

ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2013

Place: Winchell Elementary Library

Board Members:

Present: Peter Kushner, President; Sandy Bolstad, Secretary; Tom Keyser, Becky Mutsaers, Barb Ross

Absent: Chris Shook, Vice President; Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer, Kathy Shook.



- I. **Call to Order:** Peter Kushner - 7:00 pm
 - o Welcome
 - o Benefit Hockey Game Saturday 2/22 at Wings Stadium for KPS Cuffs and Ladders Fund

- II. **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.

- III. **Secretary's Report**
 - Next meeting: 7:00 pm on Mar. 19: Pam O'Connor, author of *Kalamazoo Lost and Found* will be present to talk about the Bronson Park Fountain.

- IV. **Old Business:**
 - None

- V. **New Business:**
 - None

- VI. **Public Comments:**
 - Be careful driving – people cannot see over or around snow banks, so pulling out of driveways blind, if you're driving down the streets, please pay attention and slow down.

Notes from our Speaker:

Guest Speakers: Sharon Ferrarro, Historic Preservation Coordinator, City of Kalamazoo

Topic: The Old House Network

An older home is defined as a home that is greater than 50 years old.

The Old House Network was founded partly to teach the skills like putting windows, replacing rope pulls, etc. in order to preserve and maintain older homes. One of the goals is to teach people to respect the character of an old house and to repair rather than replace. If you have an old house challenge, they will help you find the right answer(s).

An old house is not like a new house. You need to understand what you are working with and why it was built that way. For instance, gaps in sheathing under an old cedar shingle roof are intentional. They were needed to accommodate the expansion and contraction of the wood during various types of weather. In other cases, faux windows were put on outside of houses just for aesthetic balance on the outside of the house.

If you have an old porch post that is rotted at the bottom, you can cut it off and replace just the bottom, and if you do this with a stair step style cut, it will blend in better and be more supportive.

The old Gate Cottage at the old Psychiatric Hospital is completely restored like it was back in the 1800's except for the gate. It is furnished with furnishings from the period and it is open to the public during Summer Fest.

Classes taught include:

- Mortar Repointing and Repair. This one can be taught during the winter. In the old days, mortar was cheap and considered a sacrificial material. The old mortar was 500 psi, while new mortar was 5000 psi. You cannot mix materials and expect the materials to coexist well together. The new stuff doesn't allow for expansion and contraction due to temperature and moisture changes. Most sand that was used for old mortar was local. They can teach you how to use the correct materials. You can also give the (new) mortar a wash in muriatic acid to get the colors closer to matching.
- Window repair. Classes range from a single day to two weeks long for contractors. Hoekstra's and Gale's True Value are your best sources for replacement window parts.

Paint stripping from woodwork: Lead is white, so if you have a truly black paint, it likely has no lead. The best way to remove old paint from woodwork is a speed heater. It works much more quickly, and the paint will separate from the woodwork pretty easily.

Every year they take a house and do a "great unveiling". They remove unoriginal siding from a house to get it back to the original look. They sometimes uncover things like fish scale accents, etc. so it can be a bit exciting, but is tough work. They can always use volunteers and donations. They usually use tools and sometimes a volunteer manager from Habitat for Humanity since Habitat for Humanity managers are used to supervising volunteers.

In really old homes (pre 1910), gas was often used for lighting. The pipes are about the size of a water line, and were originally black (but may have been painted since). You want to be very careful when doing any renovations around these gas lines.

They have an Old House Expo every year. The goals are:

- Networking
- Education (DIY or hire a pro?)
- Inspiration
- Finding contractors and materials appropriate for your old home
- Fund raising

The Old House Network was founded in 2003, and in 2006 they became a non-profit and a 501c3 in 2008.

They recently were given "Ted's house" which belonged to a veteran named Ted who they had helped a lot. They plan to work on redoing it and use it as a place for workshops. They think they will continue working on it for about 5 years and then sell it and perhaps buy another house and do the same.

Sharon has taught classes on researching your old home, and the library has instructions on how to research your old home. (I attended this class once and it was fascinating).

They do have a Facebook page and a website: www.oldhousenetwork.org

VII. **Adjournment:** 8:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary