

FIELD,

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to stay in front of the ball," Cuff said. "The ball is jumping 18 inches to the side. That's how bad this current sod is. I believe it's been there since the late 1980s or early 1990s. It's a dangerous situation. That's why I'm coming to you for help at least with the playing surface."

According to Cuff's application, the total project cost would be \$99,234. That includes \$32,100 for a complete sod infield, \$36,000 for fencing and \$23,729 for three new cement dugouts. Cuff said after the meeting volunteers started laying down sod last weekend, with parishioners at the Keizer

Church of Christ next door pitching in to help as well. The rest of the sod is expected to be laid down this Friday and Saturday.

Once the sod is down, the field couldn't be used for four weeks, which means no games on the field until April 9. More of the work would be done once the little league season is over in mid-June.

Argue noted more than 40 volunteers were on hand last week after seeing the recent *Keizertimes* article.

"How many other parks can generate that interest around town?" Argue said. "That's the level of what that park is."

Parks Board member Dylan Juran started off the money questions.

"The number you have

written adds up to almost \$100,000," Juran said. "You're asking for \$10,000. You're expecting every year to spend approximately \$100,000?"

Argue noted some fields are better off than others, while Cuff believes initial success will lead to more.

"It will be a wave effect," Cuff said. "Once we start going, we will get more volunteers. There's plenty of support here in Keizer. There's a lot of support out there we haven't reached yet. Our goal is to bring the fields up so we can bring in tournaments."

J.T. Hager liked the plan, but had some questions.

"When you put this money into this field, when does this field need help again?" Hager asked.

Cuff feels the field will last a long time as long as proper maintenance is done. On paper, Argue said the field should last 40 years.

"We want to be the shining star" for little league baseball in the area, Argue said.

Richard Walsh was the first of several to ask if the full \$10,000 matching grant funding was needed.

"If you got less, would this still go forward?" Walsh asked.

Cuff said the answer was yes. "If we got less, we would have to scale back," Cuff said.

Clint Holland, a Parks Board member who has also been key in getting the project going, noted Cuff and Argue are bartering with people and recruiting as much volunteer help as they can.

"We're trying to use what we can," Cuff said. "We don't want to just patch it up. We want to make this able to attract tournaments again."

Walsh emphasized how much he liked the plans.

"Thank you for all the work you're doing," he said. "I appreciate that. But we have others wanting (matching grant) money."

City councilor Roland Herrera, the new Parks Board liaison, worked on the fields for many years.

"I'm excited you're moving forward on this," Herrera said. "It's long overdue."

Hager echoed Walsh's

concern.

"We've worked hard to get some grant money available for a number of parks," he said. "There are a lot of parks with a lot of needs. We've gotten success in getting a lot of matches. You're asking for all the money going to you and no one else. That makes it difficult for me. If we do \$7,000 or \$8,000, can you still move forward? We want to see you move forward, but we want to see if you have some wiggle room."

Robert Johnson, the parks supervisor for Keizer, noted that "not a lot" of requests have come in this fiscal year for the matching grants.

Jim Taylor, the former councilor who now sits on the Parks Board, emphasized the return on investment.

"On the council, we used to look at any project with a matching fund and look at the bang for the buck. Same with the Big Toy, it was the bang for the buck. Very little city money was used. I think that's what this is. There's a small amount of public money, with a huge amount of benefit."

Holland, like Cuff and Argue, feels more people will come on board.

"Once we get this field done and others see it, we will get more volunteers to work on the next field," Holland said.

Juran gave his support.

"I look and I see, what, a 1,000 percent value on our

investment?" he said. "That's a really big number compared to what we're putting out. It's \$1 million in 10 years for a \$100,000 investment. We spend \$1,000 for \$2,000 in value. This is \$10,000 for \$100,000 in value."

Walsh noted his internal struggle.

"I'm aware of three or four projects that are possible (for the matching grant) but haven't come here yet," he said. "I'm going both ways in my head. It's a fantastic project. I love the way you're doing it and the multiplication factor. What's killing me is we don't want to tell people they have to come back in July for some projects."

Hager noted that's why he asked if \$8,000 would work.

"That would make it a slam dunk for me," Walsh said.

Scott Klug expressed dismay about the thoughts of putting less in.

"I'm appalled we're even having this discussion," Klug said. "I've never been so disappointed in a conversation. The return on this money is so impressive. We're talking about (possible projects) that haven't come forward for the matching grant money. I'm so frustrated. I cannot believe it is happening."

When the vote was taken, Walsh, Hager and Donna Bradley voted against it but the motion passed 6-3.

"Despite my vote, I am thrilled," Walsh said.

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LEADER,

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By comparison, the pay range last time was \$45,000 to \$50,000.

When the news was originally announced in early December, the plan was for an offer to be made to a new director on Feb. 3. Dieker hoped to help with the transition through the end of

that month and show the ropes, but that hasn't happened yet.

According to Dieker, the revised deadline calls for interviews to start in early April and for the new person to be on board by mid-May.

"It would be ideal to have them on board by the Keizer Iris Festival," she said. "I've been looking forward to changes, but this job has always been a blessing. My family has been

supportive of me staying on board."

Dieker would like to focus on building up the various runs put on by the chamber.

"The potential of the runs is amazing," she said. "I really feel I can grow those if I can focus on them. But by still doing this, I can't stir the run pot as much as I'd like."

Dieker took over the position in March 1998.

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