

Agenda

Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo (SPK) Organizing Committee



City of Kalamazoo

Monday, July 14, 2025

6:00 PM

The Community Room at City Hall - 241 W. South Street

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

B. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(Action: Motion to approve the agenda)

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of the minutes from the Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Organizing Committee meeting on March 10, 2025 (Action: Motion to approve)

a. Approve minutes for March 10, 2025 meeting

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

E. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. SPK Coordinator Updates

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. RX Kids Update

H. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

I. STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

J. ADJOURNMENT



SPK Organizing Committee Staff Report

City of Kalamazoo

TO: The Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo (SPK) Organizing Committee

FROM: Kevin Ford, Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Coordinator
Prepared by: Jaime Marsman, Community Investment Administrative Assistant

DATE: July 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Approve minutes for March 10, 2025 meeting

SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND:

RECOMMENDATION:

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
March 10, 2025

Members Present: *Don Cooney, Alyssa Stewart, Bobby Hopewell, *Patrese Griffin, Brenda Hughes, Ben Damerow, Kym Hollars

Members Absent: Carol McGlinn, Alonzo Wilson

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:31 p.m. by Chair Bobby Hopewell.

ROLL CALL

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

A motion was made by Brenda Hughes, to excuse the absent members, seconded by Kym Hollars. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Bobby Hopewell noted that he wanted to discuss Tri-Share. It was determined that would be appropriate under Committee Member Comments.

The agenda was approved by consensus as presented.

*Don Cooney entered the meeting at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Brenda Hughes, to approve the minutes of November 4, 2024 as presented, seconded by Don Cooney. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Alyssa Stewart, to approve the minutes of January 13, 2025 as presented, seconded by Kym Hollars. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

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COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Bobby Hopewell said he connected with the Tri-Share program leader. He shared that the program has been in operation for 1 ½ years. Bobby thought it was odd that the City of Kalamazoo is not participating in a program they are sponsoring. The Tri-Share leader said she has tried to engage with the City with no response. Don Cooney and Kevin Ford will follow up.

Alyssa Stewart gave an update on Rx Kids. The Kalamazoo program was launched almost a month ago. She shared the City of Kalamazoo dashboard, explained it, and said that it is updated weekly. Alyssa said there was well over \$200,000 in the hands of families. She estimated that 400 families would bring the program to 100% saturation. Alyssa thanked the City for their support.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Imagine Kalamazoo 2035: Update & Meeting on the Go Exercise.

Kevin Ford welcomed City Planner Christina Anderson, Deputy Director of Community Planning and Economic Development. She explained they would do an Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 exercise, and then she would give an update of community comments.

Planner Anderson explained that City staff have started conversations with the community in connection with Imagine Kalamazoo in order to update the City's Strategic Vision and the Master Plan. Those documents have a ten year shelf life. She said Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 was divided into three phases of conversation: Imagine It, Plan It, and Design It. Through this process, they engage with the community, evaluate previous successes, barriers, and goals to see how to move the City forward for the next 10 years. Planner Anderson said the timeline of the phases is somewhat flexible. She shared that they extended the Imagine It phase because more people wanted to participate. Planner Anderson showed a slide of engagement and points of contact.

*Patrice Griffin entered the meeting at this time.

Bobby Hopewell asked if they had demographic information from their points of contact. Planner Anderson said they are in the process of trying to collect that information.

Committee members spent a few minutes filling out questions regarding the City of Kalamazoo. Following are the questions and committee member responses.

What makes a City happy and healthy?

- Economic opportunity
- Less poverty by race and gender
- Social capital
- Networks where people feel like they belong

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- Mutual aid – people taking care of each other on an individual level and through institutions
- Clear communication channels between residents and City leaders to create a space where anyone can live, grow, and thrive as a result of equitable access to opportunities and resources
- Happy and healthy institutions, organizations, schools, libraries, governments, public safety
- Accessibility for everyone to have mental health services
- Access to resources needed for an abundant life
- Connected
- Diverse
- Designed for all
- Children thriving
- Innovation and Northstarring occurring
- Laboratory for social experimentation
- Connected expectations for all
- Everyone shares in the prosperity abundance in Kalamazoo

Places in Kalamazoo that exhibit some of these characteristics now?

- Park Street Market
- Edison neighborhood came together and created the Albert White trail
- Steps to Victory organization
- Boys & Girls Club
- Farmer's Market
- Gatherings and traditions: Chili Cook-off, Bronson Park holiday displays

What is the role of the community to get there?

- Recognize that people are experts in their own lives

Bobby Hopewell asked how they define community. He commented that people are as involved in their community as much as they want to be. Bobby emphasized that participation is essential.

- Show up, participate, genuine civic engagement, building trust in government

Bobby Hopewell gave an example of a young professionals group that meets every month. They decided they want to engage in IK 2035 because there were only three mentions of young professionals in IK 2025. Bobby said they need innovative, welcoming cities with amenities that attract people. He believes people need to understand that they are all connected.

- Educated electorate
- Advocacy and accountability
- Talking to people in person instead of leaving angry Facebook comments
- Believe your voice can actually make change occur

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Planner Anderson shared that City staff are working on value/purpose statements for the City's work. They are reaching out to the community to help them formulate the broader City Vision statement. She requested that Committee members fill out the City Vision Statement and return it to her – they can also fill it out online. Planner Anderson went through statements heard from the community in answer to the questions. Some topics that were raised by the community: transportation; housing; accessibility; safety and infrastructure maintenance; environment; green spaces; economy; community stewardship; 3rd spaces (not work, school, or home); public spaces that are free, accessible, year-round, for all ages; activities/events, and a community calendar.

Planner Anderson showed the current Strategic Vision goals. They have themes that will result in goals, and she believes they will be a little different from the 2025 goals. They need to make sure the goals can be clearly woven into all of the City's work.

Planner Anderson shared information on upcoming IK2035 public meetings: March 11 at NACD, March 18 at Kalamazoo College, an Open House on March 27 at the KIA. She also mentioned they will have focus groups meeting at various times. Planner Anderson added that they hope to participate in another Art Hop.

Bobby Hopewell asked about engagement with children in K-12. Planner Anderson said they did some activities at after school programs and the public library. Housing was a common topic for K-8 students. The kids pictured shelters next to bakeries with access to unlimited food. She said she spoke with Dr. Slade about additional activities. Bobby Hopewell suggested engaging specifically with schools' elected student bodies. Planner Anderson said they are looking to engage with youth councils outside of schools and they are working on setting up a youth only meeting. She said they also want to meet with Arc to talk with caregivers of the disabled.

Planner Anderson told Committee members that she and Rebekah Kik were available to conduct meetings with any interested organizations or she could provide materials for them to facilitate meetings.

Bobby Hopewell asked what they found needed improvement in their process from IK 2025. Planner Anderson responded that last time they did not have the entire City organization on board when they started the work. Departments were only loosely aware of IK and weren't clear on how that should impact their work going forward. This time they have been working internally to have discussions on Imagine Kalamazoo and what that means to all departments. They also found that some goals needed to be broken down into more thoughtful, incremental steps. She felt they could reach deeper and bring more people to the table. They want to lift up everyone's needs without generalizing and lumping them all together.

Bobby Hopewell commented that the growth of our community is vital. He wondered how they could make the community attractive to get students to stay. Bobby stated that he believes they need to get out of their own way and stop using FFE as a crutch.

Patrice Griffin asked Planner Anderson if they were making plans to change policy language to align with language at a federal level. Planner Anderson said there were no plans for that right

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now. Don Cooney commented that the situation was tough, and they are keeping in touch with El Concilio with reference to immigration.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. 2025 Meeting Time Amendment

Kevin Ford explained that the first Monday of the month at the current time no longer works for the City Hall Community Room. He suggested moving to Rose Street, utilizing another time, or moving the meeting to the second Monday of the month. Kevin said the next meeting would be at Rose Street. Consensus seemed to be that the second Monday of the month at the same time was good for the group.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bobby Hopewell announced that he changed jobs, and he now works for Kabundant. He said he has a new email.

STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

Nathan Ekola, Civic Engagement Talent Coordinator, City Clerk, attended the meeting. Kevin Ford announced that Nathan would be attending Board meetings and getting a feel for how they work. He will be supporting boards through recruiting, onboarding, and training.

Kevin Ford recounted events at the City Commission Retreat. He shared that he brought forward two items: Bridges to Career Opportunities Model and the Match Savings Program. He said both items were supported. The next phase is to write up the items for internal review.

Kevin Ford went to the National Coalition for Community Capital conference in Lansing. He explained some highlights of the conference and added that he wants to talk about community capital more in-depth at a later time. He feels this would be a creative and accessible thing for them to have in the community. Kevin added that there is a bill (SB 115) in the Michigan Senate which says if you invest in a Michigan business you could get up to 50% tax credit back. Bobby Hopewell asked him to send the legislation out to the group.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

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ADJOURNMENT

Bobby Hopewell adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:46 p.m.



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SUBJECT: SPK Coordinator Updates

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