

# BALK: 'It felt like there was a lot of nitpicking'

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do things. But I appreciate what the council is doing, making sure they are dotting their i's and crossing their t's. It's a shame that we couldn't get started, but everyone needs to be on the same page," Mickey Walker said.

"It felt like there was a lot of nitpicking," Keizer Baseball and Softball President Michael Bays added.

While several youth baseball officials have shared hesitancy with the city partnering with For the Love of the Game, Bays showed his support for the Walkers during the public comment portion of the meeting.

"As president of Keizer Baseball, I totally support the Walkers. I believe they do good things for this community," Bays said. "I think it would be a really positive move forward for this city."

Councilor Ross Day was the one who initially pointed out his concerns with the contract in the meeting, citing that the current language isn't clear if the manager of the park is responsible for capital improvements made to the park or if that responsibility falls on the city. One of Day's main grievances on the topic was that the park is not ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant and the contract made no mention of addressing that situation.

"That is a difficult facility to provide appropriate, legal, usable, handicap access," Keizer Public Works Director Bill Lawyer said in response to Day. Making the entire park ADA accessible would cost around \$500,000 according to Lawyer.

Councilor Elizabeth Smith has had similar sentiments to Day in regards to how capital improvements to the park would be handled.

"We don't want to unduly burden For the Love of the Game for capital improvements that may be more necessarily the (belong to) the city. We have to have some clarification there," Smith said. "I definitely don't want them to sign a contract that could leave them wide open for something like a lawsuit."

Councilor Roland Herrera stated that he wasn't ready to move forward with the contract, but didn't state a specific reason as to why.

"I don't know why I just have this feeling that we need to pause and do this right," Herrera said. "I am guilty of not following this as closely as I should have. I had some medical issues for like a year-and-a-half. I didn't follow it until the last couple weeks."

The comment from Herrera drew the ire of Bays, who believed that Herrera should have been more prepared before the meeting.

"I thought that was disturbing. Public officials should be able to do their job. If they continue to drag this out, the kids are going to be ones who suffer," Bays said in a phone call with the *Keizertimes*.

For the Love of the Game's contract, in regards to termination, states that "this agreement may be terminated upon a two-year written notice given by one party to the other party. Notice can-

capital improvements in less than two years. We need time to do these things," Walker said.

Despite his reservations, Day said that he would support the contract if

Keizer Little League Park would be a better option than if the park was run by the city.

"They are a professional organization that knows what baseball and softball fields can look like and should look like, and have the professional expertise to deliver that. That is why I have been very much in favor of contracting with an organization like For the Love of the Game, to be able to bring that level of service that the city cannot currently provide, and certainly not without current staffing levels," she said.

Walker said that For the Love of the Game is more than willing to work with city staff to make tweaks to the contract, but hopes that the council will approach their final decision with more urgency.

"Hopefully it will be passed in a timely manner.

We will make adjustments to the contract to make the council more comfortable," Walker said. "But there is a ton of winterization to do. The longer we wait the tougher it gets."

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— MICKEY WALKER  
CEO, Mavericks League



File

not be given prior to Nov. 1, 2023 and notice must be given between Nov. 1 and Nov. 30, in any calendar year beginning in 2023."

The contract states that For the Love of the Game would have to make improvements to 14 specific items in the park by April 2023. If those improvements aren't made, the city could terminate the contract, but For the Love of the Game would still be managing the park in 2025.

Day took issue with the termination language in the contract, arguing that the process shouldn't take that long and wants it addressed before moving forward.

"I am mad at myself for not catching it earlier," Day said. "Four years seems like an awfully long time."

Walker pushed back against Day's comments in a phone interview with the *Keizertimes*.

"There is not enough time to make

he believed the proper changes were made.

"I'm good with the contract. I just think there are some changes that need to be made," Day said. "I feel like we are trying to slap it together."

Keizer Mayor Cathy Clark gave resounding support towards For the Love of the Game and shared her thoughts why having them manage

Questions or concerns? Contact the reporter via email: [news@keizertimes.com](mailto:news@keizertimes.com)

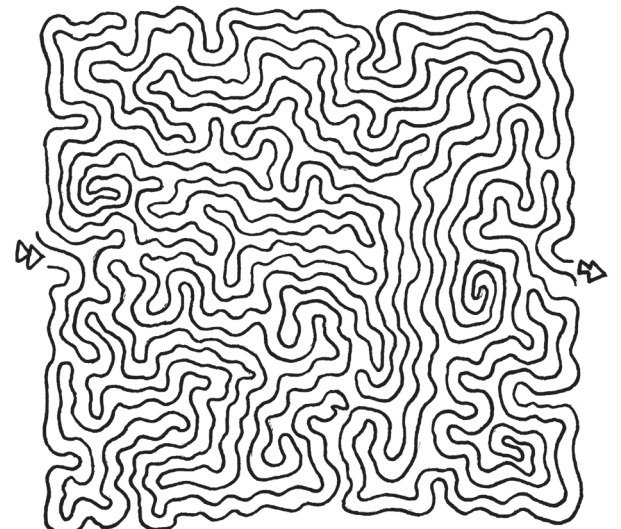
## brain food

### sudoku

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		4						7
	6			5	4	3	2	
		7		6				
		1	7	4	3	8		
				8		2		
	4	3	2	7			9	
9						1		
		2			1		3	

Enter digits 1-9 into blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, & every 3x3 square.

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maze by Jonathan Graf of Keizer