

Roll Call

A neighborhood meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, November 20, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room at City Hall, 241 West South Street.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell
Vice Mayor Erin Knott
David Anderson
Don Cooney
Eric Cunningham

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Shannon Sykes
Jack Urban

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, moved to excuse the absences of Commissioners Sykes and Urban. With a voice vote the motion passed.

Communications

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

Neighborhood Communications

Neighborhood communications were received next.

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

Oakwood Neighborhood Association

Alfonso Espinosa, Vice President
Cheryl Lord, Executive Director

Stuart Area Restoration Association

Max Tibbitts, Chair
Valarie Bader, Vice Chair

*Commissioner Sykes arrived at 6:02 p.m.

Oakwood Neighborhood Association

The Oakwood Neighborhood Association representatives:

- distributed and reviewed copies of the November/December 2017 edition of the *Oakwood Times* newsletter.
- reported on contacts and volunteer hours at the Neighborhood Center year-to-date.
- stated the new City website was not helpful and the staff directory was not up-to-date, making it difficult to communicate with the City. Ms. Lord indicated Association staff spent a lot of their time trying to connect people to the correct people in the City organization, and she urged the City to improve the staff directory.
- noted the City had not made available data gathered during the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 (IK2025) process.

- reported students from Western Michigan University had gathered and interpreted the following data: only 25% of the neighborhood streets had sidewalks on both sides; 50% had sidewalks on one side; 60% of the sidewalks in the neighborhood were damaged and in need of repair; the bike lanes on Oakland Drive were not safe.
- expressed concern about dead trees in the public right-of-way.
- thanked the Parks and Recreation and Public Safety Departments for their involvement and participation in neighborhood events.
- thanked Public Services for fixing the fence around the retention pond at Laird and Benton Avenues.
- indicated the Association was collecting food for the food pantry.
- invited people to the neighborhood holiday party on December 10th and the annual holiday benefit concert by Bell Book and Canto on December 16th.

Oakwood
Neighborhood
Association
(cont'd)

The Stuart Area Restoration Association representatives:

- reported the Association Board of Directors was extremely upset at the poor work done by the young people from Youth Opportunities Unlimited when they planted flowers at West Main Park. Mr. Tibbitts stated the Association would not be engaging with the Summer Youth Employment Program in the future.
- thanked City staff for their work on the demolition of the building at the corner of North and Elm Streets.
- remarked on properties that were being used as short term rentals and expressed concern that City was not addressing these businesses in a uniform way.
- advocated for the removal of the parking lane on Old Orchard Place.
- invited Commissioners to a soup extravaganza in February at the Stuart Avenue Inn.
- reported the Association Board had been meeting on a quarterly or bi-monthly basis, which seemed to be more productive than monthly meetings.
- expressed concern about condition of the City's property records and stated the Association had 40 years' worth of property records in storage that they would be archiving.
- expressed concern that the new zoning code would allow student housing in the Stuart Neighborhood.

Stuart Area
Restoration
Association

Stuart Area
Restoration
Association (cont'd)

- reported the Association had accomplished everything in the action plan that was developed from the last neighborhood survey.
- indicated the Association would be conducting another in-depth neighborhood survey to get better input than what was obtained during the IK2025 process.

Citizen Comments

Next, an opportunity was given for general citizen comments, but no comments were offered.

Commissioner
Comments

Finally, an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments by City Commissioners.

Mayor Hopewell thanked the City Clerk for rehangng pictures of past and current City Commissions on the walls of the Community Room.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on January 2, 2018

Approved by: _____
Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor
Dated: January 2, 2018

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