

Safety issues dominate River Road conversation

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The Keizer Chamber of Commerce's Community Conversation regarding the future of River Road drew about 40 business owners and residents who shared ideas and hopes.

The town hall-style event took place at the Keizer Civic Center Wednesday, Feb. 28, and the primary theme that emerged was increasing safety.

Keizer Community Development Director Nate Brown began the proceeding with a brief history of River Road improvements drawing the through-line from when it was two-lane unimproved county highway up to the creation of an Urban Renewal District to put utility lines underground and more recent aesthetic improvements.

"We want to get a feel for the threshold of change and how assertive (the community) wants us to be," said Brown.

Hersch Sangster, a member of the Keizer Traffic Safety, Bikeways and Pedestrian Com-

mittee was among the first to speak and safety was at the top of his mind.

"All of our major injury accidents are on River Road. I want to emphasize safety south of Chemawa, where the road is narrower," Sangster said. "River Road at Wells Fargo is 62 feet across and, with that, you can't make improvements for multimodal transportation. We can't afford the right-of-way and we have to look at how we can redesign the lanes and the striping to maximize it."

Sangster's comments tipped off a string of safety-themed issues.

Some of the suggested safety improvements included:

- Installing more street lights.
- Reducing the number of lanes and driveways.
- The improvement or addition of parallel roads and alleys allowing travelers to move along River Road without having to exit and re-enter.
- Installation of a signalized entrance/exit at Creekside Shopping Center.
- A flashing yellow light at

the intersection of River Road and Manzanita.

Beautification – and maintaining what already exists along River Road – was another hot topic.

"When I was very young and came to this community, there were trees up and down River Road. I would like to see more of them," said Carol Doerfler.

While there were no objections to added greenery, Bob Shackelford, a Keizer resident and River Road business owner, said keeping existing greenery from causing safety issues was already a problem.

"I like everything to look perfect, and a lot of places look really nice, but having trees and shrubs that overhang the street is an issue," Shackelford said.

Shackelford's comments tapped a vein into the larger issue that spawned the community conversation in the first place: a proposed 1 percent fee on new construction and major remodels that would be used to create public amenities. City staff proposed the fee



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James Hutches, an insurance agent and Keizer resident, responds to the potential of assessing construction and remodeling efforts along River Road with a public amenity fee.

in 2017, and it was approved by the Keizer Planning Commission, but the idea died when it went to the Keizer City Council after strong rebuke from members of the business community.

Danielle Bethell, speaking on behalf of business owner Valerie White, asked when funds would come available to beautify River Road.

"What business owners are

looking for is partnership and incentives," Bethell said.

Brown responded, "The concept behind the 1 percent was that we had a major business come to River Road and there was very little investment in improving the quality of life in Keizer," Brown said. "It's not about who can write who a check, it's about taking ownership in the community."

Keizer Chamber of Com-

merce member James Hutches said that a city-installed bench near the end at one River Road intersection was rarely used and wanted to see more thought put into what constitutes public amenities.

"Should we force things that are not functional just to say we put in an amenity? I think we should have incentives to put functional things in the community," Hutches said.

Fighting for their right to not comic sans

McNary Club started with a joke, finds widespread interest

By RANDOM
PENDRAGON
Keizertimes intern

Font Club is new to McNary this year, and they've already got big plans.

According to Paul Shuirman, a math teacher at McNary, the club was born out of a joke. "[Jonas Honeyman] asked why I'd used two different fonts in a slide, and even named them off," Shuirman recounted. "So I was bluffing about starting a club... The Jonas and David immediately jumped onto it."

Brooklyn Flint, President of the Font Club, had little interest in fonts prior to joining the club. She joined on a whim out of a desire to try something new.

Flint also attends Write Club on Thursdays, and sees both clubs as a way to enrich her goals in becoming a writer. She is looking forward to exploring the visual aspect that writing relies on.

David Beal, self-proclaimed Chancellor of the Font Club, comes from a background in calligraphy.

He views it as a sort of "handwritten version of fonts," and is toying with the idea of holding calligraphy lessons.

While they enjoy blurring the lines between irony and seriousness, their opinion of Comic Sans is crystal clear: "It has no use anywhere except, y'know, comics," Beal asserted. "Even then, Comic Serif is a better option." They've launched a "crusade" upon the font in hopes to completely destroy it. "It's offensive to the eye," Beal added. While you likely won't see

them marching with helmets and chainmail, they will be arming themselves with the likes of Times New Roman and Courier New to spread good typographic principles across the school.

While their first few meetings have been devoted to fleshing out the club's goals and plans for the future, Shuirman says you can expect to see them in action soon. A cornerstone of the club will be debates, where a certain font will be presented and club members will discuss

its merit. "We'll also discuss when to use fonts, how to use fonts, and how to blend them well so that it doesn't look cheesy," Beal said.

The club isn't all about crusading and debating, however. They've planned to sell club T-shirts by the end of the year to raise funds for the Salem Health Foundation.

"We chose them because it's nearby," Flint said. "We're a community, we're supposed to stick together and help each other. Beal added: "Everyone donates to those big

charities, but our local hospital deserves a bit of attention."

"We're starting a revolution," Shuirman said. "To change the world through fonts."

Editor's note: Flint is no longer a member of the Font Club. This article first appeared in the McNary Piper.

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