

Palma Ciega Park finds champions



After discussion of park's value, residents rally

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

After a discussion regarding how a pair of inaccessible parks could be repurposed, one of the spots in question had defenders step forward at a meeting of the Keizer Parks Advisory Board Tuesday, March 9.

“There was a point in time when I would have felt the same way,” said resident Carol Doerfler. “But that park is close to the river, there are tons of birds and a huge osprey nest.”

Palma Ciega Park, located in west Keizer, has a number of issues that have kept the city from investing in it. Aside from having difficult access without impeding neighbors’ use of the street leading to the park and poor delineation of public property and private property, the park sits on a 90-degree bend in the Willamette River where large piles of debris are deposited whenever the waters rise.

Gary Blake, a resident of Cummings Lane where the park is located said neighbors have grown frustrated with the park.

“The residents are turning toward tearing the [park] signs down because no one is doing anything with it,” Blake said. “Neighbors feel that most of what happens down there is more negative than positive. They’ve told me they want it closed or developed.”

Others would like to see improvements that could add elements a recent survey found were desired in local parks.

“Trails, natural spaces and river access are exactly the types of things that could be done in Palma Ciega,” said Rhonda Rich. “This is a park that needs a purpose and the survey gives us direction.”

The park is the only space where visitors can view a dike that prevents catastrophic flooding Keizer had experienced in the past. The dike is part of what attracts wildlife to the space.

The Salem Audubon Society also advocated for development.

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“A bench in this park would provide park visitors with an ideal place to sit and enjoy the park’s natural beauty,” Tim Johnson, president of the local Audubon chapter, said.

Dylan Juran who was one of the parks board members who floated the idea of repurposing the park as something other than a public space, clarified his position.

“I don’t want to cut it off, but I want to maximize the resources we have and know if we need to direct the resources elsewhere,” Juran said.

Board member Matt Lawyer said he would like more of the nearby residents to offer input before the board gives direction.

“I think now is the time to make sure that we are proud of all of our parks. There’s some excuses on the table and a lot of work ahead, but we want to uphold a high standard,” said Tanya Hamilton, another board member.

Orange is the new black at KAA

Keizer Art Association is holding their annual color show virtually in April. The color this year is orange. Children ages 4 to 14 are encouraged to enter this show.

Intake runs through March 31. The announcement of all awards will be placed on the KAA website on Saturday, April 3. The Annual Color Show will run from April 3 through April 28.

Awards include \$20 to the first-place winner in each media category (with at least three entries) and \$100 to the artist of the best of show. Entry fee for the virtual show is \$5 for each of one to four entries (\$5 to \$20).

Entry forms are available on the KAA website and must include the entry fee.

For more information on the show and guidelines for entry, visit www.keizerarts.com.


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