

Parks board begins to chart fee project plans

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of the Keizertimes

The Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board’s attempt to cancel its September meeting turned into a sprawling discussion about how to proceed with parks planning now that a dedicated parks fee is set to begin in November.

In the past, the board has canceled the September meeting because a parks tour – with members of the city council – takes the place of the meeting. However, given that the city needs to come up with plans for utilizing the parks fee, some members of the board objected to taking the month off.

Keizer Public Works Director Bill Lawyer told board members that city staff has some

priorities in mind, but they wanted to see a renewed effort to get input from residents.

“The sooner we can do that the sooner we can put together a plan of action,” Bill said.

While the city won’t begin collecting the fee until November, parks staff want to be ready for construction season in 2018 if a large project is in the offing, which Bill said meant being ready by February. By that time, the city could have collected more than \$200,000 in parks fees.

“I think the sooner we can get the public

engaged, the better. It gives us more time to develop a plan to put out to the community,” Bill said.

Matt Lawyer, a member of the parks board, said additional input could serve multiple purposes.

“Getting this back to the community will allow them to confirm their vote or maybe settle some of their feelings on how it went. It can also provide the people a checklist of things they can expect,” Matt said. “One of the challenges (in getting the fee passed) was that

the police proposal was more nuanced than ours, and this is an opportunity to show we are going to be good stewards of the money.”

Parks Board Member Jim Taylor said a stakeholder meeting in late October might be a way to garner additional input with members of the community assigning priorities on a chart.

In the end, the board agreed to have at least a short September meeting. In the meantime, board members David Louden, Cat Gaynor, Jim Taylor and Matt Lawyer planned to meet and come up with a schedule for engaging residents and enlisting other stakeholders. The subgroup will present the plan during the September meeting for approval by the parks board.

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