

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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Meadows Park first on tap for parks fee improvements

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Cooper Hurt, 10, had a clear notion of what he wanted in a new play structure at Meadows Park in north Keizer.

"I want a little balcony that you can just look out from. That would be cool," said Cooper.

However, even more than that, Cooper and his 12-year-old sister, Riley, want accessibility. Riley is such an advocate for accessibility issues she made it the focus of her TEDxSalem talk earlier this month. Yeah, a TEDx talk. At age 12.

"The way the park is now, my mom has trouble getting to it," said Riley, whose mother, Jill, uses a wheelchair. "When we were younger she had trouble watching us."

She also wanted swings and things to climb, but they were a distant second.

Riley and Cooper were just two of about 20 Meadows-area residents who turned out at a information-gathering forum regarding the future of the park. It was held at the Keizer Civic Center Tuesday, Nov. 28.

The air at the forum was best described as eager. That may be because Keizer Public Works Director Bill Lawyer and Parks Supervisor Robert Johnson can barely contain their own excitement.

"I am extremely happy to be having this conversation and it's something I've looked forward to. We haven't been able to have it because we couldn't afford it," said Johnson.

The stick stirring the pot is a parks services fee the city of Keizer began collecting in November. Moving forward, Keizer residents will be charged \$4 per month to pay for parks maintenance and improvements. An additional \$4-per-month fee is being charged for police services.

Even though the decision to enact the fees was made over the summer, Lawyer said there are still surreal moments.

"We're able to talk about doing things that I never expected we'd be able to do," Lawyer said.

The forum on Meadows Park made for an exciting kick-off point.

"We got nothing but posi-



Cooper Hurt pitches his idea for a balcony on the new play structure at Meadows Park to Bill Lawyer, director of Keizer Public Works.

tive feedback tonight," Johnson said. "And we plan to try to incorporate as many of the suggestions as we can."

In addition to Cooper's and Riley's votes for accessibility, the list of requests in a revamped park included: swings, a climbing wall, a gate at the

River Road access point, spinner seats, a merry-go-round, monkey bars and a parkour/ninja course.

Lawyer said he's aiming for a new structure and surface in the area of about \$170,000. A large part of that cost will be the installation of the new

surface itself. While it's called a pour-in-place surface, it actually has to be mixed one wheelbarrow at a time and then smoothed, by hand, with 16-inch trowels. It will, of course, be wheelchair accessible.

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SURVEY SAYS:

Residents like Keizer, not volunteerism

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Keizerites gave mostly glowing marks to the way the city of Keizer is run, but volunteerism — a staple of "The Keizer Way" — appears to be on the way out of vogue.

The city recently completed an online survey of residents with about 800 respondents. The results from the multiple choice segments of the survey are now available at www.keizer.org.

For the most part (61 percent), responders felt they were getting their money's worth for local taxes. About 22 percent said they didn't know and 16 percent felt they weren't.

If given the chance to dole out the city budget themselves, responders heavily favored public safety. Given a \$100 pot to draw from, residents allocated \$64 to public safety, \$21 to administration, \$8 for community development, \$5 for parks and \$2 for a contingency fund.

Responders (55 percent) also wanted to see the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) of the city expand slightly. Only 6 percent wanted to see aggressive expansion of the UGB, while a little less than 40 percent thought Keizer was big enough already. Expansion of the UGB would require knocking down a lot of bureaucratic and zoning barriers. Keizer shares the UGB with Salem and is required to have capacity that will last for 20 years. The capacity is already there, but it's

all in south Salem.

When asked about their impressions of public safety-related issues, residents were overwhelmingly (94 percent) found to have confidence in Keizer police officers. About the same percentage felt safe in Keizer and in their own neighborhoods, but it also depended on the time of day.

When asked whether they felt safe walking down their street during the day, nearly 65 percent strongly agreed with the statement. After nightfall, the percentage that strongly agreed dropped to 27 percent. That may seem like a steep decline, but it's an improvement overall from the last time the survey was conducted in 2013-14. At that time, only 55 percent of respondents strongly agreed to feeling safe walking down their street during the day; only 20 percent of the responders strongly agreed with the statement about walking their street at night.

About 84 percent of responders felt that traffic is a problem in Keizer, but only 70 percent attributed those problems to traffic violations. Regarding police time spent enforcing traffic laws, almost 60 percent said KPD was in line with their expectations, about 34 percent wanted more traffic enforcement and 7 percent wanted less traffic enforcement.

The survey also found that there's less investment in the city's motto of *Pride, Spirit and Volunteerism*. Only 17 percent of responders said

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Do you volunteer in the City of Keizer?

NO	83
YES	17

786 RESPONDENTS

I feel safe walking down my street during the day.

STRONGLY AGREE	64
SOMEWHAT AGREE	25
3	

796 RESPONDENTS

I feel safe walking down my street during the night.

SOMEWHAT AGREE	30
STRONGLY AGREE	27
AGREE	25
4	

751 RESPONDENTS

Pedestrian survives collision, leaves hospital in handcuffs

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

A 25-year-old man struck by a vehicle while crossing River Road North survived the collision, but ended up in handcuffs after an altercation at Salem Hospital.

Keizer Police Department officers responded to the report of a vehicle vs. pedestrian collision about 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 22.

Officers found a male laying in the northbound lanes of the roadway on their arrival.

The man was a pedestrian later identified as Brian Lee Willis, 25, a transient. Willis is believed to have

crossed the road without a crosswalk near Dutch Bros. As he did, he was struck by a 1994 Toyota Corolla operated by a 20-year-old Keizer man.

Darkness and rain at the time are believed to have been factors. Willis was wearing dark clothing at the time.

Paramedics transported Willis to Salem Health where he received treatment for non-life threatening injuries. However, after being released, Willis refused to leave the hospital, said Lt. David Okada of the Salem Police Department.

"The subject was discharged from the hospital and asked to leave, but he refused to do so. He was ultimately detained by hospital security and our officers transported him to the jail on charges of trespass," Okada said.

Willis was determined to be the one at fault for the collision and no citations were issued.



B. Willis

Lady Celts return to court

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Crystal Apple winner

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Community dinner packs 'em in

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Wrestlers back in action

PAGE A12



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