

Roll Call

A neighborhood meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, September 16, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room at City Hall, 241 W. South Street.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell
Vice Mayor Erin Knott
David Anderson
Don Cooney
Eric Cunningham
Patrese Griffin
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

Communications

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

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

James Jackson, Vice President
Pat Taylor, Executive Director
Mike Seals, Treasurer and Former President

Milwood Neighborhood Watch

John Hilliard, President
Pastor Brian Siefert, Milwood Community Church

Vine Neighborhood Association

Jeremy Terpening, Board Member
Steve Walsh, Executive Director
Margaret Wilson

Eastside Neighborhood
Association

The Eastside Neighborhood Association representatives:

- described recent changes on the board, including the addition of five new members, and stated 60% of the board members were neighborhood residents.
- reported residents were becoming more involved in the Association.
- stated the board was working on planning, prioritizing, and implementing neighborhood goals, which included fundraising to make projects happen.
- indicated work on Rockwell Park was ongoing, and people were pleased with the work that had been completed.

- reported Habitat for Humanity had finished the last home on its property, and people were moving in.
- described partnerships with the Small Business Administration (entrepreneur assistance), Kalamazoo Valley Community College (Fresh Food Initiative), Kalamazoo Public Schools (summer food program), and the Kalamazoo County Land Bank (murals on buildings).
- stated Edwin Street was the Building Blocks site for 2019.
- announced there would be a financial literacy program in the fall.
- indicated the Association wanted to work with convenience stores to encourage healthier food options.
- invited people to a harvest event on September 21st.
- reported the Association was working to identify sites for rain gardens.

Commissioner Cunningham thanked Mr. Jackson for his character and work in the community and congratulated him on becoming Vice President. Commissioner Cunningham asked how economic development in the neighborhood would incorporate activities and opportunities for young people.

Mr. Jackson stated the neighborhood needed centers for both seniors and young people.

Ms. Taylor stated there were activities for youth, but people were not aware of them. Ms. Taylor indicated there was a need for a central location and better communication/marketing.

Commissioner Griffin commended the Association for getting over 100 people to attend the design charette for properties owned by the Land Bank.

The Milwood Neighborhood Watch representatives:

- distributed and reviewed a document entitled *Presentation to City Commission – September 16, 2019*.
- shared that in a recent survey 98% of Milwood residents wanted marihuana facilities.
- announced there would be a panel discussion about marihuana on Tuesday, November 12th.
- reviewed potential activities for 2020.
- discussed projects that were waiting on grant funding.
- highlighted the Association's work with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS).

Eastside Neighborhood Association (cont'd)

Milwood Neighborhood Watch
2019-0295

Milwood Neighborhood
Watch (cont'd)

- asked that the City Commission change its rules to allow people to comment on agenda items prior to regular business meetings and to have those comments included in the official record.
- suggested a one-half mile separation distance between marihuana facilities and schools/churches.

2019-0296

- distributed the September 2019 edition of the Association newsletter.
- thanked the City for allowing the closure of Lover's Lane for National Night Out.

Commissioner Urban stated he was very impressed with the Association's National Night Out event.

Vine Neighborhood
Association

The Vine Neighborhood Association representatives:

- thanked the Community Planning and Economic Development Department for their help with the Vine Neighborhood Plan.
- stated residents wanted more public art.
- indicated Public Safety Officer (PSO) Shank had been exceptional to work with and stated the new name for the neighborhood watch was "Community Cares."
- expressed appreciation for the opportunity to look at on-street parking in the neighborhood.
- reported the Association would be hiring an AmeriCorp worker.
- stated communication and marketing were a challenge.
- thanked City staff in various departments for their help.
- commended KDPS for dealing with issues created by college student rehabilitation and homelessness.
- asked about the new definition of "blight" in Sections 20-30 and 20-31 of the Kalamazoo City Code.

Commissioner Cunningham stated he was glad the issue of on-street parking was being addressed.

Public Comments

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

Nehemiah Scudder, City resident, expressed concern about the lack of trash containers at bus stops.

Jeff Messser, City resident, thanked Mr. Walsh for talking with Rob's Barbershop about placing signs on telephone poles. Mr. Messer asked staff to talk with Mr. Zemlick about the "Save Nazareth" signs that were being attached to telephone poles around the City.

Next an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments by City Commissioners, but no comments were offered.

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on October 7, 2019

Approved by: _____
Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor
Dated: October 7, 2019

Adjournment