

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday September 15, 2021

Place: Third Christian Reformed Church – Fellowship Hall

Board Members:

Present: Peter Kushner, President; Chris Shook, Vice President; Christopher Bovid, Secretary; Kathy Shook, Treasurer; Eric Boersma

Excused: Paul Scott, Diana Morton-Thompson

In Attendance: Approximately 32 people (includes Board members)



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

- Welcome, appreciation for those able to attend.
- Thank you to Third Reformed Church for use of the building for this meeting while Kalamazoo Public Schools (“KPS”) decides facilities use by non-KPS groups
- Pass-around of sign-up sheet for monthly ODWNA eNews
- Information regarding ODWNA website: winchellneighborhood.org
 - Also posts are usually copied and posted on the Winchell Neighborhood Neighbors Only page on Facebook
- Information regarding Speaker Series postcard mailing
- Introduction of ODWNA Board of Directors, Officers
- Neighborhood Community Read update: the book is *Nature’s Best Hope* by Douglas Tallamy
- Information regarding ODWNA Board of Directors’ focus on issues in the Oakland Drive-Winchell Neighborhood Plan that has been incorporated into the City of Kalamazoo’s Master Plan
 - Complete Streets
 - Safe Routes To School (SRTS) Initiative grants
 - I. Winchell Elementary School and Maple Elementary School are working on separate grants
 - II. City of Kalamazoo is working toward finishing and submitting the grant application(s)
 - III. City of Kalamazoo is working on a sidewalk on the south side of Winchell Avenue between Oakland Drive and Rambling Road
 - i. Anticipated timeline for completion is 2023-2024
 - Traffic Calming efforts as outlined in ODWN Plan
 - I. City of Kalamazoo understands the need to start with Winchell Avenue
 - II. Two ways to encourage traffic calming:
 - i. Traffic Enforcement (currently the City has one dedicated traffic enforcement officer)
 - ii. Physical Infrastructure
 - 1. Bike lanes on either side of Winchell Avenue to visually narrow the two lanes down to 11 feet each
 - 2. Looking at other ways on other streets (mini-traffic circles, bollards)
 - III. City of Kalamazoo has created a survey on a website at imaginekalamazoo.com/projects/winchellavenuetrafficcalming
 - IV. Discussion regarding potential for 4-way stop at Winchell Avenue and Aberdeen
- Deer Population in the City: City of Kalamazoo neighborhoods have designated representatives to be on an ad hoc committee to review issues with deer in the City, review deer management plans (approximately 20 different deer management plans reviewed from places in Maine to Texas); survey the City regarding feelings concerning deer and deer management, and to generate a report on findings and present it to the City Commission

II. Treasurer’s Report

- Annual reminder that everyone in the ODWN is automatically a member of the ODWNA and can provide feedback, comments, attend meetings, volunteer, etc. If you want to vote, dues are \$20 per year (with two votes per household). Costs support eNews, website, signage, postcard mailings, and car show.
- Preferably dues would be by the end of October.

III. Neighborhood Business (Old and New):

- Introduction of Judy Marcus-Paget (Director of 60th District Office / Rep. Julie Rogers) covering the Winchell Neighborhood
- Address and email and phone number for the 60th District Office as the access point to State Government
- If anyone has questions, comments, concerns, please contact the 60th District Office
- Majority of calls lately have been with Dept. of Labor/unemployment and Secretary of State issues

IV. Introduction of Guest Speaker: Troy Thrash, President & CEO of the Air Zoo, Portage, Michigan

- Founded 1979, started with 5 privately owned aircraft (all of which were named after animals, hence the name “Air Zoo”)
- Substantial growth, including rides

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- Since 2013 expanding focus to hands-on, inspirational, interactive education for young people
- Many educational systems don't provide enough opportunities to do hands-on science education, so the Air Zoo helps provide those chances to do real science and real engineering
- Due to the pandemic, large-scale programs were turned virtual (out of the roughly 100 programs, approximately 85 of them were turned virtual very quickly) and all were virtual eventually
- The Air Zoo staff-built science kits to send to kids in their homes (including in Alaska, California, Mexico)
- The stories of the aircraft in the Air Zoo are being kept alive for young people and draw people in
- One big piece of that is an effort to have each child somehow reflected in the heroes that they see on the exhibit floor
- The Smithsonian gave the Air Zoo a permanent exhibit called Black Wings – American Dreams of Flight
- Another initiative is the Women In Air & Space (four smaller displays have now been built, including one on Amelia Earhardt, one on the real 'Rosie the Riveters' of World War II)
- Now bringing even more hands-on experiences to the exhibit floor (e.g., science behind flying, electricity and magnetism, rockets), hosting of 15 former SR-71 pilots for four days to interact with and educate adult and child guests
- Every February, the Air Zoo hosts a Corporate Engineering Challenge working with many local companies and over 200 girls, ages 9-12, to inspire interest in technical education and work, realizing multiple solutions to a problem
- More aircraft are regularly donated
- Every summer give open cockpit flights around Kalamazoo
- 2013-2019 showed 71% growth, far in excess of museums nationally
- The number of children impacted in the Air Zoo classrooms has nearly tripled
- USA Today named the Air Zoo the #6 air and space museum in the country (behind the Smithsonian, Kennedy Space Center, etc.)
- One very unique program invented about 8 years ago is Aircraft Restoration. Currently 75 restoration volunteers working at the Air Zoo. (Gemini Capsule from NASA, XP-55 (one of three ever built) from the Smithsonian, and a Sockwith-Camel WWI fighter plane)
- SBD WWII fighter plane was one of about 130 airplanes that was recovered from Lake Michigan fully recovered after 7 years
- In 1942, the Navy needed to train more pilots to fly. Most aircraft carriers were in use in the Pacific. The Navy bought ships, flattened their decks, built them out and turned them into 2/3 scale aircraft carriers. Every day from 1942-1945, the make-shift aircraft carriers left Chicago and went 20 miles off the coast, and in 3 years trained 17,000 pilots to land on a moving ship. Pilots had to prove could take off and land from these ships 8 straight times.
- FM-2 Wildcat pulled out of Lake Michigan on Dec. 7, 2012, that had been there for 68 years. The Navy was looking for restoration proposals. The Air Zoo put in its proposal to the Navy. The proposal was to do the restoration right on the exhibit floor rather than behind closed doors. The public is not only able to see it but also to work with the restoration team. This was in furtherance of the Air Zoo's educational mission. The Navy selected the Air Zoo to do the restoration work. The Air Zoo first brought in West Michigan Aviation Academy in Grand Rapids to work on the aircraft.
- The Air Zoo values being fearlessly innovative and not being afraid to fail.
- The Navy liked the hands-on restoration project so much that it decided to make it a model for restoration on its other assets.
- SBD 2173 that served in Pearl Harbor during WWII and in the Battle of the Coral Sea has now been donated from the Navy for restoration.
- Now middle schools, scout troops (as far as 4 hours away), other groups come to work on restoration.
- SBD 2173 will be shipped to Honolulu, HI for dedication and permanent residency at Pearl Harbor with the names of over 1500 volunteers from southwest Michigan who have worked on it
- The U.S. Air Force is slowly releasing F-117 fighters to museums. The Air Zoo was named the first non-government museum to receive a F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter.
- The U.S. Navy recently contacted the Air Zoo and offered another SBD 2173 from Lake Michigan to restore.

Audience Q&A:

- There are only two people in the world who know where the crashed planes are in Lake Michigan using ships logs and side-scan sonar. The Navy then decides which aircraft it wants to bring up based on the significance of their history and other focuses.
- The Air Zoo has about 50% earned revenue and the other 50% donations and an endowment that can be drawn from every year.
- None of the restored aircraft are flyable.
- After the pandemic, the Air Zoo will likely alter its approach to education. Recently discussed construction of a new building for a completely different type of educational experience and looking at the future of flight and experiential, event opportunities to be immersed in the idea of perhaps colonizing Mars, etc.

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- The Air Zoo's former air shows and the costs and liabilities with it, in conjunction with the Air Zoo museum itself, were cost prohibitive. That is why the Air Zoo brings in other experiences (e.g., the working B-29, the working C-47, recently in summer 2021 a B-25, etc.).



V. **Additional Public Comments**

- P. Kushner thanked everyone for attending.
- Next month's speaker is Derek Nofz from Consumers Energy regarding alternative energy sources for residences.

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Christopher Bovid, ODWNA Secretary