

ODWNA Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, February 20, 2013

Place: Winchell Elementary Library

Board Members:

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

Absent:, Diana Morton-Thompson, Treasurer, Kathy Shook, Deb Klug



- I. **Call to Order:** Peter Kushner, Secretary; 7:05 pm
 - Welcome and Introduction of Speaker (Notes Below. Normal business and discussion followed the speaker.)
- II. **Treasurer's Report**
 - Pete provided balance in absence of Treasurer - \$756.93; same as January.
- III. **Secretary's Report**
 - Next meeting will be March 20 and is in relation to Spring Cleaning with Christy Lamson of Christy's on Consignment. This is timely since our Neighborhood Garage Sale is in April.
- IV. **Old Business:**
 - Klaus attended the Traffic Board monthly meeting that finally took place. 3 items that he brought up and the results of those items are as follows:
 - The new stop sign at Rambling is not likely to be removed.
 - Oakland and Parkview intersection construction is scheduled for 2014.
 - The city is likely to put the corner by Bacchus up for sale. Klaus would like to see it preserved as a green space, but we are not sure how to go about making that happen.
- V. **New Business:**
 - No new business
- VI. **Public Comments: None noted other than above**
- VII. **Guest Speaker:** Tyler Bassett, Botanist, Council Member, Asylum Lake Preserve Policy and Management Council. PhD Candidate at MSU and Member of the Michigan Botanical Club.
Topic: Asylum Lake Preserve

Notes from our Speaker:

- History of the Asylum Lake Preserve:
 - Pre-European: 10,000 years ago to the late 1800's. The Preserve was largely savannah and prairie.
 - Institutionalized: 1888 The Preserve was settled and there were three cottages on the Preserve. Judging by the picture, cottage was an understatement. These cottages were on the south side of Asylum Lake, and there were tunnels connecting the Lake Preserve area to the Asylum area. These cottages were used to house some of the residents that were pretty high functioning as a sort of halfway house style solution. In later years, the tunnels were blown up by the Marines (likely to prevent problems with them or with people in them when they shouldn't be).
 - Post Industrial: Characterized by development.
- Types of land, soils and ecosystems were discussed.
- Natural Communities:
 - Lakes: Asylum Lake is fed by springs and is about 50 feet deep. It contains fish and fishing is allowed. It is not currently being stocked with fish, although it was stocked with fish in the 1800's. The water levels are higher than they would normally be due to run off of the parking lots near Stadium and Drake. There is a high pollutant load (mostly phosphorus), probably mostly due to this run off. Phosphorous is especially high, but is not a heavy metal, so does not store in fish fat. While the water tends to run from Asylum Lake to Little Asylum Lake to Parkview, the pollutant load seems to be largely retained in Asylum Lake. Work has been performed on the spillway between Asylum Lake and Little Asylum Lake to maintain the water levels. If you saw large trucks entering the Preserve, this is probably what they were working on was the spillway between the lakes. The lakes also support migratory and overwintering waterfowl. The lake is a dying lake, but it will be hundreds of years before it actually dies out and is overcome by vegetation.
 - Wetlands: Groundwater seeps maintain conditions. Reviewed many of the plants, what was indigenous, etc. There have been many invaders, responding in part to road salting that runs off, etc. Storm sewer runoff is directed to Asylum and Woods Lakes (which also means that trash thrown on roads may end up there as well). Lots of turtles, including box turtles and snapping turtles, salamanders and even a few rattlesnakes live here.

- Prairie: Reconstruction is taking place. 14 of the 22 plant species have survived. Many grassland birds are supported by the prairies.
- Oak Woodlands/Savannah: On the slopes of the savannah leading to the lake, the indigenous species that survive are indicated. They are trying to restore toward this direction.
- Prescribed Fires/Controlled Burns: Both fires to burn brush, and planned fires to control/direct what grows where are required to maintain the preserve. These are performed by qualified people who have water handy to extinguish if the fire starts to grow beyond what is planned for.
- Web Site: www.wmich.edu/asylumlake

VIII. **Adjournment:** 8:25 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Bolstad, ODWNA Secretary