

Roll Call

A neighborhood meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, April 16, 2018 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
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Shannon Sykes*

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

Commissioners
Excused

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, moved to excuse the absence of Commissioner Sykes. 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:

Eastside Neighborhood Association

Pat Taylor, Executive Director

Northside Association for Community Development

Mildred Smith, President

Mattie Jordan-Woods, Executive Director

Eastside Neighborhood
Association

The Eastside Neighborhood Association representatives:

- reported the Association had lost their ability to pay a custodian due to the minimum wage increase and stated they were partnering with AARP to have custodial work done.
- stated the Center for Community Progress and the Kalamazoo County Landbank were working to create a pocket park near the intersection of East Michigan and Phelps Avenues.

*Commissioner Sykes arrived at 6:04 p.m.

- reported on a recent trip to Macon, Georgia to learn more about public art with the executive directors from the Kalamazoo Institute of Art and Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo.
- indicated the first priority for the Association was to work on the sustainability of the organization and then see where the Association's work tied in with the City's master plan.

- stated the Association was working with Neighborhood Business Coordinator Dwayne Powell on business development.
- expressed excitement about the Rockwell Park improvements.
- reported students from the Department of Business at Western Michigan University (WMU) did a service learning project during the winter semester in which they observed Association board meetings, identified problems, and recommended solutions.
- indicated the Association was renting out their facility to other non-profit organizations to help with facility expenses.

Eastside Neighborhood Association (cont'd)

In response to questions from Commissioner Anderson, Ms. Taylor stated Sam was still working at the Association part-time. Ms. Taylor reported Habitat for Humanity was no longer working with the Eastside Network (E-Net), and other organizations in E-Net had divided up the work Habitat had been doing.

Commissioner Cunningham informed Ms. Taylor he had been talking with Parks and Recreation Director Sean Fletcher and community partners about getting a youth center in the Eastside Neighborhood.

The Northside Association for Community Development (NACD) representatives:

Northside Association for Community Development

- distributed and reviewed the most recent activity report NACD had submitted to the Community Planning and Economic Development Department. A copy of this report was filed with the papers for this meeting.
- reported the Association would be acquiring property at Park and North Streets that would allow for the construction of six additional senior housing units. Ms. Jordan-Woods stated the units would be part of a mixed-use development, and grants from various sources would allow the project to be completed debt-free.
- discussed plans to work with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety again in 2018 to host and run a program for at-risk youth.
- indicated the Northside Neighborhood plan only needed some adjustments and it would be ready for City approval. Ms. Jordan-Woods stated resident-owned businesses and affordable housing were the main focus of the plan, along with trying to keep NACD sustainable while continuing to help people.
- reported the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) had announced the locations of its Opportunity Zones and stated census tract 2.02 was included but not tract 3.0. Ms. Jordan Woods indicated this decision would result in development tools and funding going to rich developers for large developments rather than developments in the poor sections of the Neighborhood. Ms. Jordan-Woods stated it was not worth it to fight MSHDA, but she asked the City to consider this situation

Northside Association
for Community
Development (cont'd)

when deciding where to invest its economic development funds.

Commissioner Cunningham observed the Northside/Southside rivalry had become more intense in the last 6-7 months.

Ms. Jordan-Woods stated she agreed to run the program for at-risk youth again, but she expressed concern about the possibility of violence between program participants. Ms. Jordan-Woods stated the threat of jail-time was not effective at controlling behavior, and the six week program was not long enough to change behavior. Ms. Jordan-Woods indicated the program needed to be a year-round program and needed to teach the participants skills that would allow them to make money.

In response to a question from Commissioner Sykes, Commissioner Cunningham reported the intensity of the Northside/Southside rivalry was similar to the rivalries that existed in 2008-2010. Commissioner Cunningham stated the differences between 2010 and 2018 were the prevalence of guns and the involvement of girls.

In response to a question from Ms. Smith, Mayor Hopewell stated a group of community leaders was going to attend a 2-day training on keeping young people out of jail.

Citizen Comments

Next, an opportunity was given for general citizen comments, but none were offered.

Commissioner
Comments

Finally, an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments by City Commissioners, but none were offered.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on May 7, 2018

Approved by: _____
Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor
Dated: May 7, 2018

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