

ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday November 28, 2012

Place: Winchell Elementary Library

Board Members:

Present: Peter Kushner, President; Sandy Bolstad, Secretary; Chris Shook, Kathy Shook, Becky Mutsaers, Barb McCrea, Tom Keyser

Absent: Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer; Deb Klug



- I. **Call to Order:** Peter Kushner, Secretary; 7:03pm
 - Welcome and Introduction of Speaker (Notes Below. Normal business and discussion followed the speaker.)
- II. **Treasurer's Report**
 - Member and Dues Drive, there is a link to sign up to become a dues-paying member in every eNews and on the website. We collected more dues in October than in November, current balance is \$658.93. We gained/renewed 23 Association members in October due to our membership drive which netted \$301. This money pays for the E-News, Website and yearly mailings regarding meetings/speakers.
- III. **Secretary's Report**
 - No meeting during December, but January meeting is January 16, and our Speaker is Sharon Carlson, Director of WMU Archives and Regional History. With the new Archives Building going in on Oakland Drive just north of Howard, this may be your chance to get any questions answered. We look forward to seeing you there!
- IV. **Old Business:**
 - Sandy received a reply from our Kalamazoo Traffic Engineer, Fred Nagler, by telephone regarding status of plans for the STOP sign placed at Winchell and Rambling. There are no plans to change anything. They are giving people time to get used to this new intersection configuration. The city may come out in the spring to observe and see if they think it is working out ok.
 - Klaus Globig tried to attend the Traffic Board monthly meeting for the past 2 months but it was cancelled both months. Klaus will try again this coming month as he has concerns about the ability of vehicles to safely turn left onto Rambling from westbound Stadium.
 - Frank Wolf provided an update from the Asylum Lake Preservation Management Council. Several sections have been improved including a large section that is now handicap accessible. There are plans to make more sections handicap accessible. Some invasive plants are being removed. If other plants don't naturally come in, they will be planting replacement plants. There have been some issues with mud due to the weight of the trucks that have been working on the improvements. Steve Keto will be our speaker in February.
- V. **New Business:**
 - No new business
- VI. **Public Comments: None noted other than above**
- VII. **Guest Speaker:** Blaine Lam, Race Director, Kalamazoo Marathon. Blaine has quite a background in the running community, including 5 years as Race Director for the Kalamazoo Classic. Blaine coordinates logistics, volunteers, publicity, etc. for the Kalamazoo Marathon
Topic: Kalamazoo Marathon (and the Kalamazoo Running Community)

Notes from our Speaker:

- Blaine moved into the Winchell neighborhood from Plainwell, and at first he had some concerns about living in a city environment, but he has grown to love it here. A few things that he mentioned that he really appreciates about our neighborhood:
 - The presence of street lights in the majority of the neighborhood
 - There are people out walking and running all the time, and in the early mornings you will see women and children walking through the neighborhood – this makes it feel like a real neighborhood.
 - The variety and character of homes in the neighborhood and the presence of sidewalks in the majority of the neighborhood contribute toward a great neighborhood for walking and running.
 - He stood at the finish line of the last Kalamazoo Marathon and asked people that ran in it what they thought and he heard over and over that people really loved the Winchell neighborhood. People also commented that this marathon provides so much community support that they want to come back here.
- Blaine feels there are 3 top things that are important to a good community, all of which Kalamazoo has:
 - A good downtown
 - An airport
 - Good schools

Also in terms of community, Blaine likes to quote one of the Upjohn family leaders who used to say, "We want a community that will attract the smartest people in our industry."

- A lot of activities go into building the running community. One of the things that Blaine has focused on is melding the running community with being social, so that it isn't just about running, but about getting to know people with like interests.
- Kalamazoo has the following to brag about in the running community:
 - The Borgess Run Camp is the largest Run Camp in America
 - We have one of the largest "Girls on the Run" clubs
 - We have the largest running club in Michigan
 - Over 900 people participate in the Saturday morning runs
- The word **marathon** sparks interest and draws people from around the Midwest. The following items are intended to draw people to run in the Kalamazoo Marathon:
 - They give a free pair of shoes to the first person that signs up.
 - Certified as a Boston Marathon Qualifier.
 - There is a marathon on Saturday in Wisconsin and since Wisconsin thinks they are the mitten state, if runners run in both marathons (Saturday in Wisconsin and Sunday in Kalamazoo) they give those runners a pair of mittens that has the name of the two marathons, one in each palm.
 - There are runners that are part of a "50 state club", meaning that they want to run a marathon in every state.
 - Primary consideration is given to beginning runners.
- Over 150 police officers work the Kalamazoo Marathon, and this costs tens of thousands of dollars, but Blaine feels it is important for a variety of reasons that they are paid for this work – this is where the majority of the race fees go to.
- Over 1300 formal volunteers work the Kalamazoo Marathon. The County Emergency Medical Director is involved, and KCMS has Doctors and Nurses out there from both hospitals. You have to be an RN or above to work a medical station. They have doctors on bicycles that are mobile so they can get to where they need to be. The medical volunteers are a tremendous asset to this race.
 - Volunteers often report at 4:00 am
- The logistics of the race were fascinating to listen to. Items we may not think of (highlights only):
 - Shuttles and traffic for the race participants and spectators to get from where they park to where the race starts and ends (and various spots in between) can cause traffic jams if not well planned for.
 - Which roads can be closed down or turned into one lane roads to allow for the race takes an enormous amount of planning and may change from one year to the next.
 - Slippery bridges, church services, spacing out the hills and valleys, etc. all takes a tremendous amount of coordination and has to be agreed upon by the various traffic boards, police departments, etc.
- Participation:
 - Cap on marathon is 2,000
 - Cap on half marathon is 3,000
 - There is no cap on the 5K or the walk, but they do have time limits at various points on the course where the roads will be opened back up and you are now "on your own" if you are not to a certain point by a certain time. These are communicated to the participants in advance.

VIII. **Adjournment:** 8:10pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary