

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Place: Third Christian Reformed Church – Fellowship Hall

Board Members:

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

Excused: Paul Scott, Diana Morton-Thompson, Pete Kushner

In Attendance: Approximately 20 people (includes Board members)



I. **Call to Order:** Chris Shook, Vice President, 7:00 pm

- Welcome, appreciation for those able to attend.
- Pete Kushner is attending the City of Kalamazoo Environmental Concerns Committee meeting to present the results of the multi-neighborhood ad hoc committee's deer survey. The ECC will give feedback that will go back to the ad hoc committee and ultimately that will be presented to the Kalamazoo City Commission. Eventually the published content will be made publicly available.
- Thank you to Third Christian Reformed Church for use of the building for this meeting while Kalamazoo Public Schools ("KPS") decides facilities use by non-KPS groups.
- Reminder regarding the ODWNA website: winchellneighborhood.org
 - Also posts are usually copied and posted on the Winchell Neighborhood Neighbors Only page on Facebook
- January 2021 guest speaker is Bobby Durkee from the City of Kalamazoo to discuss the history of the Oakland Drive-Winchell Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Community Read update: the book is *Nature's Best Hope* by Douglas Tallamy

II. **Introduction of Guest Speaker: Derek Nofz, Community Affairs for Consumers Energy**

- Thanks for patience with Consumers Energy on Phillips-Lindberg HVD line replacement project in the Oakland Drive-Winchell Neighborhood in the last couple of years. It is an important upgrade.
- FYI: All of the Consumers Energy 'power-point'-like presentations are on its website in the 'residential' section in case anyone wants to dig into them at home.
- 2021 Clean Energy Plan
 - Originally announced in 2019 shuttering all coal-fueled power plants by 2030 or 2040. Now think they can shut those plants down by 2025.
 - Plan has been submitted to Michigan Public Service Commission with backfilling of those and using natural gas plants (seeking to purchase gas plants in Covert, MI [1176 megawatts] and a "peaker" plant in Comstock, MI)
 - Company is doing its best to offer jobs to those employees at closing locations new positions
 - Coal makes up 19% of power generation today for Consumers.
 - By 2025, 0% coal with 10% storage, 15% customer efficiency programs, and 35% renewable
 - Hope to save customers \$650,000,000 through the plan
 - Solar panels do not love heat – they actually perform best in 55 degrees and slightly overcast
 - Planning to have net-zero emissions
 - To the extent that efficiencies go into place, helps prevent building new power plants
- Home Energy Analysis programs
- Power MiDrive – Electric Vehicle Chargers (rebates for public chargers and residential / garage-based chargers)
- Consumers Energy encourages home energy efficiency
- For home solar power, consider Distributed Generation (ie, rooftop solar), formerly known as "net metering." Most of the systems are not whole-house, especially at peak operating in the summer. Most homes are still pulling energy off the grid and putting energy back onto the grid. When residents pull energy from the grid, we pay about three times less than what Consumers Energy pays for energy put back into the grid. There is a 1% cap on total megawatt generation from solar currently but there is legislation to lift the cap (although the subsidies need to be adjusted first).
 - Consumers Energy is currently functionally at the 1% cap
- Consumers Energy's philanthropic programs for the community
 - This Small Business Saturday – passing out 10 "Downtown Dollars" downtown
 - Gift Card Matching program should be launching right around CyberMonday matching the "Downtown Dollars" program, dollar-for-dollar
- StreetLights.ConsumersEnergy.com – website revolutionized in the last 90 days
 - Now has a mapping feature. Every streetlight has a dot. If someone is out at night and notices a streetlight out and goes to streetlights.consumersenergy.com and has location services enabled, it will show the light on the map in front of the person. Just click on the dot, report outage, write what is wrong with it, etc., and the person will get an email with the status, when it is fixed, etc.
 - A Phase II (ability to take pictures, perhaps with a pole hit by the car lying in the grass, etc.) to submit and helps crews be more prepared with what they will need before heading out.

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Audience Q&A:

- Why is Michigan not a great location for wind energy? Derek does not know per se. There will still be some wind projects. There are a few major wind farms (one near Ludington pump storage and the other in the Bay area, and one in Hillsdale County).
- In Washington DC area, there is no cap. Is this cap coming from the industry or where did it come from? Derek says it is old and clearly it is time for an update. At that time the energy companies' thinking was probably not as future-forward. At the time the subsidies were initially determined, the cap was needed to prevent the flood gates from opening on the utilities paying astronomical sums for subsidies for energy put back into the grid.
- Why is 'energy storage' on the bar graph? Putting energy in means it has to be generated first – so is it being 'double counted'? Derek suggests that storage is a part of renewable energy generation/production system. As an example, solar is not generated at night, but when it is not being used as generated, it can be stored and be 'giving'.
- Discussion regarding use of natural gas (a fossil fuel) as a power generation replacement for coal, another fossil fuel.
- Any thinking regarding nuclear energy generation as a part of Consumers Energy's future energy plan? Derek says it is not currently part of Consumers Energy's 20-year plan. It has not been proven in the U.S. (it is very expensive in terms of regulations and safety.) Palisades is the only one left for Consumers and it is supposed to be shut down in 2022.
- In terms of expanding solar, does Consumers have plans to buy real estate to do projects? Its 8,000-megawatt plans are 50% Consumers Energy and 50% private.
- What happens to the solar panels at the end of their useful life? Derek says a lot of the components these days are recyclable.
- There are certain private energy companies (e.g., EDF Renewables, owned by a French utility company, setting up solar farms in Hart Township, Michigan on land leased from farmers). Would those solar farm developers keep the infrastructure to Consumers Energy or other providers, or would they sell the developed infrastructure to the power companies? Derek says they would usually sell the energy.
- Will capacity go down over time? Derek says Consumers Energy does anticipate reduced use with efficiency but with healthy growth in Michigan as well, so hopefully there is a balance.
- Considering transportation, is that a significant capacity driver as well? Derek says based on folks in the industry that Consumers had talked to, their expectation is having a million vehicles plugged into that grid and that the grid will be adequate.
- Regarding incentives to push electrical demand to the nighttime, thinking about a million electric vehicles coming to Michigan and other energy use leveling measures, will energy use potentially be level? Derek thinks there will still be peaks in the hottest part of the afternoon in the summers, etc.
- One of the other things Consumers Energy is looking at is, considering the map of Michigan, and with different 'levels' of super chargers, can a person have an electric vehicle and reasonably hit the various charging stations when heading across the state east-west and/or north-south. Recently there was an electric vehicle rally in Kalamazoo.
- Question regarding ownership of electric car chargers – how would a million electric cars in the state not result in back-ups?
- Will Consumers Energy be recycling batteries in electric vehicles? Recycling of a lithium battery is a huge issue. Derek assumes that will fall more on the car dealers as it isn't as much a piece of what Consumers Energy does. Someone else suggested that the batteries last a long time and even after done with cars, they can have a second life for other power sources not as demanding as automobiles.
- Appreciation expressed for Consumers Energy subsidizing LED bulbs.
- Every time a streetlight burns out, Consumers Energy is now replacing it with an LED bulb (not proactively since more than 10,000 streetlights in the State of Michigan).

III. **Additional Public Comments**

- Chris Shook said the ODWNA will notify every one of the location, when known, for the next meeting in January.
- Chris Shook thanked everyone for attending.

IV. **Adjournment:** 8:55 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Christopher Bovid, ODWNA Secretary