

## ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, October 19, 2016

**Place:** Winchell Elementary Library

### **Board Members:**

**Present:**; Peter Kushner, President; Chris Shook, Vice President; Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer; Sandy Bolstad, Secretary; Katherine Shook, Barb Ross, Paul Scott.

**Absent:** n/a



- I. Call to Order: Peter Kushner, 7:00 pm
  - Consumers Energy Tree Cutting project on Broadway has been indefinitely postponed; CE did not give a reason for this. Pete received a copy of the letter containing the agreement between Consumers Energy and the neighborhood/City and will put a pdf of this on our website for safekeeping should it be needed in the future.
  - Foundation for Excellence proposal: the City is creating a Memo of Understanding regarding the donation of \$70 million over the next 3 years. There is a meeting regarding this on Monday, October 24 at 6:00 pm at KVCC's downtown campus at 202 N. Rose St. Anna Whitten Hall, Room 128.
    - Related to this, Bruce Martin from the W. Main Hill Neighborhood Association attended our meeting to let us know that they formed a subcommittee to communicate both with the city and the neighborhood to try to stay involved in this effort. They are inviting one to three people from our Neighborhood to join this subcommittee. Gary volunteered, there is still room for another volunteer or 2, but volunteer quickly.
- II. Treasurer's Report: We have 14 new members, we collected \$400 in dues and we have a balance of \$2500. It takes about half of that to sustain expenses (postcards, signs, website, etc.)
  - Diana also reported that Imagine Kalamazoo is hosting a dinner and get together to gather more input from the community on October 27 at St. Joseph Church on Lake Street from 5:30 – 7:30pm.
- III. Secretary's Report: Next month's meeting is a photo history of the Michigan Asylum for the Insane.
- IV. Mike Nelson and Bobby Durkee attended from the City. Mike is the Housing Inspector and Bobby is the Zoning Inspector. They attended at Pete's request due to several complaints regarding blight in our neighborhood.
  - Monthly bulk pickup has gone to quarterly.
  - "Mythbusters" has videos about what happens when a water heater explodes if not properly maintained – much damage can occur! If there is water coming out of the pipe that runs along the side of your water heater or if the valve is leaking, you may have issues. It's a good idea to have a plumber inspect if in doubt. Also, draining your water heater once a year is a good idea.
  - There is a rental newsletter for landlords that addresses many concerns for landlords as well as homeowners.
  - Camping on residential property:
    - You may not occupy a mobile camper outside of a mobile home park.
    - Campers must be parked behind the front wall of a house.
    - Any camper vehicle with an engine must be on a driveway.
  - Sheds:
    - If behind house, 3 foot from property line minimum.
    - If on side of house, 8 foot from property line minimum.
- V. Neighborhood Business: n/a
- VI. Public Comments: n/a

### Notes from our Speaker:

**Guest Speaker: Bill Rose, Kalamazoo Nature Center, President and CEO**

**Topic: Stryker Land Donation to KNC along Oakland Dr.**

- Mission: Inspire people to care for the environment by providing by providing experiences that connect them to nature.
- 2 main activities:
  - Education: Many educational programs for children, high school students through KRESA, boomers, women, etc. Six miles west of the main site they now have 80 acres with a beautiful building and this is where they have a program with KRESA to educate interested high school students. The program has been quite popular, so interested high school students in Kalamazoo County can contact their counselor to find out how to participate.
  - Conservation Stewardship: always looking for volunteers
    - Birds – reporting and banding
    - Butterflies – this is new
    - Control invasive species over a three county area. They even have contracts to provide these services, such as one with the DOD for Fort Custer.
    - Rain garden installations

- Newest Gem: property was donated by John Stryker – it's the area south and west of the Oakwood Bible Church on Oakland Drive, bordered by Kilgore, Angling and Brookhaven. It is mostly a wooded area. There is a house and barn on the property off Angling and a house on Oakland.
  - They have been engaging the community for ideas, including all of the parks, senior services, the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage, the YMCA, YWCA, the neighbors that border the land, etc. The question they asked was "How would you envision the Stryker Natural Area?" They invited people to write and draw their ideas on placemats, etc. What they heard was:
    - Preserve it
    - Yoga and mindfulness
    - Classes in the barn
    - Dancing in the barn
    - Thought on the future: Nature, Art and Mindfulness
    - The Intersection of Art and Nature
      - 27% protect the land
      - 8% trails
      - 13% art
      - 20% education
      - 6% solitude/meditation
      - 4% water
      - 4% history
      - 3% community
      - 3% gardens/food
  - Next steps:
    - Evaluate physical structures
    - Strike a balance between the buildings and the natural environment
    - Security and safety, code compliance, etc.
    - Evaluate access points, handicap accessible, admission and staffing.
    - From now until Spring, Master Planning. In addition to code issues, the barn is not heated and does not have bathrooms.
  - Contact information:
    - [www.naturecenter.org](http://www.naturecenter.org)
    - brose@naturecenter.org

VII. **Adjournment:** 8:15 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary