

ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2013

Place: Winchell Elementary Library

Board Members:

Present: Peter Kushner, President; Chris Shook, Vice President; Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer, Sandy Bolstad, Secretary; Becky Mutsaers, Barb Ross, Kathy Shook.

Absent: Tom Keyser



- I. **Call to Order:** Peter Kushner, 7:05 pm
 - o Welcome
- II. **Secretary's Report**
 - No meeting in December - next meeting:
 - o 7:00 pm; Jan. 15: Co-Existing with Wild Animals in Urban Settings, Pam DeCuypere, Circle D Wildlife Refuge
- III. **Treasurer's Report**
 - Thanks to an anonymous donation, our business members and several people paying their dues last month, we are in relatively good shape to make it through the remainder of this year.
 - What the dues pay for:
 - o Postcards (mailing, printing, postage) to announce neighborhood meeting dates and speakers
 - o Signs for events such as the Car Show
 - o Ad for the Neighborhood Garage Sale that occurs each year in the spring/summer
 - Discussed balance and how we are doing financially.
- IV. **Old Business:**
 - Pete mentioned that digital billboards have been approved for installation by the city for both Stadium Drive and W. Main St. locations. There is also one proposed for the top of the Olde Peninsula building. If you have concerns regarding this, there is a link in the November eNews and on the website providing more information on who to reach out to.
- V. **New Business:**
 - None
- VI. **Public Comments:**
 - None

Notes from our Speaker:

Guest Speakers: Katie Timber, Director of Animal Care and Community Outreach

Topic: SPCA of SW Michigan Community Outreach

The SW Michigan SPCA (www.spcaswmich.org) is a no-kill shelter on KL Avenue. They are 6th in the state for their "save rate" which is over 98%. They visit the County Shelter about twice a week, and overall, they rescue about 1200 – 1500 animals per year. Because of this, they have had cats for as long as 5 years. The adoption fees range from free to \$300. They opened their own spay/neuter clinic this year, so all of the animals adopted from their facility are spayed or neutered before being adopted. This is an important step in preventing the overpopulation of animals without homes. In Kalamazoo County, the save rate is only 30%. This is really a poor statistic for a community of our size.

Kalamazoo County last year:

	Taken In	Euthanized
Dogs	1960	864
Cats	1844	1168

Nationally, 6 to 8 million animals are taken in each year, and 4 million of those are euthanized.

In Michigan in 2011, 86,014 animals were euthanized.

It is estimated that there are 9 billion free roaming cats in the United States. Cats multiply quickly if not spayed/neutered, so it is important to spay/neuter as a first step in population control. (In looking for the bright side, the ODWNA Secretary notes the mouse and rat population would probably be much worse without these free roaming cats, but it is still a tough life for these cats). Also, we have a Pit Bull epidemic. It was pointed out that many other breeds of dogs have a worse record for biting people.

The SW Michigan SPCA is dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and responsible adoption of homeless pets. They do a “meet your match” behavioral matching with dogs. This helps, for instance, ensure that a person that is pretty much a couch potato does not adopt a dog that needs to be walked daily in order to stay healthy and happy. One of their goals is to up the rate of adoptions.

They have many programs and are also focused on partnerships with other organizations – here are some examples:

- “Cold noses, warm hearts” provides dog houses to those in need.
- “Buy local Kalamazoo” partner
- WMU Guide Dog program
- “Back in Black” program to promote adoptions of black animals. You would be surprised at how many people are still superstitious about black animals, especially cats. They have it the worst of all animals in terms of adoption rates.
- Always happy to have Corporate Sponsorships
- “Pet Smart” Cage where they take in an animal that Pet Smart couldn’t get adopted out and has reached it’s “stay limit” at the store.
- Working with Parks and Recreation and Red Cross to try to come up with a plan for Disaster Planning. In an environmental event, many animals get left behind but other people won’t leave because of their animals, so shelters where people can take their animals are an important part of planning.

There are many areas of need, including money, supplies, medications and volunteers. Volunteers are welcome for whatever time they can donate. **You can even sign dogs out to walk them.**

VII. **Adjournment:** 7:50 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary