

United Growth for Kent County, Inc Minutes of Board Meeting January 2, 2008

PRESENT: Mike Williams, Paul Haan, Kevin Wesselink, Cynthia Price, Kendra Wills

CALENDAR, NETWORKING: We discussed the fact that there are several other groups doing networking events, such as the new Green Drinks, which is actually a national initiative. The small Urban Planet list-serv that Paul knows about also has an event. Cynthia said that she was under the impression that what we were planning was more like a Business After Hours type event, where there would be networking, but also a program of some sort offering an opportunity for some entity to publicize what they're doing.

We also discussed potential topics if it were to be structured as a presentation with networking afterwards. Kendra suggested one on ag viability and demystifying "going local," that is, what are the exact benefits? This might be a tie-in with Founders. We discussed MSU profs working in the field, including Mike Hamm, Susan Smalley and Jim Bingen.

We decided to wait to figure out if this was a need. We will discuss it at the January coalition meeting.

JANUARY 15 AGENDA: We decided to have a presentation on foreclosures, their status in Kent County and what is being done about it. There is a new group meeting, convened by John Gussenbuaer, to find ways to address the increase, advocate legislatively, etc. Kendra will see if Gus is comfortable presenting. If not, Tracy Kaufman or David Jacobs of Home Repair Services would be good choices.

JANUARY BOARD PROJECT: We decided not to do a survey monkey on the calendar of events just yet. We did hope to publicize other land-use-related events over e-mail, and someone mentioned that there was an important meeting on the controversial "Dennison" dunes property at the lakeshore which should be sent out.

Paul and Kendra will draft membership letters. The intent is to send this out with a finalized calendar.

STAFFING: There was much discussion about the newsletter. We wondered if it was worthwhile to print, and if we could find that out through a survey. Even if we sell sponsorships, their names could be featured prominently in the e-mails sent out with links to the newsletter.

There was a vague consensus that if we can't find money to continue Merry's 8-hour-a-week position, we might be able to get volunteers to fill in – for example, an intern might update the web site. However, it was still deemed necessary to seek such funding since putting that together would be an administrative challenge itself and add to Kendra's burden.

MINUTES: We backed up on the agenda and discussed the minutes Cynthia had brought late. Mike moved, Kevin seconded that they be approved; motion passed.

TREASURER’S REPORT: We then looked at the lengthy report from Herb and Kendra. Kevin moved and Cynthia seconded that it be accepted and that motion passed as well.

NEW MEMBER APPROVAL: As a safeguard, we had said that the board must approve all new members. John Sutherland, a SWAN board member, had sent in his membership. Cynthia moved he be approved. Mike seconded. The motion carried.

OTHER: Wayne Norlund asked for someone to speak at the American Institute of Architects meeting on January 9, so Paul will do so. Others may attend as well.

There will be a Land Preservation Week right before Earth Day held by the UGKC Land Preservation committee. It will celebrate among other things a huge block in Vergennes Township which has been assisted by some donated easements. They are still trying to get high-profile speaker Steven Small.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Price