

ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Place: Winchell Elementary Library

Board Members:

Present: Chris Shook, Vice President; Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer, Sandy Bolstad, Secretary; Becky Mutsaers

Absent: Peter Kushner, President; Tom Keyser, Deb Klug, Barb McCrea, Kathy Shook



- I. **Call to Order:** Chris Shook, 7:05 pm
 - Welcome, Old and New Business and Introduction of Speaker (Notes Below. Normal business and discussion followed the speakers.)
- II. **Treasurer's Report**
 - Sandy provided balance and that we had added 2 new members, one of which was our first Business member, Greenleaf Realty.
- III. **Secretary's Report**
 - Next meeting will be April 17 and the topic is the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. Also reported on highlights of several upcoming events:
 - Last Saturday in April: Neighborhood Garage Sales
 - Third Wednesday in May: Car Show
 - May 5: Kalamazoo Marathon
 - Labyrinth being created at Church
 - Board is working on getting a business sponsor to provide signs for the Garage Sales and the Car Show that can be re-used each year, also working on providing food for the Car Show.
 - 2 openings on the Board, 3 openings on the City Planning Commission. Mark Hoffman has served on the City Planning Commission previously if anyone has questions.
- IV. **Old Business:**
 - No old business to discuss
- V. **New Business:**
 - Mark Hoffman is on the City of Kalamazoo Billboard Committee that is working with the City to look into the city ordinance for billboards. There is currently a moratorium to limit **electronic billboards**. The number of regular billboards in the city already exceeds the limit of 100. Would like to hear how people in the neighborhood feel about the billboards. Discussion ensued, the people in attendance generally agreed that 1) they may be a distraction when driving and would like to see studies on this and 2) they are ok in certain areas (like S. Westnedge) but not where the lights would be impacting the residential areas of our neighborhood. The moratorium ends July 22 and the commission is trying to help the city come up with wording regarding the regulation of electronic billboards. They have a web site where there is a place for public comments: www.kalamazobillboards.wordpress.com and you can also email Mark at mhoffman@kalsec.com

There are also two opportunities to speak to this issue: June 6 at the Planning Commission Meeting and July 1 at the City Commission. There is a third meeting on July 15, but the earlier you speak up with your comments the better, as the closer it gets to the end of the moratorium, the more likely decisions regarding wording, what will be allowed, etc. will already be in progress.
- VI. **Public Comments:**
 - A neighbor showed up from "Keep Wolves Protected" to ask people to sign a petition to prevent wolf hunting in Michigan. The wolf just came off the endangered species list a little over a year ago, and they are hunted for sport, not for meat. There are only 700 wolves in Michigan, and they help control the deer population. Farmers are already allowed to kill them to protect their livestock. The petition is to prevent hunting (which is often done with dogs) and steel-jaw trapping. After the meeting adjourns if anyone would like to sign the petition, the goal is to get enough signatures to allow the people to vote on this.

Notes from our Speaker:

Guest Speaker #1: Kerry Kelly from Christy's Consignment

Topic: *Spring Cleaning* (see handout for additional info.)

- Introduction of where Christy's is and what type of merchandise they work with. A little about Kerry, who is an Interior Designer, and how long she and Christy have worked together and why they work so well together.
- If the merchandise is something they would take, they typically can get you more than what you would get by having a garage sale.
- They base their pricing, generally speaking on about 1/3 of what you pay (less for upholstered furniture).
- Generally they split with the consignee what they sell the merchandise for 50/50

- They have a storage unit with merchandise that isn't in the store, that merchandise can be seen on the web site: www.christysconsignment.com They are always buying, selling and rotating merchandise between the store and the storage unit.
- They reduce the price of merchandise by 10% every 30 days (some items, such as art or crystal are excluded from this reduction). After 4 months, if the items have not sold, the consignee generally has the option to drop the price or pick up the merchandise.
- If you want to bring something for them to look at, start by taking pictures and bringing in the picture, even if it is just on your phone.
- Moving items to and from Christy's: sometimes Kerry and Christy do this work. They also recommend Vanderklok Movers. And recently they obtained the name of a gentleman that works by the hour at a rate of \$50 an hour that they have not yet had the opportunity to use, but the idea of being able to pay by the hour is appealing.
- Email: christysconsignment@gmail.com

Guest Speaker #2: Tyler Sheldon, WMU Office for Sustainability (along with Will, also from the Office for Sustainability)

Topic: *Community Garden* (see handout for additional info)

- The WMU Office for Sustainability operates Community Gardens next to what used to be called "Married Housing" and "International Housing" at the corner of Stadium and Howard. They also have a farm at Gibbs House at 4503 Parkview. They cultivate produce, which is used by the University, but they also sell it at a produce stand. Last year the produce stand was at Gibbs House on Friday afternoons (until 6 or 7 pm). This year it will be at the Office for Sustainability which is at Howard and W. Michigan where the old bookstore used to be and they are still working out when the produce stand will be open.
- Residents from the community can rent plots on a first-come, first-serve basis while they last. They also have volunteer opportunities that will reduce the price of the plot rental. Essentially, if you volunteer, you can get a plot for the season for as low as \$10.00
- All gardening is organic (no pesticides or fertilizers that contain chemicals). They have people that can coach you on growing your produce. There are four work days per week, May – October, where you can get advice and help.
- Additional workshops and/or volunteer opportunities are listed on the brochure: March 22 (free lunch), April 5, April 13, April 19 and May 17.

VII. **Adjournment:** 7:50 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary