

NEWSBERG



Protect Heritage Parks erected signs around Newberg and Dundee that read, “Who Decides the Future of our Heritage Parks? You Do. Sign the Petition Today” like this one on August 3, 2026. (Branden Andersen / Newsberg)

Signature Campaign Begins for CPRD Heritage Park Ordinance

Initiative would create a new property designation limiting permitted uses on qualifying Chehalem Parks and Recreation District land

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — A signature campaign is underway for a ballot initiative that would create a “Rural Heritage Park” designation restricting future use of qualifying Chehalem Parks and Recreation District (CPRD) properties, including Bob and Crystal Rilee Park, following the CPRD board’s June 25 vote to allow mountain biking at the park.

The initiative, backed by a petition committee called Protect Heritage Parks which includes current CPRD board directors Jason Fields and Matt Smith as petitioners, began circulating for signatures July 28. To qualify for the November ballot, organizers must collect just over 2,600 valid signatures from registered voters within CPRD’s boundaries, according to chief petitioner John Rueter.

According to a text message sent out from Protect Heritage Parks petition committee, “hundreds of voters” signed during signing events over the weekend, but final signature counts from the weekend’s efforts could not be confirmed by press time.

If the campaign does not receive enough signatures to qualify, organizers said they will continue gathering signatures to qualify for the May 2027 primary ballot.

Records filed with the Oregon Secretary of State’s office identify three chief petitioners on the Protect Heritage Parks committee: Rueter, Fields, and Smith. Fields and Smith cast the two dissenting votes when the CPRD board voted 3-2 on June 25 to allow biking within 90 days at Rilee Park, following debate over what to allow at the 325-acre Parrett Mountain property. This came after a 3-2 board vote in 2023, when the board of a different makeup voted to ban biking facilities from the park.

“Things feel almost impossible to settle at a board level,” Smith said. “If we

have another board election, something changes, one person changes their mind; it changes everything. These are all three-two decisions. They’re back and forth from one year to the next year. There’s some things that should be governed by kind of a higher law.”

Under the proposed ordinance, a Rural Heritage Park designation would apply to CPRD-owned properties of at least 100 contiguous acres that meet at least two of four additional criteria: prior agricultural, grazing, or farming use before CPRD acquired the property; agricultural or equestrian use within 20 years before acquisition; the presence or past presence of equestrian facilities or regular equestrian use; or acquisition through donation or purchase below fair market value.

Rueter said Bob and Crystal Rilee Park would meet the designation’s criteria as written. The initiative is not limited to that property, he said, and would apply to any current or future CPRD land that qualifies.

Smith clarified that the ordinance would not restrict land donors who want to donate their land for a specific purpose like mountain biking, golf, or other activities — as long as CPRD agrees to the terms.

“It just protects the land if they want it to be protected, and takes it out of the board of directors or out of staff decision, and I think that’s important,” he said.

The district’s board would be required to designate any current property meeting those criteria at its next meeting following certification of the measure by the Yamhill County Clerk, according to the ordinance text. Designated properties would be limited to pedestrian, community event, agricultural, and equestrian uses.



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River Street Committee Backs Design Concept, Confronts Tree Losses

Ad hoc panel votes to advance the “Talt Plan” and target a 58-foot corridor

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — The Newberg River Street Ad Hoc Committee voted July 16 to recommend the city proceed with developing the basic roadway cross-section of the “Talt Plan” for reconstructing South River Street. The committee left a tree replacement plan and a possible raised intersection at Ninth Street for a future meeting before any final recommendation goes to the City Council.

In a companion motion, the committee committed the city to treating preservation of the corridor’s roughly 58-foot footprint as a primary objective of the project’s upcoming request for proposals.

The committee will meet again on August 18, and if action items are completed, will forward their recommendations to city council in September.

The Talt Plan design calls for a 22- to 24-foot roadway with two travel lanes, bike lanes at least 5 feet wide on each side, a 6-foot planter strip serving as a stormwater facility, and 5-foot sidewalks. Full-depth reconstruction would run from Fourth Street to 11th Street.

Keller Engineering, the city’s contracted engineering firm, cautioned the 58-foot target cannot be guaranteed at every point without a completed land survey, since yards, driveways, and utilities vary block by block.



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OTHER HEADLINES

- Pacific University Wrestling Coach Mike Clock Dies at 90**
- Gather Repertory Theatre to Stage Oregon Debut of “Pásale, Pásale”**
- Beyond the Bin: The PCC – Newberg Center Community Garden**
- Jaquith Park Tennis Courts Reopen Thursday After Resurfacing; Pickleball Debut Awaits Sound Panels**

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Support

From Cockpit
to Cup: How a
Kenyan Pilot
Built Dundee’s
Fire Lily Coffee

Francis Kungu traded a career in aviation for direct-trade coffee, and now runs his import and roasting business from Dundee while working to change how Kenyan farmers get paid

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

DUNDEE, Ore. — Francis Kungu didn’t move to the Pacific Northwest to become a coffee importer. He moved to Seattle in 2007 to train as a pilot.

It was on that path that coffee found him. After his first successful solo flight, a flight instructor handed him a gift card to a coffee shop he’d never heard of.

“I don’t know what Starbucks is. I’m from Kenya,” Kungu said.

The card sat untouched for months. When he finally used it, he found something that stuck with him: a shop full of people lined up for coffee, a crop he had grown up regarding as a losing proposition.

“In Kenya, people are constantly going broke because of growing this crop,” Kungu said. “It’s known as a poverty crop.”

Today, Kungu runs Fire Lily Coffee, a Dundee-based roasting and retail brand, and its direct-import counterpart, Jamii Coffee, which works with Kenyan coffee farmers to cut out layers of middlemen be-

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tween the farm and the U.S. market. Fire Lily was known as Exilior Coffee until a fall 2025 rebrand.

Record Profits, Poverty
Crop

Kungu said the idea for a more direct-trade model first came to him mid-flight. Training out of Seattle, he flew a narrow corridor between restricted military airspace and the city’s airport approach, a route that put the region’s geography on display.

“Trade is the reason why you grow out,” Kungu said. “You see the ports, all the housing for the people to support the ports, and all the trade that supports the wealth coming into the city.”

He returned to Kenya to trace coffee back to its roots. Coffee grows as a cherry-like fruit, which is then pitted and processed to become a green coffee bean destined for roasters around the world. Kungu said Kenya’s arabica varieties were developed and crossbred by

colonial-era agronomists to survive the country’s high-elevation volcanic soils, producing a distinctly bright, acidic cup with notes of citrus and blackcurrant.

“It’s like a designer suit,” Kungu said. “You can still wear it if it’s not designed for you, but it’ll still be off in some places and won’t fit right. This plant was made for Kenya, and only Kenya.”

He likens the quality and unique character to wine’s terroir — the same thing that makes the land surrounding his Dundee home so cherished in the viticulture industry.

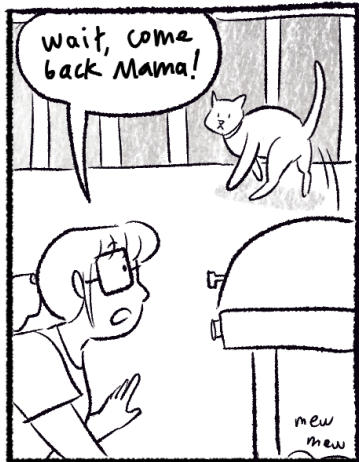
According to the National Coffee Association, Kenyan producers place a heavy emphasis on quality control during processing and drying, and use a grading system that classifies beans by size, shape, and density.



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Comic Diaries Ep. 69

Created by Brittany Long Olsen



See more of the Newsberg Funnies at Newsberg.org

BLO'26

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

AUGUST 5

4 p.m. —Newberg
Wednesday Market
Downtown Newberg, 116 S
College St

5 p.m. — The Wine Spa Grand
Opening
The Dundee Hotel, 1410 OR-
99W, Dundee

AUGUST 6

6 p.m. — Pásale, Pásale
Musical presented by Gather
Repertory Theatre
Chehalem Cultural Center
Forecourt, 415 E Sheridan St

6:30 p.m. — Pub Olympics
Chehalem Valley Brewing, 2515
Portland Road

AUGUST 7

4:30 p.m. — Newberg
Plastics Recycling Event
Newberg First United
Methodist Church - Front
Porch, 1205 Deborah Rd

5 p.m. — Newberg First
Friday
Downtown Newberg, 414 E 1st
Street

7 p.m. — Theater: Sense &
Sensibility
5G's Ranch, 17530 NE Terrys
Ln

7:30 p.m. — Tall Poppy
String Band
Chehalem Cultural Center
415 E Sheridan St

7:30 p.m. — I Pagliacci (An
Opera at a Winery)
Lady Hill Winery, 8400
Champoeg Rd NE, St. Paul

8 p.m. — Pásale, Pásale
Musical presented by
Gather Repertory Theatre
Chehalem Cultural Center
Forecourt, 415 E Sheridan St

AUGUST 8

2 p.m. — Cornhole
Tournament
Stumptown Taps, 2401 E
Portland Rd. Unit A6

6 p.m. — Pásale, Pásale
Musical presented by
Gather Repertory Theatre
Chehalem Cultural Center
Forecourt, 415 E Sheridan St

6:45 p.m. — Curio:
Praise Jesus Artis, Maggie
Ray, Adrienne Gunn
Art Elements Gallery, 604 E
1st St



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events.