

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
January 13, 2025

Members Present: Don Cooney, Carol McGlinn, Alyssa Stewart, Alonzo Wilson

Members Absent: Bobby Hopewell, Patrese Griffin, Brenda Hughes, Ben Damerow, Kym Hollars

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:38 p.m. by Vice Chair Carol McGlinn.

ROLL CALL

Kevin Ford conducted a roll call of the organizing committee and determined a quorum was not present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A quorum was not present, and no vote could be taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A quorum was not present, and no vote could be taken.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Rx Kids

Alyssa Stewart gave an Rx Kids update. She explained they were waiting for information from Give Directly, the administrator for the Rx Kids program. Give Directly will receive the applications, review them for eligibility, approve and make payments. Alyssa said they are currently working with Cradle parents and community members to test the applications to make sure they are accessible and working well. She said the launch date (when applications are available) would either be February 12 or February 18. Any baby born on February 1 or after will be eligible and will get payments from whenever they enter the program forward. Alyssa said the launch celebration is planned for Sunday, February 23, 2025 from 12:30-4:00pm at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum. The event will be tailored for those pregnant and people with young children. She said they are getting a mailing list and invitation ready.

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Alyssa Stewart also shared that there was an Rx Kids stakeholder meeting scheduled for January 23, 2025. They are hoping to have the launch date locked in by then. She said that a news source indicated that the program was limited to the first 200 eligible people. Alyssa clarified that there is no limit of participants. There are funds for all the pregnant people in the City of Kalamazoo. Ideally, women would apply at 12-16 weeks pregnant, and payment would start at about 20 weeks of pregnancy. It is for City residents only. Alyssa said they are really close to being fully funded for two years – \$9.2 million. In about six months, they will raise funds for years three through five.

Alyssa Stewart said there will be a dashboard at RxKids.org that will show how many families are being served and how much money is going out. They are putting together an Rx Kids social media toolkit that they will share with their partners. Alyssa is coordinating with Patrice Griffin to talk with all the homeless service providers. There is a process by which people can use shelters as their address and housing providers can attest that the person is engaged with their service. At this time, they only verify addresses at the time of enrollment. Alyssa shared that the program is for ages 16 and up. A guardian would need to sign off on a minor's application. She said they are updating the Rx Kids fact sheet and will share it with Committee members. More marketing materials will be coming in the next couple weeks.

Alyssa Stewart shared that the University of Michigan Poverty Solutions center is the central evaluator of the program. They are in conversation with the Upjohn Institute, which may help with the workforce development and economic development part of the program. She said they would be able to look at the data holistically but will also have Kalamazoo specific data.

Through conversation, it was clarified that to be eligible for the program, you have to have proof of residency for the City of Kalamazoo; regardless of how late you enter the program, you would get remaining payments forward – there are no retroactive payments. Steps are being taken to start programs in Saginaw and the Eastern Upper Peninsula. Alyssa said they are talking to people in other states as well. She said they will have physical posters and rack cards. They are going to try to include information about Rx Kids in the late February early March City mailing.

El Sol Update

Carol McGlenn said they are deciding about moving El Sol at the next school board meeting. She thinks they are leaning towards moving it to the Eastside of Kalamazoo because they want to expand the program and make the building much more kid focused. She said they know it would be a huge hit to the Vine neighborhood. They haven't made any decisions about what would happen to the current El Sol building. They want to have a community team look at the feasibility of the building and its potential use. Carol said it is not really a neighborhood school. You have to be committed to the bilingual program and start in first or second grade if you are an English speaker. She said they think they will get more Spanish speaking kids if they move because the highest populations are in Edison and the Eastside.

Carol McGlenn did say there was some miscommunication. She said the idea of moving El Sol's location was moving quickly, but everyone did their due diligence. They have tried to have a lot

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of conversations up until the community event happened. Carol said they had very little input from parents against the move. She spoke about the programs currently housed at education center (Chenery): Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center (KAMSC), Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program (KILP), and the Virtual program. Carol said she has been there when the kids are dismissed and it's crazy. She indicated that the current El Sol building is not in great shape. However, it will be three years before the new school will be built, so they have time to decide what is best for that location. One idea is a STEM program or a small pre-school program. Carol emphasized that they want to make sure Vine residents sit on the committee.

Don Cooney asked about the potential new location, saying there was a lack of places for youth on the Eastside. Carol stated that it was Baker Street between East Main and Nazareth – just blocks away from Northeastern. She clarified that the property is in Kalamazoo Township. Right now, El Sol is on a 6 acre property which includes Chenery. If the school stayed at its current location, there would only be 2.6 acres available. The lot on the Eastside is 12 acres. Carol spoke about the difficulties of rebuilding on the current location and that they would not be able to expand the program up to 8th grade. She mentioned their partnership with WMU on a bilingual program. Carol stated that 27/400 kids are from Vine neighborhood. El Sol has to have a 50/50 population of English/Spanish speaking kids. There was some conversation centered around school of choice.

Kevin Ford mentioned that the SPK Committee may be able to help with the conversation of what would benefit the community at the current El Sol location. Carol said she would prefer not to tear the building down. She said it is not a standalone building – water and electricity comes from Chenery. Carol emphasized again that she wants Vine representation and input in these decisions.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2025 Meetings Times and Location

Kevin Ford stated that the next SPK meeting would probably be at the CPED office. He reported that the current meeting time and location didn't work for 2025. They either need to change the time or location of the meeting. Carol McGlenn suggested moving the meeting to the second Monday of the month. Kevin said he would look at the Community Room calendar and put the meeting time and location on the next meeting agenda.

2. 2025 Updates

Kevin Ford highlighted that he will be working on a project with the Center for Community Based Enterprise on cooperative business developments. The Center will give general information on cooperative business developments and specific information about childcare cooperatives. Carol McGlenn asked if a childcare co-op would be childcare groups coming

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together to share costs. Kevin said there would be many different ways to form the co-op. The Center will give further information and if there is interest, they will proceed from there.

Kevin Ford announced the Happy City author event. He encouraged people to attend. There is a Ted Talk available too.

Kevin Ford said that Bobby Durkee, Assistant City Planner, suggested having staff come to their next meeting to talk with them about IK 2035 or conducting a Meeting On The Go.

Kevin Ford announced that he applied for a City Start grant through Bloomberg for \$75,000. He said the grant looks to identify the drivers and wealth accumulation/extraction for black residents. This wouldn't be taxpayer money, so they can be explicit that it is for black residents. Kevin said he should hear back this month. The kick-off for those accepted is in February in New York.

Alyssa Stewart shared that the Kalamazoo Community Foundation was accepted into a Community Foundation Leads cohort (economic mobility cohort). It is funded by the Gates Foundation. She said Kalamazoo is one of 10 communities who will send representatives to sessions for a year. Alyssa said she will bring back what they learn. At the end of the year, they will receive a \$50,000 grant that could support the planning or implementation of an idea.

Kevin Ford said he was tasked with coming up with a Business Retention and Expansion plan. He will be connecting with people in the SPK Committee to assist him with that. He also shared that the opportunity to submit 2026 special requests was coming up in a couple of months.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

Staff reports and updates were given under Committee Member Comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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ADJOURNMENT

Carol McGlinn adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:27 p.m.