

Roll Call

A neighborhood meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, October 19, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room at City Hall, 241 W. South Street.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell
Vice Mayor David Anderson
Bob Cinabro
Don Cooney
Eric Cunningham
Barbara Miller
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

Also present were Deputy City Manager Patsy Moore and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Miscellaneous Communications

An opportunity was given for miscellaneous communications, but no communications were offered.

Neighborhood Communications

Representatives from the following neighborhood associations and community groups were present and addressed the City Commission:

Downtown Citizen Advisory Council

Tom Shuster, Chair

Northside Association for Community Development

Mattie Jordan-Woods, Executive Director
Meshell Dandridge, Neighborhood Resident

West Main Hill Neighborhood Association

Louise Wright, President

Downtown Citizen Advisory Council

The Downtown Citizen Advisory Council representative:

- described the membership and purpose of the Downtown Development Area Citizens' Council (DDACC).
- reviewed the results of a recent survey of DDACC members. A copy of the survey results was filed with the papers for this meeting.
- highlighted projects the DDACC was involved with – community garden; late night event noise; downtown bike trails; Bates Alley Project; Dog Parks/Greenspace; KRVt Downtown Connector; Michigan Avenue 2-way conversion, Arcadia Commons West.
- asked Commissioners the following questions: What development will be a catalyst for change in next 5 years?; and What else can the DDACC do to work with the City?; What more do you want to know about the DDACC?

Commissioner Urban stated the Arcadia Commons West project would be an important development.

Vice Mayor Anderson stated change in the downtown had happened because of residential development, and this would continue to be the driver of growth in the future. Vice Mayor Anderson requested the survey results be sent to Commissioners.

Downtown Citizen
Advisory Council
(cont'd)

Commissioner Cinabro remarked that the downtown was all retail when he was growing and stated a metamorphosis had taken place over the past 20 years.

Mayor Hopewell noted the City and the City Commission were very connected with technology, and he urged the members of the DDACC and downtown stakeholders to connect with City through technology.

The Northside Association for Community Development representatives:

Northside Association
for Community
Development

- described a "Show Me the Money" event planned for January 9th to address personal finance issues.
- reported NACD was providing affordable housing for seven people and described how this had been helpful to those residents.
- stated the Association was working with City staff on a walkability study.
- indicated the Association had worked with the Building Blocks program over the summer and reported 15 residents and 3 rental units had been helped through this program.
- reported the X-train problem had not gone away but had improved some.
- indicated gentrification had begun to take place and stated NACD was working to try to help residents stay in their homes.
- Ms. Dandridge asked the City to do something about the large potholes and poor condition of the sidewalks in front of her home at 1402 N. Rose Street.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, Ms. Dandridge and Ms. Jordan-Woods stated cars cut through the Rose/Clay Street area to avoid traffic lights on other streets, and they noted there had been an increase in criminal activity in that area recently.

Commissioner Cunningham noted residents frequently identified potholes as a significant issue for the Neighborhood.

Commissioner Urban urged citizens to talk with staff first before bringing their issues to the City Commission. Commissioner Urban expressed hope that the City would develop mechanism to recognize residents who were doing good work in the City.

The West Main Hill Neighborhood Association representative:

West Main Hill
Neighborhood
Association

- thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for removing dead trees in Jones Park.

West Main Hill
Neighborhood
Association (cont'd)

- stated the Association was working with the Parks and Recreation Department to develop a community garden in Henderson Park.
- expressed concern about cut-through traffic between Stadium Drive and West Main Street.
- reported a traffic study had been performed approximately two weeks prior and expressed hope that the study would lead to additional traffic control/traffic calming measures.
- discussed the work being done on the stadium lighting ordinance and expressed confidence that a good compromise could be reached.
- stated there had been problems with a group of teens vandalizing homes near the neighborhood tot lot.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, Ms. Wright stated the Neighborhood boundaries were from Kalamazoo College on the east to a few blocks past Dartmouth on the west, and between West Main Street and West Michigan Avenue on the north and south.

In response to a question from Commissioner Cooney, Ms. Wright explained motorists were using a route that followed Lovell Avenue, Monroe Street, Academy Street, and Berkley Street to cut through the Neighborhood.

Citizen Comments

Next, an opportunity was given for citizen comments.

Lauren Rosenthal, non-resident and Program Assistant with the Young Adult Diversion Court (YADC), introduced Alora and Jacinda, who described their experiences in the YADC and presented ideas to the Commission for helping young people in the community. Ms. Rosenthal distributed a document describing the YADC, a copy of which was filed with the papers for this meeting.

Jody Dozeman, non-resident, spoke about problems she was having. A written communication from Ms. Dozeman was filed with the papers for this meeting.

Commissioner
Comments

Finally, an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments by City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on November 9, 2015

Approved by: _____

Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor

Dated: November 9, 2015