

## ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, January 21, 2015

**Place:** Winchell Elementary Library

### **Board Members:**

**Present:**; Peter Kushner, President; Chris Shook, Vice President; Sandy Bolstad, Secretary; Tom Keyser, Barb Ross, Kathy Shook, Paul Scott

**Absent:** Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer; Becky Mutsaers



- I. **Call to Order:** Peter Kushner, 7:00 pm
  - Report on Woods Lake Meeting Dec. 10 which three of our board members attended:
    - City officials Ryan Johnson and Sean Fletcher led the meeting.
    - New restrooms, boardwalk for fishing, etc., parking, limiting of vehicle access to the beach are all in the plan.
    - \$53,000 was spent on the design.
    - Project was delayed as bids for work were too high based on budget. Accepting bids again.
    - If a bid is accepted, construction will take place June through December 2015.
  - Kzoo School is having two open houses, one on Sunday Jan. 25 and one on Wed. Feb. 18. More info. at [www.KazooSchool.org](http://www.KazooSchool.org)
- II. **Secretary's Report**
  - Next meeting is Feb. 18th and our own Diana Morton-Thompson will be speaking about the Geology of our neighborhood ("Winchell rocks" ☺)
- III. **Treasurer's Report**
  - Pete reported on current balance; \$1,263.37, and expected status through end of year (just under \$200 surplus)
- IV. **Neighborhood Business (Old and New):**
  - There is a group of boys that play baseball; "West Michigan Blacksox", that will pick up your Christmas Tree and haul it away for \$5 (someone's Dad has a truck). Reported by Barb Brose.
- V. **Public Comments:**
  - None

### Notes from our Speaker:

**Guest Speakers:** Jim Ritsema, City Manager and Laura Lam, Director of Community Planning and Development

**Topic:** City/Neighborhood Issues

In addition to a PowerPoint presentation and handout, here are some of the items that were covered.

- Budget is a big concern.
- 2015 budget is approved.
- Kalamazoo has a 5 year fiscal plan.
- Long term stability: Municipal budget model is broken, and it is a constant challenge. Advocacy at the State level to get money is tough.
- Looking at what will happen if we don't have more revenue.
- Community engagement: researching/exploring how best to communicate/dialogue with residents.
- City needs to listen better.
- ImagineKalamazoo.com is a high tech and high touch solution.
- Working on developing better partnerships with organizations.
- Core services are always a concern that must be taken care of: Public Safety, Water, Sewer, etc.
- When we look at non-core services the city needs to figure out what is important to residents.
- The plan is to start with identifying community values.
- They have a Mindmixer website that will be like an online survey.
- They are working to improve their Website
- "Shared Prosperity" is a positive way to talk about the poverty issue.
- They are working on a way to set up subscriptions so that community members can subscribe to which information they want to hear about and HOW they want to hear about it.

Community Feedback included:

- Show people where the money is being spent.
- When trying to solicit feedback, it is necessary to go door to door, because some people don't have internet.
- There are also people in our community who cannot read, so a snail mail survey may not mark either.
- Suggestion to contact the political parties because they did some very good training with people before they sent people door to door.
- Allied Paper contamination situation. \$360,000 was allocated and some money has been spent on PR, citizen involvement, hiring a law firm and a consultant, performing advocacy in Washington DC and a music video. Has all of this money been spent? If not, stop. Also, we'd like to see the music video.

- Note: I searched YouTube and confirmed with Laura after the meeting and the video is called “Take it Away – Greater Kalamazoo Message to the EPA”. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZ3qbW3SDK8>

VI. **Adjournment:** 8:35 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary