

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
July 1, 2024

Members Present: Don Cooney, Bobby Hopewell, Alonzo Wilson, Carol McGlinn, Ben Damerow, *Patrice Griffin

Members Absent: Alyssa Stewart, Kym Hollars, Brenda Hughes

City Staff: Kevin Ford, Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Coordinator, Beth Cheeseman, Executive Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Kevin Ford conducted a roll call of the organizing committee and determined a quorum existed.

A motion was made by Don Cooney, to excuse the absent members, seconded by Ben Damerow. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Carol McGlinn, to approve the minutes of May 6, 2024 as presented, seconded by Don Cooney. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Bobby Hopewell expressed a desire to have Public Comments moved to the end of the agenda.

*Patrice Griffin entered the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. SPK 2026

Kevin Ford informed Committee members that he had submitted FFE special requests for 2025. He explained the process and provided the FFE and operating budget timelines. The requests

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
July 1, 2024

were based on City Commission priorities set in February: Rx Kids, business supports for home-based childcare businesses, and the Financial Opportunity Center (FOC). Kevin explained each program. He strongly recommended that Committee members attend the next City Commission priorities retreat in February so they can consider special requests for 2026.

Don Cooney asked where the FOC has worked so he could become more familiar with that program. Bobby Hopewell responded that there is one in Lansing. Kevin Ford said he would send Don information.

Ben Damerow asked if the request for Rx Kids was for just one year of funding. Kevin said it was for one year to help with start-up costs. Don Cooney thought that Alyssa Stewart had contact with local funders.

Bobby Hopewell encouraged Committee members to stay connected with IK2035. He mentioned some of the things the Committee talks about that would change prosperity: childcare, transportation, entrepreneurship, duplicating the GI bill, and youth programs. Bobby shared the observation that many things that are funded by FFE aspirational dollars have been moved into the standard budget. He also brought up the idea of labeling items as high, medium, or low prosperity work. Bobby thought that SPK needed to start assessing budget items and measuring them as high, medium, or low. Then they would have a true dashboard when it comes to prosperity. Don Cooney commented that funding is now a problem because the ARPA funds are running out. He said they won't have a budget deficit, but they had to cut back funding on some things.

Kevin Ford challenged the Committee to think in terms of systemic funding. He asked what that would look like to get something like Rx Kids launched. Kevin commented that FFE is yearly and not multi-year funding. Bobby encouraged City Commissioners to push for multi-year FFE funding. Don Cooney said that was difficult because it is based on the market. Bobby Hopewell and Don Cooney agreed that funding is based on priorities set by the City Commission. Don indicated that people advocate for different priorities, so it is sometimes difficult to get a consensus.

Kevin Ford shared that he is working with businesses – doing business retention and expansion visits.

2. Economic Development Plan Presentation

Jerrid Burdue shared that Camoin Associates were selected to help devise an Economic Development Plan for the City of Kalamazoo. He said they are nearing the end of the project. They will be presenting the plan at the Committee of the Whole (COW) on July 15, will be at the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) in August, and at City Commission for approval in September.

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
July 1, 2024

Bobby Hopewell asked Kevin Ford to send out invitations for each meeting. Kevin agreed and encouraged Committee members to attend the Northside Cultural Business Development Authority (NCBDA) meetings as well.

Jerrid Burdue said that the traditional idea of economic development is job creation, tax abatements, and a business friendly climate. He said they are looking beyond that at economic wellbeing – an upward mobility and quality of life. Jerrid shared the four goals of the economic development strategy.

- 1) Business environment, Target markets, Entrepreneurship
- 2) Preparing for growth
- 3) Strengthening neighborhoods
- 4) Improving the downtown experience

Jerrid Burdue shared that the consultant found that Kalamazoo ranks in the top in terms of quality of life, programming, and being mindful of an inclusive economy. Kalamazoo lacks the nuts and bolts of economic development: tax abatements, marketing the city, drawing in employers, and understanding the business climate.

Don Cooney worried that the strategy sounded like a trickle down theory. He didn't know how taking care of businesses would help reach out to the people hurting in the community.

Jerrid Burdue said they will create a Community Benefits Agreement policy. This policy will make sure business know what is expected from them in reference to helping people in the community. They are in the process of drafting an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA) tax abatement policy. Jerrid stated they were looking to incorporate job creation tied to minimum wage and an additional percentage based on if they were providing health care benefits. He said they also wanted to include a social equity piece that reports on residents in certain census tracks.

Bobby Hopewell thought the City of Kalamazoo does a poor job of enabling people to have their own businesses. He spoke about best practices as far as customer service and the principle of saying, “yes, and,” instead of an initial no answer to customers. Bobby shared that customer service is about focus groups and conversations of post interactions – giving the customer a voice in how things occur. He asked where land use and property management end up in the Economic Development Strategy. Bobby expressed concern that the same few developers end up purchasing City-owned properties and then their projects stall. Jerrid Burdue shared how those concerns would be addressed under different goals of the Economic Development Strategy.

There was conversation about NIE (New Inclusive Economy). This is a collection of entrepreneurial support organizations that look at start-up space, helping businesses understand taxes, forms, creating a business plan. They are trying to create a group that is complementing and not overlapping services.

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
July 1, 2024

Jerrid Burdue noted that SPK could ask for funding for initiatives to avoid displacement and help close the gap in wraparound services.

Committee members spoke about the need for housing. Carol McGlinn asked how they could get away from the housing model which only offers a couple of affordable units in an otherwise market rate building. Patrice Griffin shared that for more affordable units, a developer would need to decide they are not going to make a profit off the development. She shared that the State of Michigan was no longer going to pull from a waitlist for housing choice vouchers. Families were already in a critical space with reference to housing – now even more so. Kevin Ford suggested having Sharilyn Parsons, Housing Development Supervisor, come and give an education piece surrounding housing. He thought understanding the whole process and where there are opportunities to make it more equitable would be beneficial to the group. Kevin said he has been speaking to people about a Community Land Trust as a possible affordable housing strategy in the City. Those are potential conversations for 2026 that could create systemic change. Jerrid Burdue agreed that it is time to be innovative. They understand there is a shortage of affordable housing. They also need to think about job creation and economic upward mobility so people can afford market rate housing.

Don Cooney said what they're doing was good. He thought it did look like they were trying to move away from the trickle down theory. Ben Damerow thought Jerrid was doing a good job of explaining how this strategy benefits City residents. He encouraged him to put it down on paper, so it is not up for misinterpretation.

Bobby Hopewell suggested there needed to be multiple deployment strategies to alert people as to how they can help move and drive prosperity. He also suggested a separate strategy of how to hold people accountable. Bobby commented on a time when the City of Kalamazoo missed out on funding because they didn't ask. Don Cooney stated that they do have a lobbyist now.

Carol McGlinn commented that it was great that they mentioned the event center, but they should say, "and throughout the downtown area."

Don Cooney spoke about a forum he attended where unhoused people spoke and talked about what they are experiencing and what they thought would help. He noted the importance of having people from the neighborhoods come and say what they think will help.

Ben Damerow mentioned that if the downtown corridor is cut off by trains on a regular basis, they will still have a disconnected city. He wondered if there was a long-term plan to assist with that. Jerrid Burdue encouraged Ben to plug into the IK2035 process for conversations regarding land use and transportation.

*Bobby Hopewell left the meeting. Carol McGlinn, Vice Chair, took over facilitation of the meeting.

Jerrid Burdue spoke about the level of detail expected in the plan and asked if Committee members thought something was missing from the plan. Don Cooney brought up the needs for

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
July 1, 2024

youth: quality of schools, reading scores, a youth center on the Northside. Carol McGlinn agreed that literacy and strong school systems should be a part of it.

*Ben Damerow left the meeting.

Jerrid Burdue hoped to have a finalized draft of the Strategy in August that could be shared with the group. He offered to come back to their meeting in September.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. SPK Business Convening

Kevin Ford referenced a meeting SPK had in 2015/2016 with area businesses regarding employment and people returning from incarceration. He said that Bobby Hopewell was talking about having another meeting. This time they could speak about concrete ways people could plug into prosperity work. Kevin said that the Upjohn Institute was completing a regional childcare plan sometime around September. They were looking at having this meeting no later than the first quarter of 2025.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Carol McGlinn announced that Dr. Slade, Kalamazoo Public Schools Superintendent, started a mandatory summer school for kids who are struggling. She said that aside from his job, he has been going around neighborhoods between 8:00pm-1:00am talking to kids. Dr. Slade is asking people to join him on walks in the neighborhood. His goal is to give them some resources and get them off the streets. Carol mentioned that the City is doing some midnight basketball at different schools. Dr. Slade is about being in the community and working directly with kids - going to places where kids are gathered.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

1. IK 2035 Rollout (participation opportunity)

Kevin Ford reported that Christina Anderson, City Planner, is rolling out IK2035 right now. She will be providing information for people to participate. Kevin said that Shared Prosperity will remain a portion of the Strategic Vision. When he receives information from her, he will relay that to the Committee.

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
July 1, 2024

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Carol McGlinn adjourned the meeting at 2:01 p.m.