

UNITED GROWTH FOR KENT COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES - Jan. 7, 2009

Present: Kim Van Dyk, Kendra Wills, Kevin Wisselink, Herb Ranta, Mike Williams, Christine Helms-Maletic, Paul Haan, Cynthia Price.

ANNUAL MEETING/TENTH ANNIVERSARY: We discussed the upcoming 10-year anniversary celebration (in March). There are a variety of restaurant options, including San Chez – if the event is a right after work event, going until 6 or so, people are going to think that it is for dinner, but if just tapas it could cost less than \$15 a head. We felt this was probably the right time, but if lunch is better for Birgit Klohs that would work too. Since it is also our annual meeting, we have to do official business as well; the financial report will be in the newsletter, so we expect it could be done in about 10 minutes.

We considered briefly ideas for new board members – Christine is not planning to continue on the board. Everyone else was willing to continue to serve, but we would probably need 2 new members (Bonnie had resigned earlier). This is an excellent opportunity to try to work on our diversity plan as well. We threw out a lot of names, hoping for some rural representation as well as ethnic diversity and age diversity. Tom Noreen, farmer George Wright, Eric Pratt, and Jim Ferro, along with people from NTH and other consultants rose to the top. We hoped Carol Townsend would be willing to see if Jeanine Bryant might be willing to come back. Linda Likely's name also came up; she was a former UGKC member when she was at LISC. People were given assignments to follow up.

Paul recapped that the small group who put the budget together had given some thought to this being something of a fund-raiser. We went over those numbers. We thought Birgit Klohs would be a big draw. We also wanted to be sure that there are materials talking about our history, and hopefully a looping PowerPoint.

We also thought it would be a good idea to ask the individual committees to try and keep diversity in mind when recruiting new members. We wanted to have sign-up sheets at the annual meeting, and to some degree cover the diversity plan itself.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE: We will postpone discussion of this.

PROGRAM EVENTS COMMITTEE: Cynthia and Herb are the only 2 who have signed up for this so far. They agreed to meet in between the 2 meetings, including Kendra as she is available.

2009 PROJECTS: Proposed development along the river in Lowell means that the Land Pres. committee may want to work there. The Lowell Community Foundation supports contacting property owners. RNC has developed a list of indicators – want to request someone from Dyer Ives to fund populating those data. RNC began looking at Baxter Neighborhood as the specific, though there might be problems. There is a Weed and Seed boundary line that is loosely the Baxter area, but includes others aswell. Paul

mentioned running into former attendee Chuck Hayden, who is still interested in using financial instruments to support good land use.

We discussed salaries. The Kent County PDR administration and land use education funds 60% of Kendra's salary, but we need exact figures to work with. We discussed the likelihood of PDR funding passing the county commission now that the elections are over. Kendra said, "You're going to hear a lot about PDR at the county."

We thought that an emphasis should be made on finding out how to fund positions for the future.

Other projects: putting in a Swift wind turbine at the extension office (not a UGKC project, but education might be); home-based alternative energy demonstration project, like the MSU-affiliated Urban Options in Lansing. Carol is working with the City of Grand Rapids slightly on their energy efficiency audits project. People have expressed the feeling that the ability to do those audits should fall to community members as a job-training type piece.

We also need to continue to seek funding for Green Citizen.

2009 BOARD MEETING DATES AND TIMES: Revisit in April after new board members are elected.

ANNUAL REPORT: We hoped to get Dave Guikema to comment. We need to put in a financial report – on-line version needed. We will still do a newsletter – we have set up a capability for us to do templated e-newsletter – which gets sent right to the list-serve. Community Media Center set it up.

EVENTS: Jan. 20 coalition meeting will feature Kymie Spring of the Foreclosure Response Group. Christine said she would talk about the Fulton St. Farmers' Market in April. March is the annual meeting. In February, Terry Sanford came up as he is doing façade improvements for businesses. May is a presentation by Calvin College – and June a tour of Newberry Place co-housing. Steve Faber would be the contact for that.

ANNOUNCEMENT: There will be a John Ball Zoo Earth Day event, at which we are invited to table. There will be a lot of kids, but it costs \$25 for a booth. We decided to decline.

Adjourned 11:45.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia