

## ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, February 17, 2021

**Place:** Held virtually (via Zoom)

**Board Members:**

**Present:** Peter Kushner, President; Chris Shook, Vice President; Christopher Bovid, Secretary; Kathy Shook, Treasurer; Diana Morton-Thompson; Eric Boersma

**In Attendance:** Approximately 23 people (includes Board members)



**I. Call to Order:** Peter Kushner, 7:02 pm

- Welcome
- Zoom meeting procedures overview
- Reminder regarding resources: website, Neighborhood Plan, and e-mail newsletter (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month); also postings to separately-run Winchell Neighborhood Neighbors Only Facebook page
- Plan to continue to meet via Zoom for the March and April 2021 meetings; we hope to be able to do our annual car show in May at Winchell Elementary School
- March meeting guest speaker was supposed to be the (now former) KDPS chief but we are seeking alternative possibilities from KDPS
- We are adding another special guest speaker to the March meeting: Jamie McCarthy from the City of Kalamazoo will be presenting a more detailed update on the Natural Features Protection zoning overlay Phase 2
- Neighborhood updates (can be found on website and e-news)
  - Urban deer issues: building on our last month's guest speaker from MDNR, P. Kushner is moving forward to build an ad hoc committee of city-wide neighborhood representatives; P. Kushner has met with eight other neighborhoods' representatives already; has secured representatives to work through goals and objectives with the DNR, Kalamazoo Nature Center, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo Christian High School, and some other groups, as well as representatives to help obtain data. The goal of the committee is to find ways to effectively manage our urban deer population in the City of Kalamazoo.
  - Proposed bike trail at Glen Park South: ODWNA Board members met with some members of the Parks & Rec Advisory Board (PRAB) and the Director of Parks & Recreation, Sean Fletcher. More information has been requested from PRAB regarding the project. The ODWNA Board's goal was to seek more information regarding the project, how it aligns with the Neighborhood Plan, NFP, etc. Once the Board has had an opportunity to review those answers, we will schedule a neighborhood-wide meeting so all voices can be heard on it.
- Opportunity for questions regarding neighborhood business
- Introduction of Guest Speaker, Linda Whitlock, retired (2019) MSU Extension educator

**II. Treasurer's Report**

- None

**III. Neighborhood Business (Old and New):**

- None

**IV. Notes from our Guest Speaker:**

- What is a Native Plant?
  - Plant growing here before European settlement
- Why Plant Natives?
  - Adapted to our environment
  - VIPs for native insects, birds & wildlife for food & habitat
    - Entomology research indicates that our native oak trees support about 600 species of native caterpillars versus the non-native Ginkgo tree, which only supports 5 native caterpillar species. For chickadees to raise one brood of young takes about 6000 caterpillars. So just that one species of plant has a major impact in our native landscapes.
    - Native bees have adapted here to hatch based on when their preferred food source is available, which is how they pollinate our plants, which we rely on for food
- Friendly Natives
  - Vs. invasive species (not native to area, grow aggressively and outcompete existing native plants, and in some cases such as with garlic mustard, releases a chemical from roots that prevents other plants from growing in the area)
  - Vs. vigorous natives (once established, become very time consuming and expensive to get rid of)
  - Do background checks. There are zone ratings. We are in zones 5b-6a. Doing background checks on plants is worthwhile because if can manage it before it gets firmly entrenched, will have an easier time dealing with them
  - Free plant starts – can be a wonderful way to get native plants free of charge but again, do research regarding the plant, what it needs to thrive, and whether it is a vigorous grower.

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- Natives v Nativars
  - Plants created from different native parents
  - Bred for qualities we like; scent, color, bloom time
  - May not be as valuable as their parents to insects, birds, wildlife
- \*\*\*WHAT SOURCES DO YOU RECOMMEND CHECKING TO DETERMINE WHETHER A PLANT IS NATIVE/INVASIVE to your zone?
- \*\*\*WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND DOING TO DETERMINE WHETHER A NATIVAR is good/not good?
- \*\*\*REQUIRED MAINTENANCE ON RAIN GARDENS?
- Rain Gardens
  - Shallow depression
  - Capture rainwater, runoff & prevent erosion
  - Holds water temporarily
  - Removes pollutants
  - Plant with appropriate native plants with deep roots
- Planting Success
  - What's needed?
    - Healthy plant
    - Healthy soil
    - Water
    - Light (know in advance the plant's requirements for light in order to have it healthy)
- Start with Healthy Soil
  - Options:
    - Free basic test at many garden centers
    - MSU soil test kit - \$25 (order online or purchase @ MSUE downtown in Kalamazoo County administration building – open by appointment only right now)
- Planting for Success
  - The 5 P's
    - **P**roper **P**lanting **P**revents **P**oor **P**erformance
    - For trees grown in a pot, loosen the root ball before planting. Those roots will have a tendency to continue to grow in a circle if left in a ball. Make sure to water regularly. For a period of a year, make sure the root zone does not dry out completely so it has time to establish itself in the soil.
    - Mulch can help reduce the amount of water that you need to add (about 2-4" around plants but leave a few inches open around the stem so insects don't have easy access to the stem)
    -
- No Mow Lawns (Native) - Sun
  - Buffalo grass
  - Pennsylvania sedge
- No Mow Lawns (Native) – Shade (deer don't like to eat these)
  - Epimedium
  - Moss
  - Ajuga or bugle weed
- Groundcovers
  - Wild ginger
  - Wild strawberry
- Ferns
  - Lady fern
  - Maidenhair fern
- Perennials for Sun
  - Senna
  - Penstemon
  - Showy goldenrod
  - Bee balm, *Monarda*
- Perennials for Shade
  - Woodland phlox
  - Foam flower, *Tiarella*
  - Wild geranium
  - Bleeding heart
- Perennials for Wet Gardens
  - Joe-pye weed
  - Virginia bluebells
  - Swamp milkweed
- Growing Up – Vines
  - Vigin's bower, *Clematis virginiana*

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- ○ American wisteria
- Native Shrubs for Sun
  - Ninebark
  - Witch hazel (often the last shrub to blossom each year)
  - American beautyberry
- Native Shrubs for Shade
  - Oakleaf hydrangea
  - Rhododendron
  - Buttonbush
- Native Shrubs – Evergreen
  - Common juniper
  - American holly
- Native Trees – Small
  - Serviceberry, shadblow
  - Eastern redbud
  - Flowering dogwood
- Native Trees – Large
  - Paper Birch
  - Little leaf Linden
  - Red maple
- Native Trees – Evergreen
  - Eastern white pine
  - White spruce
  - Arborvitae
- Purchasing Native Plants
  - Hidden Savanna Nursery, Kalamazoo
  - Prudential Nursery, Vicksburg
  - Many local garden centers offer some natives – ask!
  - Wildtype Native Plants, Mason
  - Friends with benefits (i.e., extra plants)
- Digging Deeper Online
  - Kalamazoo Wild Ones – see Tom Small and his book
  - Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center – plant database – can be searched by region
  - North American Native Plants Society – plant database
  - MSU Native Plants
  - MISIN (Midwest Invasive Species Information Network) – Invasive plants database – can be used to report locations of invasive plants and fauna that you see

Linda Whitlock / [secretgardens11@gmail.com](mailto:secretgardens11@gmail.com)

### QUESTIONS:

- Q: Regarding natives, are they to be avoided completely or if not, do the resources Linda identified help figure out which ones are beneficial?
- One of the authors Linda likes is Alan Armitage (out of Georgia). He talks about not just the natives but also the natives. He is very upfront about whether he considers it to be something to stay away from or to have some value. If you are interested in supporting the native wildlife, they will not do the same job as the native species. There are some that will attract bees in the landscape or the birds, etc, but the quality of the food that they provide / quality of the habitat may not be quite as high.
- Q: Can you comment further about having plants bloom all through the spring and into the winter
- A: MSU has a couple of nice publications that show when these plants do bloom and often the list will show which pollinators or beneficial insects get value from those plants so you can really make informed decisions about the plants you are adding to your landscape. It is important to have a food source available early in the spring to as late in the season as possible. Pussywillow is probably the earliest blossoming plants and the bees on a warm spring day will be buzzing around those.
- Q: Availability of plants for purchase through the Kalamazoo County Conservation District and Van Buren County Conservation District. Are there any plant exchanges planned?
- A: (From Tom Small): Yes, the Wild Ones will host a native plant exchange on Sunday, June 6, 2021 at 1-5pm at 2502 Waite Avenue. It is an exchange. Nothing is for sale. People bring native plants and take native plants. If you are a newcomer, don't worry about bringing a native plant. You just have to promise that if you take a native plant, you will take care of it. There is also a sale on Saturday, May 29, 2021 at the Food Co-Op.
- A: (From Linda Whitlock): The Portage Library is in the process of creating a seed library. Hopefully that will start in 2021 and will be a new option available to people in this area.
- Q: In a real world application, what is your experience in working with municipalities and having more wild yards?
- A: Linda lives in Portage and has not had any experience with municipalities having issues with yards.

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- A: Tom Small said the City of Kalamazoo has a pretty liberal yard ordinance and the key word in the ordinance is "maintained." You have to have a plan and you have to maintain what you are doing. The City of Kalamazoo has never given them trouble with the yard. A neighbor once complained because of the corner sight lines. The City inspector came out and ultimately said "do what you can" and waked away. 20 years ago Tom worked hard with the City to write the present ordinance and the City's landscaping guide that is still being used.

### V. **Additional Public Comments:**

- P. Kushner thanked everyone for attendance and participation
- P. Kushner gave reminder of guest speakers for ODWNA March Meeting: Jamie McCarthy and Representative of KDPS

### VI. **Adjournment:** 8:29 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Christopher Bovid, ODWNA Secretary