

UNITED GROWTH FOR KENT COUNTY MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING 6/4/08

Present: Kendra Wills, Mike Williams, Paul Haan, Christine Helms-Maletic, Kevin Wisselink, Kim Van Dyke, Cynthia Price, Holly Zoe -- a senior at MSU in regional planning who is interning this summer mostly for Carol Townsend.

Paul called the meeting to order. We introduced ourselves for Holly's benefit. Kim had new brochures which she distributed; she said they were done by Kendall students as part of a class project. Christine talked about Project for Public Spaces' investigation on feasibility of expanding Fulton St. Farmers' Market -- they are sending one consultant this weekend. He is doing the background on where people buy their food and subjective economic analysis. In July there will be three more consultants here.

MINUTES: We reviewed that the March minutes, which had been delayed. We covered Clean Kent Co. and that they'd received similar comments to ours. Christine moved, Kevin seconded the minutes be approved; passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Kendra did the report by hand; Herb was not here and Merry Malfroid was unavailable. There were some updates, for example, just the day before seven new memberships had come in and three or four were at the \$100 level. The membership mailing went out to over 1200, accomplished by Holly, Kendra said. A couple of grants for the Land Preservation Education committee were running through MSU. We have spent our whole advertising budget, on anticipated items; \$500 needs to be moved into that budget item and then reflected as spent. Paul pointed out that it was confusing to call the land preservation brochure printing, since it was a project expense. Kendra said she would fix that. Kim moved to accept, Mike seconded. Motion carried.

GREEN CITIZEN: Holly had worked on this project, which is to designate a "green" activities on-line questionnaire with a certificate if "green" status is achieved. It is also to educate people about what is green and to serve as publicity for UGKC. Holly distributed information, and had sent out a Survey Monkey to get people's take on the questions. In terms of a promotional tool, the big question for us to think about is to make "green" our own, that is to tailor the concepts to land use issues, to conceptualize the issue of sprawl. Paul mentioned the press conference we did with the City promoting the Michigan Land Use Institute's *Growing Cooler* report, saying we have to build these concepts into the City's vision, and to relate the Green Citizen activities somehow. Holly said she tried to choose the more impactful individual activities -- not necessarily going for the easiest. The trick with this is that it has to be accessible in order to use it as a promotional tool. Cynthia brought up co-housing, and we also discussed transit. We talked about a Master Green Citizen level and decided some of the more difficult actions could be moved to this higher level. Everyone agreed this was a good idea.

Based on the survey results, Holly said that integrating personal responsibility and making urban-rural connections should be emphasized more. In general, the scheme is to open people's eyes to participation in UGKC, and to prepare them for the higher level

actions. Each question will have information associated with it (links, statements, etc.) It would also be a great promotional idea to have “big names” in the City take the test, to promote it; for example, local mayors. The launch should be heavily publicized.

If there are potential partners who have technical expertise in given areas, we should promote them, for example, energy conservation. We can also seek sponsorships.

We also thought it was a good idea to approach the Dorothy Johnson Center for funding part of the project, particularly marketing. Paul will make the approach. We will also see funding for the main web site, probably using Community Media Center (though it will be priced through a couple of other sources as well). We thought it should have its own web site. We thought that a way to approach Dorothy Johnson Center would be to consider it a membership generation/communications strategy.

We brainstormed a little about how to get people seeking the certification. Carol was thinking of going to neighborhood associations and bringing resources to help them participate – next steps might be to have them promote green citizenship throughout the neighborhood. The conclusion was that there should be a charge for the certificate of \$25 which would also be a membership in United Growth. There was also the thought that for an additional \$15 they could receive a T-shirt. The membership amount might be confusing to current members, so there would be some point in getting advice on this from a consultant.

COALITION MEETING AGENDA: This month there is scheduled an update from The Rapid by the same person who gave it before, Conrad Venema. If there is time, there should be the regular reports, but we also need to ask for volunteers for the Green Citizen and newsletter committees.

OLD BUSINESS: MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN: We looked through the list of those who had signed up, and discussed who we might call.

GVMC CONFERENCE: People will meet informally after the Growing Communities conference at Rose’s at 4 p.m. Mike Williams, who is using the “free” ticket to attend, said he would help staff the display.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS: We discussed the scholarship applications for the Zoning Enabling Act training and Citizen Planner Advanced Academy Training. No one had applied.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE: Cynthia said Herb had agreed to be on it with her, and she will call the meeting when the time comes.

OTHER: Paul brought up the role of the “urban committee” in terms of the politics of Purchase of Development Rights. We had tabled discussion of a full-coalition push for the county putting money toward it. Kendra said there is some possibility of connecting the preservation funding with the need for sites for biosolid land application in order to

avoid landfilling. We asked if the “rural committee” is working politically at all. They basically have turned that activity over to the PAC formed to address PDR. We also thought we would like to hear about that at the June meeting. Kendra will ask Denny Heffron to come and update in June.
The meeting adjourned at about 11:30.

Cynthia Price