

ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2015

Place: Winchell Elementary Library

Board Members:

Present: Peter Kushner, President; Chris Shook, Vice President, Sandy Bolstad, Secretary; Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer; Tom Keyser, Barb Ross, Paul Scott

Absent: Katherine Shook

In Attendance: 22 people + speakers (includes Board members)



- I. **Call to Order:** Peter Kushner, 7:00 pm
 - Sign-up sheet passed out
 - Stadium Lighting Ordinance: Monday December 7 City Commission meeting is the last meeting allowing for public input before a vote is taken. We encourage you to attend and speak out if you are interested in providing any last input.
- II. **Treasurer's Report**
 - We have about \$1464 in the account. Enough to cover the budget for the year. Thanks to our dues-paying members and sponsors!
 - City of Kalamazoo is updating the Kalamazoo Master Plan via the "Imagine 2025" process
 - Several committees were set up in order to provide input to the Master Plan
 - Diana is serving on the "Great Neighborhoods/Downtown" committee; she has already attended an Oakwood Neighborhood meeting in order to solicit their ideas/input. She would like anyone that has input or ideas to help by providing input to her. Suggestion: think of your top 3 dreams for Kalamazoo and the top 3 barriers. You can email her via the website or check with her after our meeting for her ODWNA email address.
 - Friday December 18 there is a 7:00 pm benefit concert at the Community of Christ Church. Bring food bank items for donation for the food pantry. 2523 Amherst in the Oakwood Neighborhood.
- III. **Secretary's Report**
 - No meeting in December, enjoy your holidays and we'll see you all in January when our speaker (Peter Copeland) will discuss local Frank Lloyd Wright homes.
- IV. **Neighborhood Business (Old and New):**
 - Frank Wolf – Friends of Woods Lake (FOWL)
 - Woods Lake Park will open Memorial Day. New restrooms, picnic tables, 2 spaces down at the beach for handicap vehicles only, a dock in the wetlands area, stone retaining walls, a playground area, a fishing area, altogether there will have been \$800,000 in improvements.
 - There was a loss of public access from the original plan. Part of the path between Woods Lake beach and Oakwood Park were not completed.
 - Thursday December 3 there is a meeting on the outstanding issues. This will be at 251 Mills Street near the ballpark.
- V. **Public Comments:**
 - (None).

Notes from our Speakers:

Guest Speakers: Bob Miller, WMU and Sandy Bliesener, OCBA Landscape Architects

Topic: Colony Farm Orchard Engineering and Design

- Design is not complete. Interested in community input.
- Existing Business Technology Research Park (BTR) houses 42 companies with 850 employees; 15 are high tech companies, all add to the Kalamazoo tax base. The environmental management and water runoff management of the existing BTR has won awards. The existing park is full – all spaces are occupied/sold.
- 7 Engineering Teams responded to the call for bids for design of the new BTR. The selected firms were OCBA (O'Boyle, Cowell, Blalock & Associates, Inc.) as Landscape Architects and FTC&H (Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc.) as the architectural/engineering firm.
- One of the main premises of the new development on the Colony Farm Orchard property is that whatever happens, no harm shall be done to the Asylum Park Reserve.

- OCBA plans to conduct a charrette to gather community input. Announcements of this will be upcoming in the next few weeks and will be broadcast via television and radio media, etc. They want to hear from everyone interested in providing input before any design begins.
 - Pete asked that they also email the board with this information so we can broadcast that information to our neighborhood.

- Q&A session:

Q: What's the status of removing the few thousand pounds of gravel at the corner of Stadium Dr. & Drake Rd.?

A: This is not on the CFO property, but on the former trailer park site which is now owned by the WMU Foundation. They allowed MDOT to temporarily place the gravel there while they were completing the Stadium Dr./US 131 overpass project. MDOT has been asked to remove it. Between the old trailer park and the CFO the grade is steep and will not be developed. The old trailer park site will not be part of the new BTR being developed at the old Colony Farm Orchard.

Q: How many acres will Phase 2 encompass and where is it exactly located?

A: S. of Stadium, N. of Parkview, E. of 131, W. of Drake, 55 acres

Q: Will they take the congestion of traffic on Parkview Avenue, especially during rush hours, into consideration and try to focus on alleviating rather than adding to it?

A: The existing BTR has a single entry to cut down on traffic issues. They hope to be able to work on traffic issues as part of the considerations.

Q: Are there plans to work with Oshtemo on traffic issues?

A: Yes

Q: Who will receive the tax beneficiary of the new BTR?

A: Oshtemo, as the land sits in their Township, not in the City of Kalamazoo

Q: How will we be notified of the charrette?

A: Mass media

Q: What is the timeline for construction? Projected start and end dates.

A: Unknown. The interest is in doing it right more than doing it quick. As a guess, the earliest likely start date would be late next summer or early fall.

Q: What percentage of the park is expected to be developed?

A: Current BTR is 265 acres and 137 acres is developed. Not very densely populated by design. We would expect Phase 2 to be the same type of density.

Q: Because these were orchards, there are likely contaminated soils. Are you planning for what to do/how to handle?

A: Yes, we will have to.

Q: Has Oshtemo developed zoning to disallow for certain kinds of development, such as manufacturing?

A: Not yet, but the existing zoning for the BTR says, "No manufacturing using raw materials".

Q: What type of businesses are you targeting for occupying space in Phase 2?

A: High tech companies that can bring job creation. Not donut shops or law firms.

Q: Are there plans for the old trailer park area?

A: No plans as of yet, the Foundation is not in a hurry to develop it.

Q: Does WMU have a say on who occupies Phase 2?

A: Yes

VI. **Adjournment:** 8:10 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary