

GRASSROOTS GOVERNMENT

The Keizer Planning Commission held its most recent meeting Wednesday, Jan. 10. This is what was discussed.

- As the first meeting of 2018, members of the board and city staff went over the expected workload for the coming year. While agendas are always subject to change, and emergent needs take priority, here are some of the issues commissioners will be giving input on:
 - The Keizer sign code. Commissioners began this process in 2017, but they still need to recommend new language to the city council. Among the proposed changes are loosened regulations on electronic reader boards.
 - Development standards regarding new buildings. Everything from colors permitted to glazing requirements and orientation of frontage could be up for grabs. It could also include elements like a 1 percent fee that would be dedicated to creating public amenities in Keizer.

- We would like to change it a bit because the market changes and aesthetic changes. The things that people like are changing from the 1990s when we had the last big look," said Shane Witham, Keizer's senior planner.

Storm drainage expectations for new developments.

- Redefining the city's urban transition zones in north Keizer to reflect the desired uses of those properties and to reflect the city vision as a whole.

Affordable housing and the timelines for approving such projects when they are brought to the city.

Realigning the approval process for changes within

the Keizer Station master plan.

- Adjusting floodplain overlay zones to coincide with new data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

- The most interesting exchange between commissioners and members of the city staff occurred during the discussion of the urban transition zones and how those spaces could affect the urban growth boundary (UGB) if it is expanded.

Keizer shares its UGB with Salem and Keizer is rapidly running out of space to grow, but Salem reportedly has enough room for expansion for both cities for the next 20 years.

"If we have a deficit in residential single-family housing or residential multifamily housing yet we share common UGB with three other entities, how do we end up with a deficit when (Salem has) an ample supply for the next 20 years?" asked Commissioner Garry Whalen.

"The bottom line is we carved out the concept that we are our own jurisdiction and own needs. Could somebody challenge us and say we don't? It would be possible," replied Nate Brown, Keizer community development director.

"Our adopted documents in Keizer say we have (these needs) but, in a statewide analysis, it would be possible for them to say we don't," said Witham.

- The board also received legal training from City Attorney Shannon Johnson.

Extreme pruning

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KEIZERTIMES/ERIC A. HOWALD
TOP: Volunteer Jerry Nuttbrock hoists a tree out of the dirt. ABOVE: A Bobcat was used to stack the trees in burn piles.

A crew of volunteer workers led by Mark Caillier

knocked down nearly 2,000 decaying hazelnut trees in Keizer Rapids Park over the course of three days last week.

The almost 90-year-old orchard was no longer profitable for the farmer who was harvesting it.

The plucked trees are now stacked on the site and are expected to be burned sometime in February.


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