

ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, September 21, 2015

Place: Winchell Elementary Library

Board Members:

Present:: Peter Kushner, President; Sandy Bolstad, Secretary; Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer; Tom Keyser, Barb Ross, Paul Scott

Absent: Chris Shook, Vice President; Kathy Shook

Left early: Peter Kushner, President; Diana Morton-Thompson

In Attendance: 15 people + speaker (includes Board members)



I. **Call to Order:** Peter Kushner, 7:05 pm

- Diana asked the attendees if they had anything they wanted to bring up or any ideas for speakers
 - Klaus Globig responded with a question: How can we get the City Commission to be more responsive? No one will answer a question, and they put a 4 minute time limit on allowing people to speak.
 - Another person in audience replied that if it is an agenda item they will give feedback.
 - Pete and Diana mentioned that the City is updating the 2010 Master Plan, so it is a good time to provide input.
 - We probably need someone to speak next year, a City Commissioner and someone to speak to Master Plan.
- Meeting on Thursday at Mayors Riverfront Park regarding Stadium Lighting. Open to public. Full draft of Proposed Ordinance is posted on our website. It is about 5 pages long. It has been changed substantially. Noise is now exempt from the Ordinance. The City Staff wrote the Ordinance. The Committee was to provide input, but it seems that they are listening more to K College than the citizens of the neighborhood and the committee. There was little interaction between those writing the Ordinance and the Committee. The only people in favor of the lights seem to be the staff and students of the schools. Diana recommended that we flood the City with e-mails regarding the Proposed Ordinance.

II. **Treasurer's Report**

- We have about \$1,400 in our account. It takes about \$650 per year for the postcards. Is there anything else that people in the neighborhood think we should spend a little money on?
- That being said, dues for the year are due, they are \$8/year or \$15/2 years.

III. **Secretary's Report**

- Sign-in sheet going around, only need to list your email if you are not receiving the eNews and would like to.
- Next meeting a representative from WMU will be here to speak to us about the Colon Farm Orchard Engineering and Design.

IV. **Neighborhood Business (Old and New):**

- None

V. **Public Comments:**

- None

Notes from our Speakers:

Guest Speakers: Jason Latham, MDOT Regional Planner

Topic: Stadium Dr. / W. Michigan Ave. Corridor Study Update

- Asked if any from our neighborhood that were present attended the Charrette. Four did.
- Kalamazoo Bike Club wanted better intersections. The City was in agreement with this and is adamant about "complete streets". They will likely be bringing a consultant on board to design the corridor. Jason thinks that with the professional judgment of outside engineers, they will get it about 80% right.
- They have looked at how other cities have designed their downtown areas.
- Jason noted that it was nice to have the various organizations (City, County, MDOT) all in the same room. They were talking to each other to see how they could help each other out.
- They will likely do the work in phases, not all at once.
- Stadium and Howard Project planning has been going on for 8 years. Processes take time. It is difficult to get things done due to the need for extensive planning and coordination with other entities. This project will start in 2018 or 2019. There is a congestion issue at this intersection that they are attempting to mitigate and at present, it sounds like they will be adding more left turn lanes.

- Michelle O'Neil reviews accident data.
- They have about \$500,000 to spend to gather data for a \$10 million project.

Neighborhood Member Input/Feedback, and response:

- Stadium and Drake to W. Michigan & river – lights are not synchronized. (Klaus)
 - Per Jason, MDOT and the City fight each other when trying to sync lights, they have engineers that do this for a job, and it's a constant effort.
- Suggestion to stripe the left turn lanes further back, and also noted that double-left turn lanes on every turn violates the "Complete Streets" plan. (Jim Ferner)
- Suggestion to look at Kalamazoo holistically, and not do it in pieces and parts. (Jim Ferner)
- Multiple requests and suggestions to get a left turn light off of Stadium onto Rambling. People shouldn't have to die to get this in place. How much would it cost to put a left turn light in place? Every other week there is an accident there. Also, having a pause on the light would help (like they do at Winchell and Oakland, where there is a pause between one light turning red and the next turning green. (Klaus and Tom)
 - Jason knows that there are financial concerns and concerns with the studies not warranting this, but will look into it and see what can be done.
- Suggestion to create a left turn lane to go up W. Main hill and to turn the section of W. Main that is coming down the hill by Walgreens into a 2-way street. Reasons for this suggestion: how to get up W. Main hill is confusing to people and also, a ton of people are cutting through the residential neighborhood by going up Lovell and Monroe. There are 3 disabled people living on Monroe and this citizen is concerned about their safety. One of them crosses the street daily to go to PT at K College. There are also no crosswalks on this street. Noted that this is a city issue, but if MDOT could do anything to help (such as with W. Main), please consider it. Sandy chimed in with agreement for these suggestions and a concern that between the new Stadium Lighting and the traffic issues, with empathy since she listens to the Oakland Drive traffic 24x7, that many of the nicest neighborhoods in Kalamazoo are being ruined in the name of traffic and development. Westnedge is much faster during rush hour than Oakland but people persist in driving down Oakland. Sandy ran over a bicyclist on Oakland due to traffic backups.
 - Jason noted that people with disabilities can change how a street is treated.
 - Jim chimed in and said that we need a cultural change and that people need to be less reliant on traveling in cars. Jason and Sandy noted that Michigan is a car state and that with the winter that is unlikely to happen very quickly or easily.
 - Jason made note of the comment about the neighborhoods and noted that perhaps they needed to divert traffic away from Oakland Drive, that he didn't want a corridor from Stadium to Oakland. He also said he would keep that in mind about Monroe and see if he could do anything to help when looking at that area.
- The group agreed they would like to have MDOT back next year to speak.

VI. **Adjournment:** 8:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary