

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Place: Third Christian Reformed Church – Small Conference Room

Board Members:

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

Excused: Paul Scott, Diana Morton-Thompson, Eric Boersma

In Attendance: Approximately 32 people (includes Board members)



I. **Call to Order:** Pete Kushner, President, 7:00 pm

- Welcome, introduction
- Woods Lake Winter Golf Classic has been cancelled by City Parks & Rec due to lack of ice on Woods Lake
- Kalamazoo Craft Beer Week started this week
- Next Saturday starts the Kalamazoo downtown Chili Cook-off
- There is an update on the impact of the Foundation For Excellence as this is its fifth year
- Next month's speaker is Christina Anderson, City Planner, regarding the Streets For All / Connected City initiative

II. **New Business**

- Katie Bloom states that she assumed the ODWNA Nominating Committee would be created at this January meeting based on her interpretation of the ODWNA Constitution and its requirements for the Board to appoint a Nominating Committee made up of Regular Members by February. Mrs. Bloom offered her own name to be considered for appointment to the ODWNA Nominating Committee. Mrs. Bloom insists that Nominating Committee members are to be "Regular Members" and presented a printed copy of the ODWNA Constitution to Pete Kushner.
 - Pete Kushner stated that historically the ODWNA Nominating Committee members have been selected from current members of the Board of Directors (all of whom have paid their dues and are "Voting Members" and therefore also "Regular Members" per the definitions in the ODWNA Constitution).
 - Mrs. Bloom questions whether the current board members/officers were even properly elected pursuant to the ODWNA Constitution. Pete Kushner assured Mrs. Bloom that to the best of the Board of Directors' knowledge, all board member and officer election and appointment processes have been properly followed since the current version of the Constitution was adopted (2011) but that the Board will review those processes again since she has brought this concern to the Board's attention.
 - Chris Shook stated that he is on six non-profit corporation boards of directors and it is a common practice for nominating committees to be established from board members.
 - Another attendee questioned whether the Nominating Committee appointment process would be reviewed and the Nominating Committee appointed "before February 1". Pete Kushner stated that the Board of Directors would review the matter and take any required action.

The Secretary of the ODWNA reviewed the Constitution of the Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood Association presented to Pete Kushner by Katie Bloom at the meeting, which document makes clear that:

*The ODWNA Constitution *requires* a member of the Board of Directors to be a member of the Nominating Committee (i.e., one of at least three Nominating Committee members).

**The ODWNA Constitution does not prohibit appointment to the Nominating Committee of Regular Members who are also members of the Board of Directors.

***The ODWNA Constitution does not require that a Nominating Committee be appointed by February 1, but rather, "no later than February," which language is inclusive of every date on or before February 28.

In relevant part, the copy of the Constitution of the Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood Association presented to Pete Kushner by Mrs. Bloom states:

Article III

Sec.1 Membership Classes

A) **REGULAR Membership** shall be open to any resident of the Oakland Drive/Winchell Avenue Neighborhood.

B) **VOTING Membership** shall only be open to any Regular Member who is current in their dues.

Article V

Sec.1 Elected Officers and Executive Committee

A) The elected Officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Co-Presidents may function as President and Vice President.

Sec. 7 Term of Office

The term of office for all Officers of the Association shall be two (2) years.

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Sec. 8 Vacancies in Office

If a vacancy should occur in any of the offices of the Association, the President shall appoint a person to fill the vacant office for the remainder of that term, subject to the advice and consent of the Board of Directors.

Article VI

Sec. 1 Board of Directors

- A) A Board of Directors shall be established in the Association, to consist of:
- 1) Five (5) representatives of the Membership
 - 2) Four (4) elected Officers
 - 3) Past President

Sec. 5 Term of Office

The members of the Board of Directors shall be elected for a three (3) year term.

Sec. 6 Vacancy on Board

The President shall appoint members to fill all vacancies on the Board of Directors.

Article VII

Sec. 1 Standing Committees

- A) Association Standing Committees shall be established as:

- 1) **Nominating**
- 2) Communications
- 3) Membership
- 4) Programs
- 5) Election

- B) The President shall appoint, subject to the advice and consent of the Board of Directors, a Chairperson to head each of the Standing Committees. All Chairpersons shall be Voting Members of the Association.

Sec. 3 Committee Size and Membership

- A) These shall be determined by the Chairperson of the committee, in consultation with the President.
B) Each Board Member shall be required to be a Chairperson, or serve on at least one (1) Standing or Ad Hoc Committee for their entire term of office.

Article VIII

Sec. 1 Nominating Committee

- A) The Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee of not less than three (3) Regular Members no later than February.
B) The Nominating Committee shall meet as necessary to select candidates for election to all open Officer positions and to select candidates for all open positions on the Board of Directors.

Article V

Sec. 1

- C) The Executive Committee shall conduct the matters of business of the Association and carry out routine functions of the Association and implement policies as directed by the Board of Directors.

III. **Introduction of Guest Speaker: Paul Seldon, President and President of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo, author of The Complete Kalamazoo (1976), chair of Kalamazoo Bike Week; member of the Kalamazoo Bike Club, former Director of Road Safety**

- Bike Friendly Kalamazoo is a Michigan non-profit (501(c)(3)) organization
- Its mission is to make our community greater, meaning boundaries extended to counties beyond Kalamazoo
- Focus is on education, awareness building, and encouraging proper infrastructure and policies
- Started approximately 12 years ago with brainstorming sessions
- All volunteer board
- MPE-wide network of participants
- Building Community Through Bicycling

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- Audience questions/comments:
 - What political power does the organization have to influence infrastructure changes, etc.?
 - It is always through collegial relationships
 - People like to do things with people who are encouraging
 - Do we know if any of the infrastructure changes in this area have actually brought about increases in bicycling?
 - Paul hears that yes, it is working. There is additional technology that he has also come across that counts automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians
 - It would be nice if the City could start providing data about usage.
 - Paul has talked to people in Public Works and they have been using the many cameras in the City to count types of traffic to get useful data
 - Major infrastructure changes always bring about some negativity as people get exposed to it.
 -
- Major Events: May & Sept.
 - Kalamazoo Area Bike Week – Saturday before Mother’s Day through following Saturday (May 13-20, 2023)
 - Fall Bike Celebration – third weekend in September
 - Farmer’s Market “Bike In”
 - Kid’s Bike Rodeo (where kids roughly 3-10 years old learn the rules of the road from instructors on a closed course). Last year’s was in Vicksburg. Paul would love to see one at Winchell Elementary School.
 - Bike Tour (last one was Vicksburg to Climax and back)
 - The point of the events is to encourage safety by emphasizing treating bicyclists, and by extension, each other, better.
- Audience questions/comments:
 - Bike safety programs at schools would be nice to have implemented at every elementary school, even during recesses
 - Paul is excited to note that there are 45 area elementary schools in the Kalamazoo Transportation Area. This past year, money raised through grants and donations was enough to have two additional schools in south county at \$5,000 per school for a “all kids bike” Kindergarten P.E. program integrated into the regular physical education program at schools. It can be done in a gymnasium. Kids start out with a push-to-pedal bike. In the course of five years in a typical school the program reaches 500 children. The bikes come with pedal conversion kits. They get the pedals and learn how to balance and also learn social cooperation in navigating around each other.
 - I. The City of Portage just indicated that it is going to fund the program for four additional low-income area schools as well, which means 9 of the 45 schools in the area will now have the program.
 - Is there any research available from other communities as to the relative effectiveness of certain types of infrastructure changes as far as improvement of road relations?
 - There is, but it is often niche-focused.
 - MDOT also has a manual regarding it.
 - Localized research at WMU done by volunteer work has been used to reduce traffic incidents.
 - Does the local research indicate where bicycle danger hotspots are?
 - High density traffic areas in the metropolitan area in the City of Kalamazoo are the hot spots. Speed is always a major factor and is more deadly to any encounter.
 - Bike Friendly Kalamazoo also provides Bike Booster Mini-Grants
 - League Certified Cycling Instructor Scholarships
 - Public Murals: Joys of Bicycling
 - 7908 Lovers Lane, Portage – Thanks to site owner Jaime Clark of Clark Logic
 - Highly visible to thousands of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians
 - “When the Street Lights Come On” by local artist Ellen Vandermyde
 - Handouts of Southwest Region Road & Trail Guide and “Rules of the Road” pamphlets
 - Thank you to sponsors!
 - December – February Planning Mode and fundraising
 - Ask to join Paul Seldon in the effort
- Audience questions/comments:
 - Question regarding how improving automobile and bicycle relations is going in this area and what else can be done to improve motorist attitudes toward cyclists?
 - Talk with neighbors and work on it as a grass roots effort.
 - Paul believes the 5-foot passing ordinance here has made a difference. Yard signs that also give notice of the five-foot distance is also helpful as motorists see those.
 - Question about the “sin wave” bike lane/barrier on Lovell by the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. It went away – does Paul know why?
 - He does not.

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- The League of Michigan Bicyclists had loaned it to the City.
- CAT sponsored an adult educational series
 - Kalamazoo Bike Friendly events page lists adult educational events
 - Most of the training for bike facility design has been on the web since the COVID-19 pandemic started.
 - Kalamazoo Bicycle Club runs bike camps as well that are geared toward adult bicyclists.
 - Perhaps the ODWNA would be able to promote that in the neighborhood.
- Audience member has 5 family members and they were living in Chicago and looking for a softer place to be. They noticed that although this was a progressive place that there were very few bike lanes and asked what that meant about the vitality of the City. When they moved here and started seeing more bike lanes, etc., they were refreshed. Kalamazoo does not have a culture of commuting by bicycle but does Paul have an opinion on if and how the culture is changing?
 - Paul indicates that demonstration of people wanting to have those changes happening means things are improving.
- Part of the equation is not only how can we make our roads safe but increase the amount of use of bike lanes and use bikes being used for practical purposes. Perhaps Bike Friendly Kalamazoo could open up conversation with local employers for promoting bicycle commuting.
 - Paul agrees and offers open opportunities for volunteering with Bike Friendly Kalamazoo.
 - Public meetings are often not the best place to do that as it puts people on the spot. Most productive conversations seem to be personal in nature as they are more friendly. After all, their organization is Bike *Friendly* Kalamazoo.

Pete Kushner thanked Paul Seldon for his presentation regarding Bike Friendly Kalamazoo and adjourned the meeting.

IV. **Adjournment:** 8:11 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Christopher Bovid, ODWNA Secretary