

Parks Board talks of size

By CRAIG MURPHY
Of the Keizertimes

The Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is in an unusual situation.

Usually the Parks Board is the most popular committee in Keizer and thus vacant seats don't stay empty for long.

Until now, that is. As currently set up, the Parks Board has nine seats. Eight of them are currently filled, with Clint Holland indicating he wouldn't mind leaving the board. That would leave seven seats.

Simple solution, right? Chair David Loudon noted at a recent meeting the Parks Board went up from seven to nine members a few years ago because of the growth at Keizer Rapids Park. Jim Taylor, who just joined the Parks Board, noted the situation could be remedied as terms expire. Richard Walsh suggested the city not advertise the opening if the idea of cutting a seat is

on the table. Debbie Lockhart, the deputy city recorder, said the opening has been advertised for three months with no applicants.

"All but one committee in the city is seven seats," council liaison Brandon Smith said. "There was a special reason for the nine for Parks Board. There used to be waiting lists to be on committees, but that doesn't happen these days."

J.T. Hager wasn't quite seeing the need to drop from nine to seven.

"I haven't heard anything to say there's a problem with nine seats," Hager said. "There hasn't been a problem with having enough for a quorum. We have enough to do in the parks, more minds are often better. Clint, you still being on, we benefit greatly from your past experience. I can appreciate that other boards are at seven members, but whatever someone else does is not particularly relevant to me. I don't think now is the time for it."

Scott Klug agreed with Hager.

"I'm in the same boat, I'm not sure there's a problem," Klug said. "How hard will it be to get those two people back

later? If Keizer became that great parks destination, how do we get those two seats back?"

Taylor, a former city councilor, sided with Klug and Hager.

"I agree, if it ain't broke, don't fix it," Taylor said. "Parks Board for years has been the poster child for successful boards in Keizer. It's a very active board. Those two extra people are needed, in my opinion. I don't see the problem with having them."

Smith noted the issue was more general for Keizer.

"There are fewer volunteers in general," Smith said. "Times are different now than five or 10 years ago. There's just not as much interest right now."

Hager urged the recruitment for another board member to continue.

"The question to us should be what can we do to promote and fill the vacancy," he said. "Let's go out and recruit some talent."

Klug said the season may be contributing to lower interest in the vacancy.

"Parks are not a priority right now," Klug said. "It doesn't surprise me there's a lack of interest. When the weather is good, people come back in the parks."

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Christopher, last year's First Citizen recipient. Continuing a trend started last year, Christopher had all former First Citizens in attendance come to the front of the room as this year's winner was introduced. They continued to stand as Caillier spoke.

"At least 15 of these previous winners worked on the Big Toy," Caillier said. "When you volunteer, it's nice to get a thank you once in a while. This is quite the thank you."

According to Caillier, Keizer easily lives up to its "Pride, Spirit and Volunteerism" motto.

"This whole community just gets you involved," Caillier said.

In introducing Caillier, Christopher rattled off a long list of activities he has been a part of over the years.

"The recipient of this 2015 First Citizen Award has been a longtime volunteer and overachiever," Christopher said. "Lucky for us, this individual can't learn to say no. This recognition has been a long time coming and I am thrilled that I get to be the one to present the award."

In introducing Bethell,

Zielinski noted some people motivate others to get things done, while others show up and enjoy being the worker bees.

"My choice of the person to receive the President's Award has both of these characteristics, plus this person has an amazing talent to be able to create a project by envisioning the good things that can happen in the community," Zielinski said.

Bethell, president of the McNary Athletic Boosters Club, was bolstered by the project and is now helping to lead a similar project for McKay High School in Salem.

"I get excited about challenges now," she said. "I am working with McKay to do a timeline for their turf field. I see opportunities in those struggles. I can't wait to see it done. We already have a design in mind."

The Lees noted Honey has changed over the years, thanks in particular to the four years he spent as principal at MHS.

"John Honey didn't grow up a Keizer kid, but he now claims himself to be a Keizer guy," Krina Lee said. "Working in Keizer with different groups has helped him come to value how closely connected the Keizer community is and how very easy it is to be engaged in the family atmosphere of the city of Keizer."

Honey said that is indeed the case.

"I really do consider myself a Keizer guy now," Honey said. "There is a strong sense of unity and purpose in Keizer."

The longest introduction speech was from Joe Egli, last year's Merchant of the Year, about White.

"Everybody knows this person," Egli said. "This person always says yes. Actually, you don't say yes or no, you say sure or absolutely. They make it happen."

White had earlier recognized his father, Glenn, as one of the Pairings of Excellence recipients. There were a total of 12 such winners.

When on stage to accept the Merchant of the Year award, Scott White individually recognized every member of his family sitting at his table.

"It's been a lot of work and a little bit of fun," he said with a big grin.

Nathan Bauer served as emcee again this year and encouraged everyone to stop by Big Town Hero.

"Hey everyone, free sandwiches on Monday!" Bauer exclaimed with a laugh.

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WKNA,

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We talk with the city councilors. There are so many speakers we've had over the 10 years."

To get ready for the meeting, Rich noted she went through minutes from the past 10 years.

"We've done a lot as far as many topics and speakers, from government, transportation, groups, representatives of committees and activities. I listed all of the people who've been on the board the last 10 years. We have 70 years of total service to our neighborhood if you tally up all the years everyone has been on. We have a good thing going and I hope it continues."

Blake tipped his cap to Rich. "WKNA and Rhonda Rich are almost synonymous," Blake said. "I want to really thank Rhonda for her time and effort

the last 10 years keeping this organization alive and viable. I appreciate what you've been able to do."

Rich got a standing ovation from the 20 or so people in attendance.

Following the elections, Blake pledged to keep going with what Rich started.

"This association needs to continue to be closely associated with the neighborhood," Blake said. "I know there are many other people who would love to come to the meetings. We want to get more and more support as time goes by."

Blake also led a discussion about options for what to do at Palma Ciega Park, following up on a talk during the Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting a couple of nights earlier. He referred to

the master plan for the park and asked WKNA members to prioritize the amenities they would want to see in the park.

"They need to know a direction," Blake said of Parks Board members. "We've done a poll and came up with a number of items. As we're all aware, if the park doesn't get used, we may lose the property to something else. We want to make it a more attractive place to go."

Martin Doerfler repeated his request for a couple of benches, while Holland pointed to an ongoing problem with the park.

"We're killing lot of trees with a lot of ivy down there," Holland said. "It's so cheap to kill ivy. I hope we can kill all the ivy. We need to get the stuff cleaned up. That needs to be a

top priority in the parks."

Sarah Head agreed with the reference to the amount of ivy.

"At first I didn't understand why we call it a park," Head said. "It felt like I was in someone's backyard and took a wrong turn."

Holland said previous work didn't do the job completely.

"We cleaned the park one time, but we didn't kill the stuff," he said. "It grew right back the next year. We need to get that ivy taken care of before it kills all the trees."

Mayor Cathy Clark suggested youth could help with the project.

"I've been contacted by local youth groups looking for good community projects," Clark said. "I know we can get some youth and scout groups down there."

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