

MINUTES
KEIZER CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION
Thursday, September 12, 1996
Keizer Police Department Auditorium
Keizer, Oregon

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Koho called the special session to order at 7:07 p.m..
Roll call was taken as follows:

Present:

Dennis Koho, Mayor
Carl Beach, Councilor (arrived at 8:10 p.m.)
Jim Keller, Councilor
Jerry McGee, Councilor
Al Miller, Councilor
Bob Newton, Councilor
Jerry Watson, Councilor

Staff:

Dotty Tryk, City Manager
John Morgan, Community Development Director
Wally Mull, Public Works Director
Kim Krause, Finance Officer
Shannon Johnson, City Attorney
Tracy L. Davis, City Recorder

DISCUSSION

**PROPOSED
PUBLIC/PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIP FOR
BASEBALL STADIUM**

Mayor Koho announced this special session was scheduled to gain input and reaction to the possibility of a public/private partnership to build a baseball stadium near the Chemawa interchange along Interstate 5.

Dotty Tryk, City Manager reported in late June the City was contacted by Lisa and Jerry Walker, owner of the Bellingham Giants, with the notion to enter a partnership to build a baseball stadium near the Chemawa interchange. This partnership would involve the City purchasing land, providing sewer and water to the facility and constructing the parking lot. In return, the owners of the team will lease the improved property in order to build a baseball stadium. Ms. Tryk displayed a drawing of the proposed stadium.

City Manager Tryk announced the Council has discussed this possibility and prepared several guiding principals which would assist in the decision to enter this venture. One principal was to gain public input, therefore this opportunity was scheduled.

Mayor Koho introduced Jerry and Lisa Walker, the owners of the Bellingham Giants.

Jerry Walker briefly described his family background including his purchase of the Bellingham Giants in 1989. He indicated a minor league baseball team is very community oriented. Many of the players will live with host families and become very involved with the families and activities in the community.

Lisa Walker added they have been very encouraged by the number of phone calls received supporting their relocation to Keizer. She hopes they can share their love for baseball with the Keizer community.

Presenting testimony to the Council were:

Jim Lander, 6592 Amy Lane NE, Keizer announced he was speaking on behalf of the Gubser Neighborhood Association and as a private citizen of Keizer. He indicated the Gubser Neighborhood would be the area most affected by the construction of the stadium which causes him and his neighbors great concern. He added these concerns have already been voiced to the Council in a formal letter. As a private citizen, he is disturbed by the costs that will be incurred to prepare a site for this facility. He questioned the anticipated costs, potential revenue return to the city and increased property taxes. Mr. Lander concluded by noting he lives on a very strict budget and expects the city do likewise. He noted each of the concerns of the Neighborhood Association have to be addressed or they will oppose this plan.

AP Marshall, 2250 Stonehedge Drive NE, Keizer advised the Council he lives on Stonehedge Drive with property abutting Tepper Lane. He does not support the construction of a stadium in the Keizer area. Mr. Marshall noted there have been several other minor league ball teams located in the Salem area in the past, however all have folded due to attendance problems. He believes the interest level in this area will not be financially supportive. In addition, Mr. Marshall indicated he is concerned with the potential noise from the stadium.

Karen Trucke, 6330 14th Avenue NE, Keizer indicated the residential development in this area of Keizer has already increased the noise and traffic problems. A specific plan to deal with the traffic has not been developed or any potential solutions devised. Therefore, she is opposed to the construction of the stadium. In addition, there has not been any evidence this venture will be economically beneficial to the City. In conclusion, Ms. Trucke indicated further development is a great concern to her.

Wayne Trucke, 6330 14th Avenue NE, Keizer pointed out the recent article in the newspapers indicate this is already a done deal. He believes this proposal is moving too fast without determining the economic value or detriment this stadium may cause. He suggested the baseball team use an alternate sight for one year until all the facts can be studied. He questioned the economic feasibility, potential costs to tax payers, what guarantees would be made to the Gubser neighborhood that their area would not become a thoroughfare for traffic, and the effects of the increased noise. Mr. Trucke urged the Council to answer each of these questions prior to making a final decision.

Robert Scheffel, 6682 Amy Lane NE, Keizer (provided testimony to the Council with the aid of deaf interpreter, Bob Togioka) indicated he supported the baseball venture. He added Keizer is a growing city and this investment will provide an asset to our community. Keizer is a baseball/softball city that has one of the strongest little league programs in the state. Mr. Scheffel relayed his baseball memories of his youth and believed the benefits of this stadium will outweigh the costs in the long run. During a recent visit to the potential site, Mr. Scheffel noted the area next to the freeway is a good location for noise or traffic since both are already present.

John Conner, 5416 Chetco Court NE, Keizer stated he fully supports the baseball stadium proposal because baseball has been a important part of his life. He believed with the importance of baseball in the Keizer community, the stadium will be beneficial to the citizens. Mr. Conner understands there area costs associated, however the potential benefits will override those in the long run. In addition, he believes the fans will come to the games in Keizer rather than enduring the drive and traffic of the Portland games. In closing, Mr. Conner indicated the area next to the freeway is an ideal site for this proposal. He urged the Council to move forward on this venture.

Greg Lamb, 2323 Latona Street NE, Keizer expressed his concern with the potential traffic problems, the hazards of a facility that serves alcohol and the noise associated with this proposal. As a board member of the Gubser Neighborhood Association, Mr. Lamb also voiced his frustration with the secrecy in bringing this issue to the citizens. He indicated this will result in a negative vote in the upcoming tax base election. Mr. Lamb hoped the attendance by the Mayor and City Manager at the upcoming Neighborhood Association meeting on September 19th would shed some light on the details of this proposal.

Rich Peterson, 980 Orchard Street N, Keizer informed the Council he fully supports the partnership with the owners of the Bellingham Giants. He believes this opportunity will only come once for Keizer and the Council should move ahead. Keizer and baseball go together and this endeavor will do nothing but support this strong interest of our community. Mr. Peterson pointed out some type of development will happen in that area and he believes a baseball stadium is better than a shopping center.

David Steinke, 4758 Riverwood Drive N, Keizer explained he has lived in Keizer for twenty years and supports the construction of a baseball stadium at the interchange. He pointed out Keizer is a baseball community and feels the city would benefit by this addition. Mr. Steinke realized there could be potential problems but puts his faith in the city officials to work these details out. He strongly urged the Council to go forward with this proposal.

Jim Warner, 7245 Wheatland Road N, Keizer expressed his opposition to an increase in taxes in order to support this proposal, however he believed this could be a successful business venture in the City. He noted his surprise in the Council's reaction to spending potential funds on this venture when it was so opposed to the past recommendation of the financial task force. His other concerns centered on the long term debt, the lack of commitment by the team to sign a long term lease and the potential added costs to the city for overtime by the police and public works departments. In conclusion, Mr. Warner urged the Council to provide answers to these concerns and convince him this was beneficial use of the taxpayers money.

John Dodge, 801 Cade Avenue NE, Keizer urged the Council to move forward with this proposal.

Jim Mickesh, 1726 Meadowlark Drive NE, Keizer stated he is opposed to this venture due to the possible increase in taxes and the potential traffic problems.

CA Jarvis, 2128 Flagstone Court NE, Keizer expressed his opposition to this proposal due to the potential noise and traffic congestion. He believed the citizens of this area voted for incorporation in 1982 to avoid becoming a large city like Salem which holds major activities like baseball games. Mr. Jarvis suggested an election be held on this issue to determine the feelings of the citizens. In closing, Mr. Jarvis suggested the Keizer Little League Park is an ideal location for playing baseball and another stadium does not need to be built.

Harlan Naegele, 2054 Rock Ledge Street NE, Keizer disclosed he has two major concerns on this issue; traffic and funding. He pointed out that Radiant Drive is a narrow two-lane road which will not accommodate the amount of traffic a baseball stadium will generate. In addition, urban renewal funds should not be used to take this valuable farm land away from the community. He foresees this as a misuse of funds. Mr. Naegele also voiced his opposition that a baseball stadium has never been discussed as an aspect of the Chemawa Activity Center plan and therefore no testimony has been allowed on the subject.

Manny Martinez, 1747 Meadowlark Drive NE, Keizer informed the Council he is opposed to this proposal based on the financial information he has gathered. He believes the stadium will not cover the financial debt to the City. Mr. Martinez also pointed out the Salem Mayor suggested the team locate in Keizer. Salem is not participating in any of the funding required to build the infrastructure for the stadium, but the team will bear the Salem name. Mr. Martinez noted if the Walker's do not have enough money to finance the full structure then they should not relocate their team.

Mike Witenberger, 4721 Jones Road SE, Salem spoke in support of the stadium proposal noting he is a long time supporter of baseball. He agreed there will be increased traffic and noise but believes those issues can be dealt with. Mr. Witenberger urged the Council to support this proposal for the well being of the community. He suggested putting Keizer first in the name of the team.

Ron Hittner, 5265 Willow Leaf Street NE, Keizer described his fond memories of baseball as a child. He supports the concept, however he has several concerns. These concerns include the affect on other city departments such as police and public works, the fast track this decision process is on and the lack of details being released to the public. Mr. Hittner disagreed that this venture will give Keizer an identity. He enjoys Keizer the way it is presently. In closing, Mr. Hittner noted the city has been fiscally conservative in the past and would hope the Council will make the best decision in this case.

Ruth Palmer, 3945 5th Avenue N, Keizer stated she is not against baseball only an increase in taxes. She is suspicious of the use of urban renewal funds to finance the infrastructure for the stadium. She is also concerned with the financial stability a baseball team to repay for the improvements to this property. She also encouraged the Council to carefully consider all the facts before rushing into this great deal.

Jim Kinkaid, 7185 Lakeside Drive NE, Keizer reported his family operates a farm north of Labish Stables where the proposed stadium will be constructed. He is concerned with the wastewater runoff and the effect it will have on Labish Ditch. In addition, he voiced his concern with the potential traffic congestion and the use of farm roads for the traffic to escape this congestion. Mr. Kinkaid suggested the Council discuss this last issue with the Marion County Commissioners.

Michael Baker, 4416 Great Plains NE, Salem remarked he is in support of the stadium proposal, however he does have several concerns, many which have been discussed during previous testimony. His major concern focuses on the livability of the residents in the area, however Mr. Baker indicated he has faith the Council will address these concerns. He reported he has visited several other minor league ball fields, including Bellingham, and believes this is great family entertainment at a reasonable price.

Greg Rands, 6813 Rock Ledge Court NE, Keizer expressed his full support for this proposal. He lives in the Gubser neighborhood and is concerned about the potential problems, however he believes this opportunity should not be passed up by the City. Mr. Rands indicated the owners of the baseball team would not be willing to make a substantial financial investment in the community if they did not have the confidence it would be a success.

Mr. Rands also pointed out if the investment is made to provide the infrastructure for the stadium, this will be a jump start on further development in that area. It is a good investment that will provide many returns to the City. Keizer is a growing community and the interchange area will develop. A baseball stadium will be a good use in that area. In conclusion, Mr. Rands believes the noise and traffic concerns can be worked out and urged the Council to go forward with this proposal.

Paul Orcutt, 6833 Rock Ledge Court NE, Keizer recounted his recent experience in attending a minor league baseball game in Bend. He believed it was a good family atmosphere providing wholesome entertainment at a reasonable cost. He also noted the players become very involved with the fans during the game which provides a memorable experience for the children. However, Mr. Orcutt believes that Salem should not be a part of the name of the team. He urged the Council to move forward on this proposal.

Brennon Jordan, 1015 Rafael Avenue N, Keizer fully supported the proposed baseball stadium because it will provide an opportunity for community spirit. The owners of the team are willing to make a major commitment to this area and believes the City should go forward to provide the necessary land and improvements. Mr. Jordan looks forward to enjoying this public community facility.

Paul Gorlinsky, 7164 Lawnridge Street NE, Keizer gave his full support to the City entering this proposal. His family has been involved with the Keizer little league program and thinks this would be a great asset to the City.

Bruce Rector, 1427 Meadowlark Drive NE, Keizer pledged his full support for the proposal.

Christine Robeless, 1161 Willow Lake Road N, Keizer mentioned her fond memories of growing up attending the Eugene Emeralds baseball games. She noted there are several questions that need answers including the zoning issues, the use of farmland, the future plans of the Chemawa Indian School and the traffic issues. Ms. Robeless urged the Council to inform the citizens on all of these issues.

Cathey Philbrick, 1180 Lockhaven Drive NE, Keizer explained she had been a Keizer resident for twenty years. She believed this is an important forum to gain public input on this issue. Ms. Philbrick noted she is opposed to building this stadium with public funds and is concerned with the City's priority in using taxpayers money. She believed there are other critical uses for these funds, especially for social or environmental issues. Ms. Philbrick urged the Council to conduct an election to determine the feelings of the entire community on this issue.

Kenneth Philbrick, 1180 Lockhaven Drive NE, Keizer believed Keizer is already saturated with baseball by Keizer little league and minor league baseball in nearby communities. He feels there would not be a market for another baseball stadium in this community. Mr. Philbrick reminded the Council of Salem's lack of success with baseball teams due to the small attendance. He believes some other type of youth activity center would be a better way to spend public funds.

Jim Taylor, 688 Menlo Drive North, Keizer reported he is a member of the board of directors for the Keizer Little League program and also serves as chair of the Keizer Parks Advisory Board, however his testimony is that of a private citizen and his love for baseball. He noted this would be a family oriented

business which would provide entertainment for the citizens of this community. The successfulness of the Keizer Little League program should give some indication of the popularity of baseball in this community.

Mr. Taylor pointed out the Keizer City Council has always been fiscally responsible and he believes this venture will be considered in the same manner. He urged the Council to move forward with this proposal.

Clint Holland, 6488 Crampton Drive NE, Keizer informed the Council he is the President of the Keizer Little League and was previously a partner in the ownership of the Salem minor league baseball team. He believes this would be a positive activity for the youth of this area and also other community events could be sponsored in the stadium. He suggested using the stadium for the Little League World Series which would provide additional revenue for other area businesses. He fully supported the public/private partnership with the Bellingham Giants.

Responding to an inquiry by Councilor Watson, Mr. Holland indicated the failure of the Salem team was due to many factors. However, it is not uncommon for a public/private partnership to develop in this fashion. He referred to the success of the Portland Rose Garden and the number of other events this complex is used for. This generates income for the entire community.

Rick Frey, 1252 Horizon Ridge Court NE, Keizer pointed out building a stadium at the interchange could provide a cornerstone for the future of this community. As an employee of McLaren, he is aware of the need for community activities involving youth. In addition to baseball, this facility could provide a setting for band competitions, high school football playoffs and other youth events. Mr. Frey understood this is a large investment but it will be a great return to the community.

Rick Roemer, 3105 Zee Lane NE, Keizer voiced his support for the stadium proposal. He believes this is an ideal location and will be environmentally safe for a development of this type. Mr. Roemer affirmed there will be traffic issues to deal with, however the Miracle of Christmas lighting event also draws large amounts of traffic and this has been successfully handled. He is concerned with the financial details but trusts the City Council to make the appropriate decisions. Mr. Roemer believes this will be a positive addition to the community and encouraged the Council to move forward with this great opportunity.

Dale Nason, 2200 Chemawa Road NE, Keizer noted as a neighboring resident to the Keizer Little League complex, he believes the noise and traffic concerns will be successfully worked out. He also concluded if the team left the area, this stadium would provide a very nice addition to the Keizer Little League complex. He supports the city participation in this project.

Donald Porter, 4820 River Road N, Keizer voiced his support for the development of this stadium project. He believes this will be a wonderful opportunity for the youth and citizens of this community. Mr. Porter pointed out a minor league baseball game will provide low cost family entertainment.

Dean Lohrman, 3506 Glen Creek Road NW, Salem described his recent experience while attending the Little League world series in Dickinson, North Dakota. He stated by having a facility of this type and holding this similar event in Keizer, it would provide an economic impact to the entire community. He strongly urged the Council to move forward with this project.

Norm Cobb, 4606 Rivercrest Drive, Keizer pointed out the testimony of the Gubser Neighborhood Association representative indicated their quality of life will decrease if this proposal is agreed to. He urged the Council to fully study this issue prior to making any decisions.

Emil Valish, 6625 Radiant Drive NE, Keizer informed the Council he lives on Radiant Drive near the proposed site. He noted development in his area will occur in some fashion and the noise and traffic concerns will always be an issue. He supported the baseball stadium proposal.

Mike Hart, 6955 9th Court N, Keizer stated he is in favor of the baseball stadium proposal. He believes development has not occurred at the interchange because of the lack of infrastructure, however if it is in place this area will become viable for development. As a former council member, he understands the frustrations but urged the City Council to move forward.

Allen Marshall, 2041 SW 58th Avenue, Portland indicated he is the real estate broker for one of the parcels of property targeted for this development. He is willing to work with the City in negotiating this transaction. Mr. Marshall favored a baseball stadium over an industrial building at the entrance to the City.

Ron Hoke, 2823 Ridgeway Drive SE, Turner informed the Council he represents one of the property owners of the potential site for the stadium. In a recent conversation with the owners, they were very supportive of the development of the baseball stadium at this location. Mr. Hoke also pointed out this property has easements for the BPA power lines which will make some types of development very difficult. However, a baseball stadium and parking lot would be perfect for the site. He believes this would provide a great focal point at the entrance to Keizer and also provide a great benefit to the entire community.

Steve Martin, Keizer indicated he has been a Keizer resident for only one day, however he is very supportive of this proposal. He noted he previously worked with the Eugene Emeralds which employs several youths and provides a good place for the young members of the community to congregate. Mr. Martin also noted there is less parking area in Eugene than proposed at this site and the traffic congestion is minimal.

Gordon Larson, 441 McNary Hts Drive N, Keizer voiced his concern with the potential costs to the tax payers to enter this partnership with the team. However, as a lover of baseball he fully supports this proposal.

Bill Wolf, 4055 Gary Street N, Keizer described this venture as a great investment and asset to the City. Baseball is the spirit of Keizer and the addition of a minor league team will be a success. Based upon the drawings and plans of the stadium, he indicated this facility will be top notch and draw the fans from around the metropolitan area to Keizer. Mr. Wolf noted the traffic issues can be resolved by blocking off Tepper Lane and the noise issues can be resolved in the acoustical design of the stadium. Mr. Wolf supported this venture using urban renewal funds as long as this does not harm the River Road or Cherry Avenue projects. He believes this development will provide a beautiful gateway to our city.

Joe Johnson, Monmouth pointed out he is a teacher at Grant Elementary and involved in a men's softball league. He fully supports the development of a stadium. Mr. Johnson indicated the facility would accommodate the world masters games of men's softball which draw participants from all over the world. It would be a great revenue source for the community. Mr. Johnson urged the Council to move forward on this proposal.

Responding to a question from the audience, Mayor Koho pointed out there is insufficient time to prepare a ballot for the community to vote on this issue.

Bill Medford, 1179 Ridgepoint NE, Keizer noted this is a tremendous opportunity for our community. He has fond baseball memories of attending games with his father in Eugene. Mr. Medford pointed out there will always be obstacles but each can be overcome in a positive way. Furthermore this opportunity will only bring further development to the community. He urged the Council to move forward.

Ray Peters, indicated this is a great opportunity but cautioned the Council to move slowly. He requested staff provide the financial facts to the community in order to make the right decision on this issue.

Bob Herberger, 2805 Chemawa Road NE, Keizer reported he owns land near the proposed site for the stadium. He fully supports the development of the stadium which will bring additional development to the Chemawa interchange area. Mr. Herberger pointed out the property owners in this area have been held hostage by the City since 1977 with zoning discussions for this area. He welcomed the development.

Bob Togioka, 45th Avenue, Salem recounted his experience living near the site where the previous Salem baseball team played their home games. He reported no negative factors, including traffic or noise issues that affected his livability. Mr. Togioka noted from his past experience in teaching at Gubser Elementary school, Keizer is a volunteer community dedicated to a little league program which is recognized around the state for its success. He believed with the love of baseball already obvious in a community, this proposal is a sure success.

Glen Sanford, explained the baseball stadium would be great for the community, however he is concerned with the lack of information available on potential costs to the tax payers, the traffic issues and the possible noise problems. He hoped all of these concerns would be addressed and reported to the citizens prior to any commitment being made.

Responding to several concerns and issues raised during the testimony, **Jerry Walker** indicated the player development contract with the San Francisco Giants has two years left until expiration. However, the Giants are very excited with the relocation prospect and drawings of the stadium, therefore he believes the contract will once again be negotiated and signed for another four-year term. Mr. Walker also noted that he and his wife are very committed to this project and are pledging all of their assets to make this proposal work. He agreed this stadium will make a beautiful gateway to Keizer.

Lisa Walker pointed out the issue of having Salem included in the name of the team is a marketing strategy.

Mr. Walker also noted the architect is working with an acoustical engineer to divert or reduce the noise effects on the neighborhood. Furthermore, he stated his number one goal is to sponsor sporting events in the stadium rather than concerts. These events could include soccer, football, baseball or softball.

After further inquiries from the audience, Mr. Walker reported this is a family oriented operation which may employ up to 50 seasonal employees. He indicated the baseball operation will attract young or retired individuals as employee prospects and most will make minimum wage or slightly higher. The Northwest Baseball league has been around since 1901 and includes teams in Medford, Eugene, Portland, Boise, and Yakima. Mr. Walker believes this will provide the community with a fun family environment at an inexpensive cost.

Mr. Walker pointed out when he first met with City officials in the beginning of July he asked that the name and details be kept confidential until the present baseball season was completed. This was important to keep the players focused as well as not alienating the fans in Bellingham.

In addition, Mr. Walker indicated there are plans to sell alcohol at the games, however there will not be any special beer nights or other functions that promote the use of alcohol. In Bellingham, the sale of alcohol at the facility has not prompted any negative reports. In regards to the traffic issues, Mr. Walker hopes there will be shuttle transportation for some of the fans attending the games. He is willing to work with the City to reduce any potential traffic impacts on the neighborhood.

Responding to questions from Councilor McGee, Mr. Walker stated it is important to include Salem in the team name so they can draw more corporate sponsors from the Salem area. He did not know if it would make a difference if Keizer's name was prior to Salem. However, he did indicate stadium name will not include the Salem.

Mayor Koho thanked those who gave oral testimony and also for all the citizens attending the meeting. He recognized there are several issues that need to be resolved and will continue with the public process to gather input.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to come before the Council.

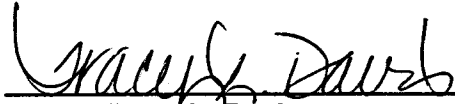
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Mayor Koho announced two letters were received in regards to the proposed stadium; one in support and one in opposition.

There was no written communication to come before the Council.

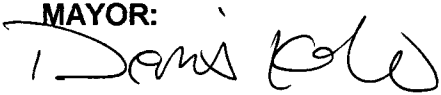
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 p.m.



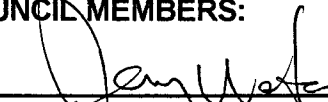
Tracy L. Davis
City Recorder

APPROVED:

MAYOR:


Dennis Koho

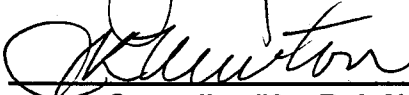
COUNCIL MEMBERS:



Councilor #1 - Jerry Watson



Councilor #4 - Carl Beach

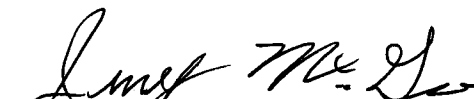


Councilor #2 - Bob Newton

Councilor #5 - Al Miller



Councilor #3 - Jim Keller



Councilor #6 - Jerry McGee

Minutes approved:

