2014) was the last sip of alcohol I had and will ever had. God has completely changed my desire and my heart in such a mighty way. I’ve never been more on fire for God than I have right now.”

## TAX, continued from Page A1

“We’re asking Keizer employers and employees to help stop an unfair proposed tax,” Keizer Chamber executive director Christine Dieker wrote in an e-mail promoting next week’s forum. “Businesses are being targeted for an employee payroll tax levied by the Salem-Keizer Transit District. Please take a moment to understand the impact this measure will have on local small business in Keizer, if passed. We want to support our transit district, but we believe that there are better and fairer solutions.”

Cherriots officials announced the proposed tax in late June, after transit directors approved the ballot measure at their May 28 meeting. In the spring, transit directors surveyed members of the public to gauge support for either a payroll or property tax to help pay for transit.

Brea acknowledges the road is tough.

“Adoption is not for the faint of heart,” she said. “You really have to be called. There are the unknowns, the wait, the cost, all the paperwork. That is why we sought God so much in the beginning. We didn’t want to commit to something so big without knowing for sure. We know God is able. In the right time we’ll get the money. But it is overwhelming. It is scary.”

The Drahn’s got an anonymous \$3,500 donation, plus there was a cool call from Matt’s cousin in Minnesota.

“He called us and said they felt being called to give us their Honda CR-V,” Brea said, noting she and Matt sold a vehicle they could no longer afford. “They paid for our trip there to pick it up. The car is in great condition. It’s amazing to see God work.”

Just to submit a dossier, the Drahn’s have to raise \$6,000 more.

“That money is needed really soon,” Brea said. “The longer we wait to submit, it extends the wait time. If you look up families that have

gotten children from Ethiopia, the average time I’ve seen is two-and-a-half years.”

Matt noted there was an unexpected issue: some resistance from family members.

“That was an obstacle we didn’t expect,” he said. “We thought it would be well received. That was a challenge. But it came back to remembering why we are here and why He laid it on our hearts. He’s going to get the glory through it all. Our families have started to come around to us more. We have seen some breakthroughs.”

Within their own walls, family has been on board from the start. Avery and Paisley light up when asked about their upcoming brother.

“We’re very transparent with our girls,” Matt said. “We love God and talk about God all the time. We had some cool first conversations about what God was stirring in our hearts. They were both very excited. They can’t stop talking about bringing their brother home and about bunk beds. Their hearts were ready, too. It’s been so cool for them to be part of the process.”

The expanded service would be phase two of the transit district’s Moving Forward plan. Phase one started earlier this month with more frequency on busy routes, buses running on a consistent schedule and more cross-town routes with fewer transfers.

“We asked the community what kind of service they wanted to see. The Moving Forward system improvement plan reflects that feedback,” Cherriots general manager Allan Pollock said at the time. “But, in order to implement phase two, additional revenue is required.”

For a business with a payroll of \$500,000, the annual tax would be \$1,050. Adding back Saturday service would be the first improvement funded.

The Keizer Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee recently voted unanimously to campaign against the employer payroll tax and wrote an argument against the tax for the voter’s pamphlet.

The argument points out the tax will only be on small businesses, meaning governmental bodies will be exempt, even with state government being the area’s largest employer. The argument further notes the tax is double what is collected from ticket fares, may double in 10 years without a public vote, could deter job creation since less money would be available to create jobs and could increase costs for hospitals and medical clinics.

“Our community does not need another tax on small businesses during an economic recovery already scarce of jobs,” the argument reads in part. “This expansion of services is desired, but should be accomplished through a mechanism that is fair to all, not one that targets a small segment of our community. Please stand with the Keizer Chamber against this unprecedented and unfair funding mechanism that is decidedly not good for keeping jobs in the area.”

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