

United Growth for Kent County, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting Minutes April 2, 2008

Present: Bonnie Blackledge, Paul Haan, Christine Helms-Maletic, Herb Ranta, Kevin Wisselink and Kendra Wills

Absent: Cynthia Price, Kim Van Dyke and Mike Williams

Approval of the minutes was tabled as Cynthia didn't have a chance to get them out to the Board.

Treasurer's Report

Herb gave a brief Treasurer's report based on handouts prepared by Merry. \$1,600 in membership dues have come in over the past month. The only expenses are the phone bill and postage thanks to the WK Kellogg grant ending in May/June. A motion was made by Paul with support from Bonnie to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Election of Officers

After some discussion, a motion was made by Christine with support from Kevin to keep all officers for another year. Paul said he would accept with the understanding that he would step down after this year because new leadership is important. Others noted that all officers (even those not present) said via email that they would be willing to serve another year. Officers are: Paul, President; Mike, Vice President; Herb, Treasurer; and Cynthia, Secretary. Unanimous.

Clean Kent County Letter

Paul stated that he did have a chance to work on the draft of the letter that Cynthia started. He wanted to be sure to maintain the positive relationship between WMEAC and United Growth since he was on both Boards. The Board agreed. The draft letter from Paul will be printed on letterhead by Kendra and mailed today. All Board members present supported the letter and trusted Paul's edits. Bonnie noted that the Rogue River Watershed group came to the same conclusion about the campaign as this Board.

Annual Meeting

Kendra wanted to get a sense of the group's satisfaction with the meeting since evaluation forms were not distributed (which will be done in the future). The Board really enjoyed Mike Hamm's presentation and felt that both urban and rural people benefited from it. The Board was pleased with the turn out, the length and overall content of the meeting. Kendra noted that turn out was down from last year's event of 50 people but the Board wasn't too concerned about that.

Founders Event

Kendra also wondered about the success of the Founders event. Christine reported that 12-15 people participated and a good mix of urban and rural people. The group was having good conversation so the tours did not take place. People seemed to really enjoy getting to know each other in a non-formal setting and the Board would like to do more similar events again in 2008. The Board decided to let Kendra pick a Thursday evening in June and September – but not the third Thursday as this may conflict with the "Green Drinks" events. The Board liked the idea of going to Founders again and possibly the Corner Bar in Rockford as a more rural location.

Other Upcoming Events

Paul and Christine reported that a small committee met and decided the Urban Committee's Brown Bag Video Lunch would be Friday, May 9 at 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM. They will show pieces of three videos on town center revitalization from around the U.S. \$5 per person. A "Save-the-Date" notice will go out this week.

The Board discussed the June 27 GrandWalk Tour. The Board is concerned about the approximately \$300 bus rental fee. They wondered if we can get a smaller bus or turn it into a walking tour. The Board also suggested parking right at the Lear plant and starting there rather than the Radisson hotel. They hoped Rick Chapla would be able to get a lot of his contacts to attend such as state department officials and legislators as the Board was concerned that not many United Growth contacts would attend the tour to fill a 50 person bus and cover the cost of box lunches as well. The Board suggested the tour be from 10 AM – 1 PM to allow people time in the office in the AM before the tour. Kendra said she would pass this information in to Carol as she is working with Rick to plan the tour.

Christine brought up the idea of promoting the new Green Grand Rapids game "Green Pursuits" game to United Growth contacts. She is willing to host a game at Kent/MSUE the week of April 14 – 21 over the lunch period. Paul is willing to host a game for up to 8 people at his office at 742 Franklin on May 2. Both events will bring \$3 for a pizza lunch. The game would be of interest to anyone that uses the Grand Rapids park system or works in Grand Rapids or cares about planning issues. Kendra will draft an email to go out to the Listserve for Paul and Christine's approval. Game results are due to the GR Planning Dept on May 2.

Membership Campaign

Kendra distributed a sample cover letter to be mailed to United Growth database contacts (approximately 1,200 people) seeking membership renewals and new memberships. The Board reviewed the letter and made some additions/corrections and approved it as revised. Updates to contact information to some past members were noted and will be passed along to Merry to update the database. Merry will help with the mailing to go out in April. The mailing will include the UG brochure and updated 2008 calendar of events.

April 15 Coalition Agenda

The three recipients of Michigan Land Use Leadership Academy will be the speakers for the meeting in a panel format. The Board decided that each person will have 3-5 minutes to respond to the following questions; 1) what did you learn? 2) how will you apply it? 3) any conflict resolution skills you can share with the group?

The Board will give a report on the Election of Officers, reminder to renew membership, and distribute the updated calendar in addition to committee updates.

The Board adjourned at 11:15 AM.
Submitted by: Kendra Wills