

	A neighborhood meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, March 18, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room at City Hall, 241 W. South Street.
Roll Call	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 Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Cooney, 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: <u>Edison Neighborhood Association</u> Steve Dupuie, Board President Tammy Taylor, Executive Director <u>Stuart Area Restoration Association</u> Valarie Badar, Board Chair Dana Underwood, Treasurer <u>Vine Neighborhood Association</u> Sarah Ruggles, Board Vice Chair Margaret Wilson, Secretary
Edison Neighborhood Association	The Edison Neighborhood Association representatives: - Distributed and reviewed the Edison Neighborhood Association <i>Annual Report 2018</i>.
Stuart Area Restoration Association	The Stuart Area Restoration Association representatives: - announced the Association's annual meeting and board elections would take place on April 8th. - described upcoming events and projects. - expressed concern about the disrepair of The Stuart House and the blight on the corner of North Street and Douglas Avenue.

*Commissioner Sykes arrived at 6:06 p.m.

- asked about the development of the Kalamazoo Avenue/West Main Street area relative to streetscape improvements and conversion to 2-way streets.
- reported 8 people were running for positions on the Board of Directors, including three people with prior service on the board and five people who had never been on the board and were new residents in the neighborhood.

Community Planning and Development Director Rebekah Kik stated right-of-way improvements were not happening in the Kalamazoo Avenue/West Main Street area. Director Kik explained the City had only recently assumed jurisdiction of these streets, and there would be a lengthy planning and design process before any improvements were implemented.

The Vine Neighborhood Association representatives:

- reported they had signed the Neighborhood Initiative Agreement and indicated they were looking forward to the neighborhood assessment.
- thanked Neighborhood Activator Katie Reilly for her work on the Imagine Vine Plan and stated walkability was a major goal that came out of the planning process.
- thanked City code inspectors and Community Police Officer Ryan Shank for their work in the neighborhood.
- stated the Association had refinanced its loan with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and reported the value of the Association's property had doubled since they bought it.
- indicated the annual membership meeting would take place in May, and three director positions would be open.
- reported the Association was partnering with the Kalamazoo Public Art Initiative to refurbish the Central Corners Building, which would include two additional large murals.
- stated there was a full Art Hop schedule in place for the first half of the year.
- indicated the Association had reworked its budget, with one of the goals being to increase support for events.
- spoke about blighted, fire-damaged houses that were owned by the Kalamazoo County Land Bank and asked why it was taking so long for these houses to be torn down.

City Attorney Robinson explained the challenges involved with demolishing fire-damaged homes.

Director Kik offered to look up blighted properties to check their status, and she explained the City was working to try to save homes as an affordable housing strategy.

Stuart Area Restoration Association (cont'd)

Vine Neighborhood Association

Public Comments

When an opportunity was given for public comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

Jody Dozeman, City resident, spoke about her bus fares for people with disabilities and her ideas for the development on Lake Street.

Richard Stewart, City resident, presented reasons why the Southtown area should be its own neighborhood with a neighborhood association. Mr. Stewart described the Southtown boundaries and stated flooding and failing infrastructure were the biggest concerns of property owners and residents. Mr. Stewart reported City staff had put requirements on Southtown that they had not put on other parts of the City that have formed neighborhood associations.

Dana Underwood, City resident, stated she had been asking the City for information about the requirements to be a neighborhood association, but she had not received a response.

Steve Dupuie, City resident, noted he lived in the Southtown area and felt represented by Edison Neighborhood Association. Mr. Dupuie stated Mr. Stewart's comments were the first time he had heard about Southtown residents/businesses wanting to separate from their current neighborhoods.

Commissioner
Comments

Next an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments by City Commissioners.

Mayor Hopewell encouraged people who were not satisfied with City staff to contact their supervisors.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, Mayor Hopewell stated the City did not have a land bank.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on April 1, 2019

Approved by: _____

Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor

Dated: April 1, 2019

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