

## ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, March 15, 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; Eric Boersma; Diana Morton-Thompson

**Excused:** Paul Scott

**In Attendance:** Approximately 35 people (includes Board members)



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

- A. Welcome, introduction
- B. If anyone would like to receive the ODWNA eNews that goes out on the third Monday of each month, sign up on the ODWNA website: [WinchellNeighborhood.org](http://WinchellNeighborhood.org).
- C. Introduction of KDPS Officer Bagley, covers Southwest side of the City of Kalamazoo.
  1. Not many crime statistics in ODWN – a couple of larcenies and breaking & enterings but nothing in the last week. Be sure to just lock car doors and house doors.
  2. The KDPS Academy is coming up and info is on the ODWNA website. It is two Saturdays of 'come be a cop for a day' – drive police cars, shoot guns, get fed well, learn what KDPS does. Officer Bagley does not know of a minimum age for it. Application and background investigation is required. Roughly 24-28 people have applied and the City takes approximately 30 people. Not everyone gets in – commonly it is due to background checks that show felonies.
- D. Detour scheduled for Winchell Ave. closure: March 27-April 4. The ODWNA has requested directed patrols in that area.
- E. Last month's "Streets For All" PDF presentation is on the ODWNA website.
- F. ODWNA Board elections:
  1. Applications need to be received by March 24. Information and links on the ODWNA website. Ballots will be distributed via email by May 3 and except in limited circumstances must be submitted electronically by May 17.
- G. The City's Easter Egg Hunt is being held once again at Mayor's Riverfront Park on April 8. It is broken down by age groups but families can go together.
- H. Next month our guest speaker will be resident Donna Keller: Lawn Lover to Native Gardener.
- I. ODWNA Treasurer's Report (presented by K. Shook). Monthly Balance Sheet ending Feb 28, 2023 - copies are available for taking. Balance in ODWNA checking account is \$7,739.61. We had 10 new voting members during that month. Four of our six eNews sponsors have paid. Tonight we have received more membership dues so the balance will presumably increase by next month.

**II. New Business**

- A. A gentleman states he is a new attendee and introduced himself as Bob Isacksen and that he lives on Broadway. Has a question regarding voting membership vs regular membership. Mr. Isacksen asks approximately how many regular members do we have in our association versus voting members. Pete Kushner stated that the number of regular members living in the neighborhood is unknown but there are approximately 1600 households. Voting membership numbers vary but per the Treasurer's records at present we have had about 50 households pay dues..
- B. Christine Chadderdon says she does not remember living through an election here. Chris Bovid stated that ODWNA's records clearly record having the last election by electronic ballot in 2019.
- C. Donna Keller is asking about the Nominating Committee and notes that it has a lot of responsibility, essentially determining the slate of candidates. She says her concern is that it is exclusive and is not representative of the Neighborhood. Chris Bovid stated that the Oakland Drive-Winchell Neighborhood Association is not a republic or other unit of government but rather, a Michigan non-profit corporation advocacy group for the Oakland Drive-Winchell Neighborhood. A non-profit corporation's nominating committee does not need to be representative.
- D. Katie Bloom asks where the ODWNA Constitution indicates that there are criteria considered for Board membership. She stated that she applied to be on the Nominating Committee and believes she is extremely qualified but was not appointed and that the other female applicant for the Nominating Committee was also not appointed. Katie Bloom wanted to know why she, herself, was not appointed. Chris Bovid stated that it would be inappropriate to openly announce issues with any applications for any ODWNA positions in such a forum but offered to discuss the matter privately after the meeting if she wished to do so.
- E. Tom Small asks about whether there is a provision for write-ins on the ballot. Pete Kushner stated that there is not and that as per the ODWNA Constitution it is a Nominating Committee that determines the slate of Board candidates for the ballot.
- F. Christine Chadderdon asks that if there was a resident who had not been on any boards or any executive committees, etc., if that meant they are not qualified to be considered for ODWNA Board membership according to the ODWNA's published evaluation criteria. Pete Kushner stated that, as set forth on the published list of ODWNA Board/Officer/Committee Member Evaluation Criteria, they "include, but are not limited to" the items in the list and that it is not a 'checklist' requiring every item. An applicant very heavy in one criterion might be more appealing than an applicant that lightly meets most criteria.
- G. An attendee asks whether this whole body would consider setting up a work session to talk about what the ODWNA Constitution is, are there changes that could be made, what is the interest level, and get feedback from everyone who

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has a positive or negative response to it, etc. Pete Kushner stated that the ODWNA Constitution was written decades ago and revised slightly in 2011 so it might be a good idea in the 2023-2024 ODWNA calendar to have an entire meeting or two dedicated to reviewing the ODWNA Constitution and consider changes to it.

- H. Donna Keller noted that there are 9 Board of Directors seats being voted on in the upcoming election. She asks how many of the current Board of Directors are planning on running. Pete Kushner stated he believes all of the current Directors are planning to reapply.
- I. Paul Marquardt stated that he believes the makeup of this Board of Directors and the decisions that have been made regarding the Nominating Committee are to just reinstate the current Board of Directors. Pete Kushner noted that prior to people becoming upset about the City's decisions regarding implementation of the ODWNA Neighborhood Plan, no one has applied to be on the Board of Directors in at least 7 years. During that time the current 7 members of the Board of Directors have been the only people in the neighborhood offering their time and talents to help run the organization and without specific agendas.
- J. An attendee further responds that she is applying to be on the Board. She stated she does have critiques of the Neighborhood Plan but does not feel threatened to apply. She also thinks there are ways to improve the ODWNA Constitution and does not think it has been an issue until people got upset about the City's decisions about how to implement the Neighborhood Plan and then wanted to be on the Board. She stated that in all of the non-profits in which she has worked before, the Boards of Directors were self-perpetuating. She stated that in one instance the CEO actually determined the next Board. She stated that regardless, it is bad to not have institutional knowledge. She thinks there is a way to critique the Neighborhood Plan and the ODWNA Constitution and improve on it in ways that are more civil than what is happening here.
- K. David Chadderdon says he values diversity and is not convinced that the current Board of Directors does value that. Pete Kushner again noted that no one of any gender or race has come forward and applied to be on the Board of Directors in at least 7 years, which is why there have been and are still unfilled seats.

### III. **Introduction of Guest Speaker: Dr.Gail Walter, DVM; Audubon Society of Kalamazoo: Peregrine Falcons and The Urban Bird Treaty**

- A. The fastest animal in the world is the peregrine falcon and we have some in Kalamazoo
- B. Peregrine Falcons
  - 1. Crow-sized
  - 2. Wingspan 36-44 inches
  - 3. Yellow eyes
  - 4. Hooked beak
  - 5. Hood and moustache
  - 6. Eggs – 45-58 X 36x44mm, buff with rust-brown mottling
    - a. Females lay between 3-5 per year
  - 7. Powerful and Fast
  - 8. Average speed 40-55 mph
  - 9. Aerial hunters
  - 10. Fastest recorded speed 242 mph
- C. Why Do We Care About Peregrines?
  - 1. 1900-1970 DDT used to control insects
  - 2. DDT accumulates in body tissue and is not eliminated
  - 3. DDT accumulates in food chain
  - 4. DDT poisoned many birds of prey at top of food chain
  - 5. Thin egg shells that broke during incubation
  - 6. By 1968, there were no Peregrines east of the Mississippi River
  - 7. In 1970, Peregrine Falcons put on the endangered species list
- D. Peregrine Recovery
  - 1. Captive breeding programs and reintroduction
  - 2. Tremendous effort from private organizations
  - 3. Number of Peregrines increased enough to be taken off the federal endangered species list
  - 4. Peregrines are still on the Michigan endangered species list
  - 5. Protected in US by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- E. We are excited to have Peregrine Falcons in downtown Kalamazoo.
- F. The word 'peregrine' means 'wanderer'
- G. Here in the Midwest there are food resources available for peregrine falcons year round and open water sources so they do not migrate in spring and fall as they do in other parts of the country
- H. Peregrines in Kalamazoo
  - 1. 2010 – pair of Peregrine Falcons seen at the Fifth Third Bank
  - 2. Nest in drain was unsuccessful
  - 3. 2011 and 2012 – Female Rebecca and unbanded male
  - 4. Nest not successful again

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- I. 2013 Nest Box Installation
  - 1. Folks from the DNR and the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo got together with Fifth Third Bank about being peregrine falcon landlords and created a DNR-specified box for nest
- J. Eyases (young hawk or falcon in the nest, or that has not yet fledged)
  - 1. Eggs were eventually laid in the nest box and hatched
  - 2. DNR planned to band the chicks when they are still in the box and big enough to handle but not
  - 3. As it was unclear when the chicks were hatched, by the time the DNR went to band them, the chicks were already able to leave the nest
  - 4. The DNR was willing to allow a nest cam. With a grant from Zoetis a nest cam was installed in 2015 and much more information was learned about the peregrine falcons.
- K. Learning from Mom
  - 1. Flying is not easy
  - 2. The young falcons learn a lot from their parents
  - 3. Parents fly with food and young falcons chase them, developing speed and skill
  - 4. Parents will transfer the food to the chicks in mid-air (skill of flipping upside down, grabbing it, and flying with food in their feet and being able to land)
  - 5. Final step is learning to grab the food when parents drop it in the air.
- L. Teenagers
  - 1. Blue around eyes, beaks are blue.
- M. The Parents
  - 1. Mother - Rebecca (hails from South Bend, IN; hatched in 2009); now mature bird, grandmother many times over
  - 2. Father - Kewpee (from Lima, OH; hatched in 2010)
  - 3. These are the adults and stick around downtown
- N. 2020 Nest Activity
  - 1. 4 eggs laid between March 17 and March 24
  - 2. Average of 30 days to hatch
  - 3. Eggs hatched between April 24 and 28
  - 4. Fledging (first flight) between June 4 and June 6
  - 5. Not banded or named
  - 6. 2 in rehab; all 4 survived
  - 7. The birds here have always have four eggs laid, not all of them always hatch
- O. 2021 Nest Activity
  - 1. 4 eggs laid between Mar 21 and Mar 28
  - 2. Hatched Apr 28 – May 1
  - 3. Fledged June 4 and 5
  - 4. 3 males and 1 female (Chase, Skye, Vincent, Princess)
  - 5. Chase and Skye early fledge to rehab
  - 6. Vincent lost
  - 7. Princess early fledge- back to nest
  - 8. There are some very dedicated volunteers that are watching the chicks during their first flight periods to help make sure they survive
- P. The peregrine falcons are very territorial. If other males try to come in, the resident male will fend off the intruder. If other males try to come in, the resident female will fend off the intruder.
  - 1. WHAT IS THE SIZE OF THEIR "TERRITORY"? Any chance for others in Kalamazoo?
- Q. Both parents will spend equal time on the eggs
- R. [www.KalamazooFalcons.com](http://www.KalamazooFalcons.com)
- S. [www.KalamazooAudubon.org](http://www.KalamazooAudubon.org)
- T. Urban Bird Treaty
  - 1. 3 Billion Birds fewer than there were 50 years ago– Together we can bring them back
  - 2. Eco Services
    - a. Habitat regeneration
    - b. Consuming insect pests
  - 3. 2.9 billion birds gone since 1970
- U. 2022 State of the Birds
  - 1. Since 1970, there are 90 bird species in the US that have declined 50% or more
  - 2. Of these 90 species, 17 are found within Kalamazoo county and 10 breed here
  - 3. 1 in 4 birds gone since 1970 in the world
  - 4. Not lost uniformly across all species of birds
  - 5. Eastern Forest Birds seen in our geographic region – 6 out of 10 Wood thrushes lost since 1970
  - 6. Grassland Birds (e.g., eastern meadowlarks, 3 in 4 lost since 1970)
  - 7. Directly correlated to the conversion of farmland to development and intensive farming practices
  - 8. Aerial Insectivores – 2 in 5 lost since 1970

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- V. So What?
  - 1. Why care about birds:
    - a. Bird habitat supports clean water – protecting waterways and their surrounding watersheds protects bird habitat.
    - b. Birds are good for the economy
      - i. Birdwatching generates almost \$100 billion in economic impacts and more than 45 million people in the US watch birds.
      - ii. Birds benefit your beverages, eating insects and saving up to 24 pounds of coffee beans per acre each year
    - c. Bird Habitat boosts property values
- W. What is Causing These Losses?
  - 1. Habitat loss & degradation
  - 2. Climate change
  - 3. Free roaming cats (2.6 billion)
  - 4. Collisions with windows, etc (624 million+)
  - 5. Collisions with vehicles
- X. Reasons for Hope
  - 1. Waterfowl gained since 1970 due to conservation efforts - +35 million
  - 2. Raptors gained since 1970 due to conservation and captive breeding and banning of DDT - +15 million
- Y. Simple Actions To Help Birds
  - 1. Bird-friendly Coffee (e.g., Smithsonian Coffee)
  - 2. Reducing Collisions
    - a. Bird-safe building design (homes & existing buildings)
    - b. <https://abcbirds.org/>
    - c. Wood-Haenicke Walkway Mitigation at Western Michigan University – August 2019
    - d. You are limited only by your imagination (use temporary paint on windows!)
  - 3. Cats Indoors
  - 4. Native Landscaping – all birds need to feed insects to their young regardless of whether seed eating or fruit eating as adult
  - 5. Bird-friendly Communities
    - a. Urban Bird Treaty Program
      - i. Through US Fish & Wildlife Service
      - ii. To help alleviate bird population declines and create connected conservation communities, through enhanced opportunities for people in urban areas to engage in meaningful bird education, recreation, and conservation
      - iii. Conserve urban habitats for birds
      - iv. Reduce urban hazards to birds
      - v. Education and engage urban communities in caring
    - b. Two Program Components:
      - i. Urban Bird Treaty City Designations
      - ii. Small Grants through NFWF (5 Star and Urban waters Restoration Grant Project)
- Z. What is Significant about Birds in Kalamazoo
  - 1. 331 bird species have been historically documented in Kalamazoo county of which 319 are considered likely
  - 2. 15 species that are listed as endangered threatened, or of special concern in State of Michigan
  - 3. Kalamazoo River corridor is a recognized Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBAs are identified using an internationally agreed set of criteria as critically important for bird conservation)
  - 4. There are 4 other IBAs in Kalamazoo County
  - 5. Motus Wildlife Tracking System is an international collaboration using radio telemetry
  - 6. There are three Motus Receiving Towers in the county. Significant detections of several species that were not previously known to fly over this area.
  - 7. eBird – collaborative enterprise of Cornell Lab of Ornithology. eBird hotspots represent a set of public locations that people regularly visit for birding. There are 97 in the county (17 in the city).
- AA. Urban Bird Treaty Program Potential Actions
  - 1. Goal 1: Protect, restore, & enhance habitat for birds
    - a. Increase size of parks, green spaces, natural features
    - b. Create corridors & connectivity
    - c. Promote brown field over natural area development
    - d. Plant native trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses
    - e. Decrease/Eliminate pesticide use (no neonicotinoids)
    - f. Increase walkability / decrease auto traffic / decrease noise and air pollution
    - g. Invasive species control
    - h. Dam removal / stream side restoration
    - i. Volunteer workdays to enhance natural areas
    - j. Support of any of these goals (advocacy / financial)

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2. Goal 2: Reduce Hazards to Urban Birds
3. Goal 3: Educate & engage urban communities in caring about and conserving birds and habitats

BB. Donna Keller notes that the ODWNA is already a partner in the Urban Bird Treaty and many are already doing the things that have been promoted in this presentation.



### Q&A:

- 1) An attendee asks how long the peregrines live. Dr. Walter does not know specifically but that 14 years old is getting up there. The oldest female she has heard of in the wild was in Pittsburgh and was 19 before she flew off and was never seen again but life expectancy is not known. If a mate were to be ousted, the remaining mate would stay with the newcomer.
- 2) An attendee asks whether babies imprint on the natal area? Dr. Walter says they do not although our male (Kewpee) did show up in 2014 and the male that had been here prior to that was not banded and there was a dispute over the territory but he was flying through in migration time (fall) and saw Fifth Third Bank and it looked a lot like the building he hatched on in Lima, OH and he might have recognized the structure.
- 3) An attendee notes that one of the neighborhood hot topics have been about bike lanes and traffic calming and asks if that is one of the things the City is doing that makes us a good candidate for the Urban Bird Treaty. Dr. Walter says yes, decreasing the traffic, making it calmer, reducing the noise, etc., in an effort to create a more walkable city is helpful (e.g., building the "Safe Streets").
- 4) An attendee asks if there are other UBT cities in Michigan. Dr. Walter states that yes, there are, including Detroit. She says if Detroit can do it, Kalamazoo can do it.
- 5) An attendee asks if it is known where Rebecca's offspring are? Dr. Walter states that yes, they are banded. One ended up in Detroit after rehab, on the Whittier apartments. He sired many years of birds. There are now other birds in that site.
- 6) Tom Small notes the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service gives good news about waterfowl being on the increase but he has also read that birds requiring open water are declining twice as fast as land species. Dr. Walter says 'coastal' shorebirds are in big decline. With climate change and severe weather it has caused major problems, whereas inland waterfowl are doing better.
- 7) An attendee asks where the rehab is located. Dr. Walter says it is near Eaton Rapids at a place called Wildside (although the DNR tells her where the birds need to go).
- 8) Donna Keller spoke of the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo and stated that there are excellent bird walks within the City that people might be interested in attending.
- 9) An attendee asks how the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo feels about the peregrine falcons reducing other bird populations. Dr. Walters says they will hunt any bird species. It is sometimes hard to reconcile that.
- 10) An attendee asks whether the mere presence of the falcons scares other birds away. Dr. Walter states that she does not know but it appears other birds do seem to know when to stay clear because the birds are hunting versus just flying around.
- 11) An attendee asks whether there are differences in behavior or otherwise between falcons in urban areas versus non-urban areas. Dr. Walter does not know although when the young branch out to find their next home they look for areas similar to where they were hatched. Falcons from non-urban areas are not used to being around people and if people get near them, they might well abandon their nests.
- 12) An attendee asks about the Avian bird flu and setting out bird feeders. Dr. Walter says the Avian bird flu hits waterfowl hard and is pathogenic to poultry. Song birds can get it and pass it between themselves. Often if a song bird gets sick and dies, we might not know it so we can't really track that death and mortality in the wild bird population. We do know when wild birds come into contact with domestic flocks, that is when the disease really spreads. It has been in the millions of poultry that have been culled as a result of Avian influenza. That is why we were asked to take down bird feeders as they were migrating in the fall because the birds congregating transmits the virus through excrement on the feeder and on the ground. There had not been any flocks identified in Michigan with the flu since the beginning of 2023 until two days ago (a small backyard flock in Eaton County) and the flock was culled.
- 13) An attendee asks what is her second favorite bird? Dr. Walter says whichever bird she is watching at the time.

Dr. Walter's email address is [gailwalter@att.net](mailto:gailwalter@att.net)

Dr. Walter was thanked for her presentation and the meeting was adjourned.

IV. **Adjournment:** 8:48 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Christopher Bovid, ODWNA Secretary