

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Place: Third Christian Reformed Church, 2400 Winchell Ave, Kalamazoo, MI

Board Members:

Present: Christopher Shook, President; Stephanie Watkins, Vice President; Christopher Bovid, Secretary; Christine Chadderdon, Barry Olson, Barb Miller; Paul Scott; Diana Morton-Thompson

Excused: Rachel Bennett, Treasurer; Peter Kushner, Past President;

In Attendance: Approximately 44 people (includes Board members)



- I. Meeting called to order by Christopher Shook, President; 7:00 PM
 - A. Chris Shook welcomed our attendees
 - B. The Oakwood Neighborhood Association is having a free, family friendly Christmas concert by Bell Book & Canto at the Community of Christ Church on Amherst Avenue December 14, 2024 at 8:00 PM. Food item donations for the Oakwood Neighborhood Center's food pantry would be helpful.
 - C. Review of Agenda and tonight's guest speaker
- II. MINUTES – October 16, 2024 (Christopher Bovid, Secretary)
 - A. Minutes from the October 16, 2024 ODWNA meeting have been posted to the website.
 - B. Minutes adopted without objection.
- III. TREASURER'S REPORT - (Stephanie Watkins for Rachel Bennett, Treasurer)
 - A. ODWNA Checking Account Balance as of 11/11/2024 was \$4,992.16.
 - B. Also of 11/11/2024: \$60 of additional funds are in transfer from Venmo to Checking Account.
 - C. Also as of 11/11/2024: \$10 cash of additional funds are received but need to be deposited in Checking Account.
- IV. BUSINESS ITEMS
 - A. Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 and "Quick Win" / "Betterment" Projects (Stephanie Watkins, Vice President)
 - I. ImagineKalamazoo.com lists the goals and events and work that has already been done.
 - II. There is a strategic goals survey.
 - III. There is a "Meetings on the Go" tool kit if you want to have your book group or running club, etc., meet and provide feedback.
 - IV. The author of "Happy City" is coming to Kalamazoo on January 31 (time/location TBD).
 - V. The Adopt-A-Drain program has 54 residents and 78 drains adopted. We are currently in the process of fundraising for this year and next year and gladly accepting donations.
 - B. Woods Lake Association update (Christopher Bovid, Secretary)
 - I. The WLA held its annual meeting on Sunday, November 3, 2024. The same current slate of officers was elected (Christopher Bovid, President; Steven Sedore, Vice President; Aaron Harp, Treasurer; Micah Woods, Secretary). Stephanie Watkins presented at the WLA Annual Meeting on the Adopt-A-Drain program and its potential benefits for Woods Lake and its watershed.
 - II. The WLA was informed that the City of Kalamazoo Dept. of Parks & Rec's water quality study of Woods Lake has not received funding in the City's budget for 2024-2025 so lake water sampling after the first year of the study has been discontinued. The City's environmental consultants are preparing a report based on the data collected during the past year and many residents will be eager to see what it states.
 - III. Reminder to please keep leaves on the curb lawn and not in the street to keep the organic matter out of the storm drains that flow to Woods Lake. The City of Kalamazoo's leaf pick-up crews remove the leaves from the curb lawns and use backpack blowers and sometimes a riding blower to remove the leaves from the curb lawn.
 - C. KDPS Officer Bagley report
 - I. No major crime statistics to report. This is a quiet neighborhood. Over the summer there were some issues at Winchell Way Apartments with cars being broken into.
 - II. Be mindful of mail/packages theft given this time of year.
 - III. Keep your cars locked, take your valuables out of them and bring them inside as this is the time of year.
 - IV. An attendee asked about an assault that occurred outside the Third Christian Reformed Church but Officer Bagley didn't have specific information about it yet and will look into it.
 - V. Office Bagley is being transitioned over to the North Side Neighborhood area for Community Policing purposes.
 - VI. Officer Shmeltz and Officer Crooks will be our new Community Policing Officers going forward.
- V. GUEST SPEAKER – Lynn Houghton, Regional History Curator, Zhang Legacy Collections Center, WMU: "Kalamazoo in the 1870s" (Introduction by Barry Olson)
 - A. Co-Author of "Kalamazoo – Lost and Found"
 - B. Participated in PBS Series: "Ten that Shaped America"
 - C. Other resources:

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- i. "Kalamazoo And How It Grew And Grew" by W. Dunbar
 - ii. "History of Kalamazoo County Michigan
 - iii. Kalamazoo – The Place Behind The Products
 - iv. A Fellowship In Learning: Kalamazoo College
 - v. Maps had been produced in the 1870's
 1. "Bird's Eye View" maps
 2. Artists would travel around town and sketch renditions of the area
 3. County Atlas from 1873 (shows "National Fair Grounds" – where Edison Neighborhood is today)
 - vi. City Directories are also a wonderful source of the institutions that were around (Young Men's Christian Association, business directories)
 - vii. Kalamazoo Public Library website has done a great job of making available historical information about Kalamazoo
 1. The KPL acquired rights to the digital version of the Kalamazoo Gazette Collection (coverage from 1837 through current) and there is a Kalamazoo Gazette search page.
 2. KPL also has "Pages from the Past" (digitized three books published by the Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Commission (Kalamazoo Lost & Found, "Walking Through Time" and "Kalamazoo 19th Century Homes In A Midwestern Village")
- D. 1870's time period is easier to review than 1850's because there were some photographs
- i. Review of photographs of Kalamazoo in the 1870's
 1. Discussion regarding photographer Scott O. Baldwin and Wallace White and their work with stereographs
 2. Discussion regarding items on map from 1873 Atlas
 - a. Discussion regarding where people were living in Kalamazoo in 1873 per the Atlas.
 3. West Main Street was originally known as "Grand Prairie Road." The Stewart neighborhood was just coming around. Among the houses that existed were the Bartholomew house on the corner of Woodward and Elm, the Proud House on Elm, and the Kent House on the intersection of Kalamazoo Avenue and Douglas (built in the 1860s). In 1873 there was the Ashby House and the Rickman House (not far from the playground at Woodward Elementary) and the house at the corner of Willard and Elm Street. There were different version of Italianates from the 1860s. Kalamazoo really boomed in the 1880s though.
 - E. Map shows Grand Rapids Road was a plank road from Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids in the 1850s.
 - F. Discussion regarding homes on South Street (the Little House built in 1847; the Jane DeWalker House – notably built by a woman - around 1870; the Henry House around 1852)thanks .
 - G. Things began to spread out a little further to the South (around 1st Street and 2nd Street), including the Vine Neighborhood, Kalamazoo College, and Union School (the Community Education Center), the Octagon House on South Westnedge, and the Remington House on Westnedge. These give a feeling of the residential area of the period.
 - H. Discussion regarding the Bird House on the corner of Edgemoor and South Westnedge. Bird had 80 acres. James Taylor had 160 acres of farmland. They had wheat, corn, cows, and horses. At the time there were agricultural censuses taken.
 - i. Kalamazoo was incorporated as a village in 1843 but did not become a City until 1884. It was known as the "big village" for many reasons though. The library was housed in Corporation Hall (what we would call our "village hall") that was built in 1867. It was the heart of the village. The fire department and any other village officers would have been there.
 - I. Fire Prevention:
 - i. Fire was a big problem
 - ii. First ordinance in 1843 said each house had to have two ladders and two pails or buckets.
 - iii. Fire Department was all volunteer.
 - iv. The equipment would be purchased by the village treasury.
 - v. Four or five different companies operated the Fire Dept. equipment.
 - vi. One of the biggest issues with fighting fires was getting water.
 - vii. The main source for our fire department was Arcadia Creek.
 - viii. They began to have serious discussions on creating a regular water system.
 - ix. In 1869 almost an entire block of buildings (Stevens Boarding House burned down) – Michigan Avenue between South Park and South Westnedge, Academy on one side and West Michigan on the other. At least 30 apartments, several single family homes. Could not get water from the cisterns and could not reach Arcadia Creek. So started talking about the Holly Water System. Wanted it to be on Eleanor. In the end moved it to South Burdick (now known as Crosstown Parkway). The water table in that area was a great thing to tap into. Decided in 1869, built it, and by 1882 had 155 fire hydrants throughout the village that could be tapped into.
 - x. In 1870 the Fire Department was reorganizing and in 1877 we started paying firefighters. In 1872 we had a village marshall with regular police officers working under their supervision.
 - J. In the 1870s Kalamazoo put in a sewer system. Discussion regarding photo showing sewers being dug (by hand) in Vine Street from Davis to the river. Property owners were assessed \$.25/foot.
 - K. Improvements to our downtown park also happened. It was called "The Commons" at that time.

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- L. In 1876 the park was renamed after Titus Bronson. They later added better drainage, had an architect come up with ideas to beautify the park, and (in the 1880s) the fountain was installed.
- M. First Telephone – March 1, 1878. First telephone circuit installed two years later. In 1881 the first telephone network had two subscribers.
- N. 1837 house on Courthouse square was renovated in 1867. The jail was built in 1869 and remained there until the mid 1930s.
- O. Transportation –
 - i. Still had stage coaches (although last one was 1869 that went between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids). In 1871 the Village Directory said there was a stage coach that delivered mail to Richland and Prairie View and you could ride it for \$.75.
 - ii. Had Michigan Central Rail Road that ran west to east. Went to Detroit and to Chicago and beyond.
 - iii. New railroad Lines:
 - 1. Lakeshore and Michigan Southern, 1869
 - 2. Kalamazoo and South Haven, 1869
 - 3. Grand Rapids and Indiana, 1870
- P. Education
 - i. Union School Building (opened in 1859) – covered grades 1-12 (Kindergarten did not exist yet)
 - ii. Ward schools – anywhere from 2700 to 3100 students. 65% in primary, only about 10% in high school. Most people did not graduate. An 8th grade education would have been sufficient for most people at the time.
 - iii. Discussion regarding a number of other union and ward schools
 - iv. Colored School (1861-1871) – There is a lot of information and a video presentation on it at the KPL website.
 - 1. In 1871 there was a lawsuit in Detroit that challenged them and the Michigan Supreme Court's decision caused the school to close.
 - v. Before the Civil War the State of Michigan had set up union school systems and allowed taxes to fund primary grades and said it could be voted on to fund high schools. In Kalamazoo three citizens brought suit in the circuit court claiming they should not have to fund high schools. At the intersection of Vine and Westnedge there is a historical marker that talks about the "1874 Kalamazoo School Case." The Michigan Supreme Court upheld the right to charge for high school education so there were free public high schools.
 - vi. In 1870 there was an earthquake and concerns were raised over the condition of the Union School Building, which was eventually taken down and replaced.
- Q. Kalamazoo College
 - i. When Lucinda Hinsdale Stone left the college, enrollment dropped. Kalamazoo College struggled with enrollment, weak finances, and needs of the facility. Economic depression during that time did not help. The school did persevere however and never closed.
 - ii. The theological seminary and the men's building were the two buildings that existed.
- R. Michigan Female Seminary – started by the Presbyterian Church. Was basically a private high school for women. At the time had about 60 students. Stayed open for the last half of the 19th century but closed in 1970s
- S. Parsons Business School (opened in 1869 – men and women enrolled)
- T. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone from Kalamazoo College worked very hard to get women to be admitted to the University of Michigan (first one allowed was in 1870). Carolyn Hubbard Kleinstuck was also a student of Lucinda Stone, graduated from Kalamazoo high School, went to the University of Michigan, graduated with her bachelors degree in 1875 and became first woman to get a masters degree in 1876. She went to Germany and married a man named Carl Kleinstuck. She gave land to the State School Board and they gave it to Western Michigan University and that is the Kleinstuck Preserve now.
- U. Review of a number of churches from the period.
- V. Entertainment:
 - i. National Fair Grounds
 - ii. National Driving Park (Portage & Washington – 64 acres, county fairs, horse racing, a lot of State fairs, and a sanitary fair during the Civil War put on by the Ladies Library Association).
 - iii. Halls:
 - 1. Allen's Hall
 - 2. Union Hall
 - iv. Organizations – many! German Benevolent Society, Allemania Society, Sons of Temperance, odd Fellows, Kalamazoo Medical Association, Masons, Kalamazoo County Bible Society, Young Men's Library Association, Ladies Library Association (1878 completed their building on South Park Street – still there and in great condition)
- W. Temperance
 - i. Kalamazoo Temperance Reform
 - ii. Union Sunday School Temperance Society
 - iii. Temperance Coffee House and Free Reading Rooms – get people off alcohol by drinking coffee (since there is nothing addictive about coffee...)
- X. Centennial – July 4, 1876 (in 2026 we will have our semiquincentennial or 250th anniversary)

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- i. Began at sunrise with guns firing
 - ii. Bells
 - iii. Parade with hundreds of people
 - iv. Ceremony at Courthouse Square
 - v. Events throughout the afternoon
 - vi. Ended with fireworks
- Y. Kalamazoo Public Schools (1876) issued two books containing works by KPS students and a photograph of students in the Kalamazoo High School
- Z. Newspapers
- i. Kalamazoo Gazette (weekly and daily)
 - ii. Kalamazoo Telegraph (weekly and daily)
 - iii. Business College Record
 - iv. Michigan Free Mason
- AA. Healthcare
- i. Michigan Asylum for the Insane (awarded it in 1853, opened in 1859, by October 1860 there were dozens of men and women. Number 1 occupation for men were farmers; number 1 occupation for women were farmers' wives)
 - ii. Male Building completed in 1859. Dr. Edward VanDussen was the first superintendent of the hospital, came in 1856, resigned in 1878. Moved to South Street. They were the major benefactors to the KPL when built first building on the corner of South and Rose Street. The VanDussens moved into the Carter House and added the portico with the columns.
- BB. City Directory had three categories of physicians:
- i. Physicians
 - ii. Physicians, Eclectic
 - iii. Physicians, Homeopathic
- CC. Upjohn Family discussion
- DD. Manufacturing
- i. Carriages and wagons
 - ii. Musical instruments (melodeons)
 - iii. Coffins (O.M. Allen – Globe Casket Company)
 - iv. Cigars and Trunks
 - v. Brooms Handles and Croquet sets (from wonderful supply of wood)
 - vi. Agricultural Implements
 - 1. Windmills
 - 2. Planning mills
 - 3. Feed cutters
 - 4. Mowers
 - 5. Reapers
 - 6. Plows
 - vii. By 1873 had 5 different companies making iron for agricultural implements
 - viii. Paper (first paper mill off Alcott Street began 1866) (big thing was being near water for power and for disposal of waste)
 - ix. Celery
- EE. 1878 the New York Daily Graphic came out with a special edition showing Kalamazoo buildings touting the growth of Kalamazoo and how it was changing. They also wrote about our water system in 1878. They extolled the virtues of the village.
- FF. Things only kept growing as the years went by.
- GG. Invitation to come and see the Zhang Legacy Collection on Oakland Drive.
- HH. Questions:
- 1. When did the Kleinstucks live in Kalamazoo? Later than the 1870s. Her father, Silas Hubbard, owned the house that became the Kleinstuck residence later.
 - 2. Roughly how many people lived in Kalamazoo in the 1870s? Don't have the info.
 - 3. To learn about a particular house should one go to the library or to the Zhang Legacy Collection? Either! No prior relationship with WMU needed to work with Zhang/WMU. The library does have evening hours, however. The public history organizations work really well together, however. The Kalamazoo Gazette is one of the best resources though.
 - 4. Does the map showed early on with Whites Road etc show a curve because of the Native American reservation (1821)? Not that particular curve – it was just due to three roads connected in later times. Certain street signs in Kalamazoo have the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of the Potawatomi tribe symbol on them.
- VI. OLD BUSINESS:
- A. Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council (Paul Scott)
- i. The Preserve has had 20 deer dead in the Asylum as a result of EHD (caused by the Midge Fly that grows in mud / stagnant water area). Not dangerous to humans or contagious to other deer.

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- ii. The storm water system that is taking the salt out of the stormwater has been pretty successful, about 50-70% of the salt in the stormwater coming down Drake Road has been removed by this experimental process that the WMU professors have worked on. The State spent \$300,000 and WMU has spent several hundred thousand on the process as well. It is new around the country.
 - B. Luminaries (Ellen Foley)
 - i. Christmas Eve luminaries program covers from Sheffield to Oakland and Howard to Winchell Ave.
 - ii. If didn't receive mailing, contact Deborah Rose.
 - iii. If anyone wants to coordinate for a different street, can do so – please reach out.
 - C. Who do you call if you find a dead deer in your yard? Paul Scott suggests contacting the DNR in case the deer is diseased. The City did previously allocate funding to remove deer carcasses but it has seemed that the City will only do so if the deer is located in the street. Some residents have just moved the carcass into the street and then reported it.
- VII. Christopher Shook adjourned the meeting at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christopher Bovid, ODWNA Secretary