

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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'Historic' snag in cow pasture redux



By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Public hearings on a proposed rezoning of the area commonly known as "cow pasture" hit a wall in Keizer City Council chambers Monday, June 20.

Between the release of the council's agenda last week and the start of the meeting, city staff discovered that the home and associated buildings on the site are listed in a state database of potential historic sites.

Heirs to the Herber family, the current owners, are seeking to rezone the land for apartments.

"The city has the obligation

to examine the issue and go through the process to determine its historic value," said Nate Brown, Keizer community development director.

The home on the property, located between Chemawa Road Northeast and Dearborn Avenue Northeast along Verda Lane Northeast, is the oldest structure in the city and suspected to have been built around 1890. It is designated as the Pugh-Hall-Savage Farmhouse in state registry documents.

While the site has not officially been deemed to have historic value, the documents suggest it merits "elevated

significance" given that there are no other sites of national historic significance in Keizer and it meets at least two of the criteria for inclusion on the national registry.

Wallace Lien, attorney for the property owners, asked the city council to continue the public hearing on the matter to give his clients time to investigate the historic significance and possibly work with staff to come up with more specific guidelines as to what would be built on the property.

The council was required to grant the request and, as a result, the applicants will have

File After learning that the home and associated buildings on the Herber property - known as the cow pasture - have potential historical value, a decision on rezoning has been delayed until September.

Rezone opposition had many voices
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Parks fund can unlock SDCs

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Imagine having a \$793,000 pot of money to spend on improving parks in the city of Keizer, but the only way to use it was to come up with another \$6.1 million from other sources.

In the simplest terms, that's the dilemma the city is facing when it comes to using existing system development charges (SDCs) to improve Keizer parks. The topic was the center of discussions at the Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting Tuesday, June 14, as board members wrestled with the possibility of creating a dedicated parks fund by establishing a parks district within the city.

If the idea gains traction, Keizer residents would likely see the additional cost in the form of a surcharge added to utility bills.

Bill Lawyer, Keizer Public Works director, was on hand to answer questions about budgeting for parks as members of the board prepare to survey residents regarding needs and wants when it comes to recreation in the city.

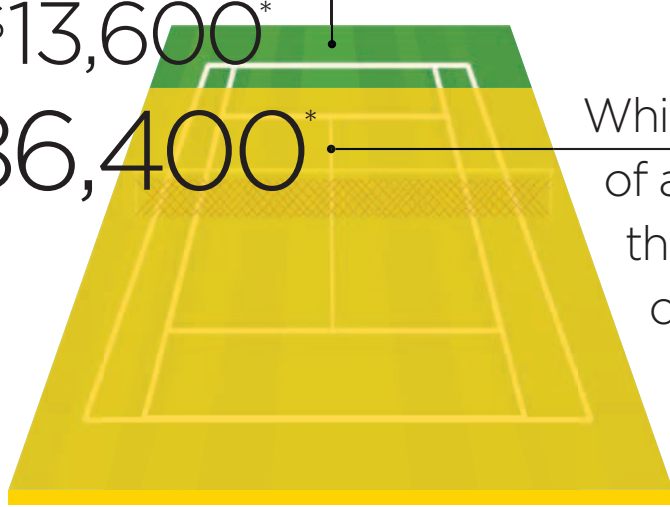
Here is the lowdown on the parks budget as it currently exists:

• Parks comprise a minimum of 2.5 percent of the city's total general fund. That money, which comes from the same fund that pays for police officers, is primarily used for maintenance of existing facilities and amenities.

CASE STUDY: \$100,000 Parks Project*

A maximum of **13.6%** of any new parks project can be funded using new SDC money.

\$13,600*
\$86,400*



Which leaves **86.4%** of any new parks project that must be funded from other sources (donation, grants, sponsorship, or dedicated parks fund).

*Dollar figures are based on hypothetical project.

KEIZERTIMES/Andrew Jackson

• Parks also benefit from rental fees paid for the orchard and residence at Keizer Rapids Park and for a cell tower at Bair Park. It amounts to about \$50,000 per annum, but only \$10,000 per year is earmarked for improvements.

• The lion's share of money available to improve parks comes from system

development charges paid to the city when new homes and apartments are built. The city has two different SDCs accounts, one for fees collected before April 2009 and one of charges collected since that time. In both cases, the SDCs come with strings attached regarding where the funds can be used and in what amounts they can be used.

The regulations on fees collected before 2009 are somewhat more lax. Depending on when and where the money was collected, anywhere between 30 and 80 percent of fund can be used to improve parks of any size. The city still has almost \$170,000 remaining in old SDC funds.

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Repairs to skate park fall through
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Eclipse planning gets parks board blessing

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Keizer will be one of the better viewing spots for a total solar eclipse in August 2017, and members of the Keizer Parks Foundation are looking for ways to capitalize on the opportunity.

Rich Ford, a member of the foundation, spoke at a Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting Tuesday, June 14, to ask for the board's blessing to proceed with fundraising plans that might include turning Keizer Rapids Park into a campground for visitors.

"Our plan right now would be to ask the city to avoid taking reservations for Keizer Rapids

Park the weekend before the eclipse and the money raised from camping fees would be used for the parks," Ford told the board.

The moon will cross in front of the sun between 11 a.m. and noon Monday, Aug. 21, 2017. The last time an eclipse was visible across United States - from Washington to Florida - was 1918. The 2017 eclipse will follow a similar path and Keizer is well within the range of the optimum viewing.

The foundation board hopes to work with local astronomy groups to provide instruction and information to campers for the best viewing.

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"We're also thinking of providing dinner the night before and lunch the day of the viewing."

— Rich Ford, Keizer Parks Foundation

Business move revived south River Road offices

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

When Valerie and Geoff White signed a lease to move their property management and construction businesses to Keizer in July 2014, it was something of a watershed moment.

"There hadn't been an office lease signed in Keizer in the previous nine months," said Valerie.

Their businesses, Encompass Management & Consulting (EMC) and Central Valley Construction Group, were truly only about a year old at the time. But, since setting down stakes at 132 Glynbrook Street N., EMC has grown from nine employees to 32 and helped revitalize two suites of office space on the site. It led to the Whites purchasing both buildings two months ago.

"We were terrified because the businesses were so young," Geoff said. "But it was the right time for each step we took and nothing



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald After leasing an office at 132 Glynbrook Street, off River Road, two years ago, Geoff and Valerie White now own both buildings on the site.

felt forced."

Since leasing a space on the property, which had been vacant for almost six years after a local attorney moved to a new location, the number of other tenants has also grown to include an in-home care administration office, a hearing device office, a flooring company, a training center for a knife company, a bookkeeping firm and an excavation company.

"We still have space available and I would love to add some retail business. We could easily accommodate something like a nail salon," said Valerie.

Geoff and Valerie set up

EMC in 2011, but both were working for The Rushing Group at the time. Geoff worked in the construction side while Valerie had worked her way up to assistant vice president of the whole corporation.

When Pam Rushing approached Valerie with the proposition of selling the property management side of the business, Valerie asked if she and Geoff could make an offer.

Thirty days later, the Whites were setting up their own office in south Salem across the parking lot from The Rushing Group.

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Top citizen at McNary
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Panthers head to nationals
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