

Keizertimes

SECTION A

JULY 22, 2016

\$1.00

BURNING QUESTIONS on city park's survey

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

A planned survey of Keizer residents on the issue of parks funding has a looming deadline and may be headed back to the drawing board.

The members of Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board are hoping to assess just how much city residents are willing to pay for increased parks maintenance and improvements, but how they are going to put the question before residents remained something of a mystery after a meeting Tuesday, July 12.

The goal is to gauge Keizerites' willingness to pay an additional fee — and how much — on their utility bills to create a dedicated parks fund.

Board members Matt Lawyer and Donna Bradley presented their co-members with a draft questionnaire, but it didn't take long for everything from the length of the survey to specific questions to come under fire.

Even before those questions began, some members took issue with how to preface the survey. Lawyer, along with Jim Taylor and JT Hager, hoped to include a statement regarding why the questions are being asked.

"It's because of our low tax base that we are unable to maintain the parks at the level that is satisfactory and that's unlikely to change in the near future," said Taylor.

"I would want to know why you're doing a survey. It's a simple answer: we're underfunded," Hager added. "The parks master plan is a good plan and we haven't come close to having enough money to implement it."

Bradley contended that the survey had missed the mark thus far.

"This is a starting point to find out what people want, not what they'll pay," she said. "It should be a two-part process, ask what they want now and later ask what they would pay."

While an additional survey would incur additional costs, Lawyer said it would also take longer than the board originally envisioned. It hopes to present the survey findings to the council in January.

Board members also contested the specifics of the draft survey, which currently includes questions about which parks maintenance



and amenity improvements residents would like to see get priority as well as how much they would be willing to pay.

In the draft survey, residents would be presented with \$1, \$2, \$3, \$4 or \$5 options, but some board members felt the numbers posed questions of their own.

"I would eliminate \$1 and \$2 option because that's not enough funding. That's like asking if you want to feed a family of four on a two-person budget? We should start with \$3," Hager said.

Johnson said. "If there's a certain amount that we are underfunded, I want to know what that is as a resident of the city."

"We could show which figures would keep us underfunded, which ones would maintain existing facilities and which ones would permit us to build new facilities and fields," Walsh added.

Walsh also expressed concern over the spread of the dollar figures.

"Looking at the options we have, (responders) are going to think \$1 is low and \$5 is high and that we want them to pick the number in the middle," he said.

Robert Johnson, Keizer's parks supervisor, said a \$1.50 fee would allow the city to add one full-time and one part-time parks employee, which would allow the city to perform routine maintenance on an annual basis.

"You could do a better job of maintaining turf year-round," Johnson said. However, little, if any, money

Taylor pushed back. "I would like to keep the \$1 and \$2 in because when this comes back, we have to prove that there are people who want to pay something," he said.

Board members Scott Klug and Richard Walsh felt some sort of explanatory statement should be added to each of the dollar figures.

"Someone can look at these numbers and not have any idea which ones take care of the problems we're facing," Klug

said. "If there's a certain amount that we are underfunded, I want to know what that is as a resident of the city."

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"You could do a better job of maintaining turf year-round," Johnson said. However, little, if any, money

would be left over for parks improvements at the \$1.50 level.

"Watering and mowing would be a step up," Walsh said.

Johnson said he and Bill Lawyer, Keizer Public Works director, are developing a table of possible funding levels with descriptions of what each option would permit the city to do within Keizer parks.

Taylor eventually suggested withholding the dollar figures completely.

"We ask if they are willing to support a minimal fee," he said. "Community meetings will be where we get the number and they tell us how much they're willing to pay. If we ask for a number in relation to the wrong question, the results are going to be skewed."

As a way to move the conversation forward, Lawyer asked board members to submit their survey revisions in writing and come to the August meeting prepared to talk about which community groups are going to be asked for input.

"We have to remember that we are trying to present this to the council so they can move the process forward," Lawyer said.



KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley
Joshua Rist is taking over the MHS choir program.

McNary taps its new choir director

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Joshua Rist knows what it's like to be dragged to choir.

At 16 years old, taking classes at Linn-Benton Community College in Corvallis, a friend managed to get Rist to give singing a try for the first time.

"I fell in love pretty hardcore," Rist said. "It really changed my life, the experience of being part of a community that was really dedicated. It was an instant family. It was exactly like what I have my kids do now—grab a friend and bring them to choir."

While he continued to love music, even playing in a rock band after high school, Rist didn't know he wanted to direct until a summer mission trip to Nigeria.

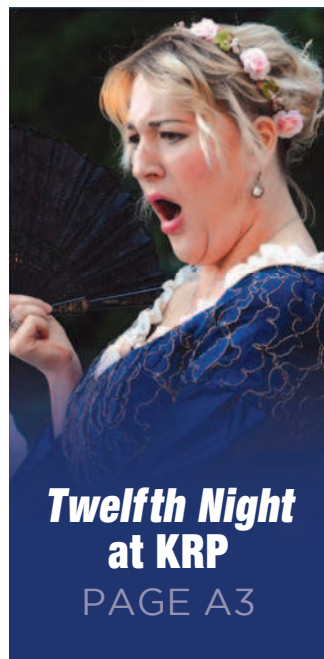
Rist was teaching piano lessons on a battery powered keyboard outside of Abuja, the capital, when he met the director of a small youth choir.

"They were trying to be a choir that would initiate social change and reform," Rist said. "They wanted to change the world through this little group. He really believed in the power of music."

Rist was invited to work with the kids as a traveling music teacher.

"I didn't know anything about directing a choir at that point but I thought I'd give it my best shot," Rist said. "I taught them a song and played with them for a couple minutes. I felt really

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Twelfth Night at KRP

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Keizer author has new novel

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Small hands needed for mural

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Food truck plan gets council nod

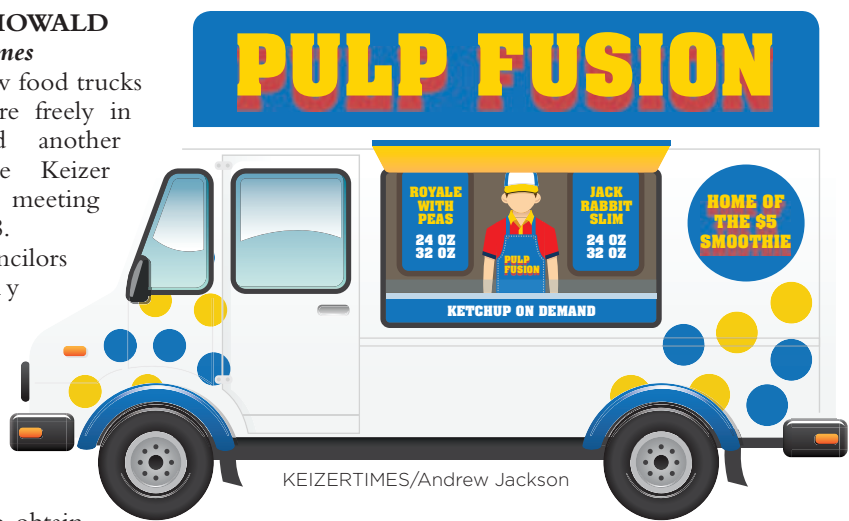
By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Plans to allow food trucks to operate more freely in Keizer cleared another hurdle at the Keizer City Council meeting Monday, July 18.

City councilors unanimously approved a motion directing staff to draft an ordinance allowing mobile food vendors to obtain permits and set up along River Road North and some areas of Cherry Avenue Northeast.

Food trucks are currently permitted in Keizer, but only for 90 days in each calendar year. The new ordinance will allow them to operate year-round.

"Our current ordinance has been a significant limitation for mobile food vendors hoping to operate



KEIZERTIMES/Andrew Jackson

along River Road," said Nate Brown, Keizer community development director, while presenting the plan to the council.

Before the plan was forwarded to the council, the Keizer Planning Commission discussed changes to the rules governing food trucks at length during two monthly meetings earlier this year.

Councilors asked several

questions during the public hearing on the matter, but no one from the community offered testimony.

The plan highlights include:

- Creation of an annual permitting process for mobile food vendors.

- Signage changes that allow mobile food vendors to have a sandwich sign during

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Mural's first portrait a labor of love

KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald
Nancy Erickson-Ward works on a portrait of her father, Tony Vittone, at the Iris Parade mural.

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

When the mural at Town & Country Lanes is complete, Nancy Erickson-Ward will have contributed to the process in many ways.

She will have instructed some of the volunteer artists and painted some components herself, but there's one spot that will be uniquely her's — a portrait of her father, Tony Vittone, the one-time sole proprietor

and later co-owner of the bowling alley.

"It's emotional because this is my dad, and I want it to look just like him," Nancy said.

Her father's portrait will likely be the first to be completed on the 140-foot mural, but it's caused her no small amount of anxiety.

"I went home the other day and I wanted to cry because I didn't think it

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Celts to state tourney

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