



## **Board of Directors Meeting Minutes August 6, 2026**

**Present** Dana DeLuca, Zach Ehmann, Steve Glista, Valerie Leith, Jim Ratliff (via Zoom), Craig Vaughan, Wilson Xu (via Zoom)

**Absent** Qianna Decker, Lynn Lupini

**Resignation** Lanny Potts (resigned from the Board on August 5, 2026 via text)

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:49 pm by Valerie Leith, Board Vice President.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve agenda approved unanimously.

### **Approval of Previous Minutes (July 2, 2026)**

Motion to approve July meeting minutes approved unanimously.

### **Guest in Attendance**

Cindy Goodison, a longtime resident of Westnedge Hill (Edgemoor Avenue), attended the meeting.

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Financial Report**

Craig presented the financial report and reviewed current cash balances and recent expenses. Discussion included:

- The portable restroom expense for National Night Out had recently cleared the account and was not reflected in the distributed report.
- The Westnedge Hill gateway sign will require an approximately 50% deposit of \$1,500. Dana offered to pick up the check from Craig and deliver it directly to SignWriter.
- Craig clarified that the National Night Out deposits associated with Midtown Fresh totaled \$275, consisting of a \$250 sponsorship and a separate \$25 donation.
- Dana has several remaining receipts to submit to Craig.

- The Board revisited options for moving some association funds into a higher-yield interest-bearing account or certificate of deposit. Members discussed checking, savings, and CD options and the importance of maintaining sufficient liquid funds for upcoming expenses.

**Action:** Craig will research available interest-bearing options through Consumers Credit Union and share information with the Board by email or at the September meeting.

### Neighborhood Plan Update

Valerie reported that the Neighborhood Plan team has not yet had an opportunity to fully analyze the feedback gathered during National Night Out in comparison with the earlier Midtown Fresh neighborhood input sessions. Qianna took photographs of the input boards from National Night Out, which will be reviewed as the team continues its work.

Initial observations included:

- Strong engagement from neighbors at the Neighborhood Plan table.
- Little support for adding a food concession at Crane Park.
- Interest in restroom facilities near the tennis courts.
- Interest in additional children's climbing structures.
- Interest in more structured programming at the tennis courts.
- Concern about the maintenance of Crane Park garden beds following changes in volunteer leadership.

The Board discussed the possibility of participating in or supporting the adoption of a garden bed at Crane Park. Girl Scout troops and volunteers from the association's existing volunteer list were identified as possible partners.

**Action:** Valerie will follow up with Kalamazoo in Bloom regarding garden-bed adoption requirements, including the expected time commitment and volunteer needs.

The Neighborhood Plan team hopes to revise its written findings and begin developing a final proposal for review between September and October.

### National Night Out Recap

Board members agreed that the 2026 National Night Out was a successful event. Attendance appeared slower at the beginning of the evening but increased significantly later in the event.

Positive observations included:

- The addition of classic cars was well received and added a new element to the event.
- Numerous city officials, elected officials, candidates, public safety personnel, and community representatives attended.
- The event provided strong opportunities for neighborhood engagement.

The Board discussed sending thank-you messages to elected and city officials who attended.

**Action:** Steve will send a thank-you email to attending officials and copy the Board.

Valerie noted that coordination with the City was considerably more difficult this year, particularly regarding the foam activity, street closure, water access, tables, and other logistical needs. Numerous last-minute requests and lengthy email exchanges made event planning challenging. She encouraged the Board to begin National Night Out planning significantly earlier in 2027 to allow adequate time for City approvals, resources, and logistical arrangements. Valerie thanked Dana and Qianna for their work on the National Night Out Planning Committee and for helping navigate City requirements.

The Board also discussed feedback that National Night Out lacked activities specifically geared toward teenagers. Ideas included graffiti-style art activities, chalk activities, and other teen-oriented programming.

**Action:** Board members with teenagers will ask them what activities they would find appealing and bring ideas back for future planning.

### Annual Corporation Statement

Steve reviewed the annual State of Michigan nonprofit corporation filing. The document is largely unchanged from the previous year except for Lanny's resignation and any future Board additions. The annual filing carries an approximately \$20 fee and is due by September 15, 2026. Steve plans to complete the filing online and will circulate a reminder before submitting it.

**Action:** Add the annual corporation statement to the September agenda for a final review before filing.

### Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary School Upkeep

Dana reported that she recently saw photographs on the Westnedge Hill Facebook page showing concerning exterior conditions at Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary, including trash, debris, apparent vandalism or building damage, and a damaged memorial bench.

Dana contacted Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade, Director of Facilities Karen Jackson, and the school board. Dr. Slade responded promptly, and the exterior conditions were addressed within a few days. Dana subsequently thanked KPS for its quick response. Facilities staff encouraged the association to contact them directly regarding future building concerns. Wilson asked about the removal of a damaged balcony area and whether KPS plans to replace it.

**Action:** Dana will send Wilson the appropriate KPS Facilities contact information so he can inquire about the balcony. Steve suggested strengthening the association's relationship with Parkwood-Upjohn's Principal, Jessica Rosencrans. The school may be able to help distribute neighborhood information to families through KPS communication channels, including Peachjar.

**Action:** Steve will circulate the principal's contact information to Dana and Wilson.

### Upcoming Board Elections

The Board discussed preparations for the next annual meeting and Board elections.

Under the current bylaws:

- Board elections take place at the annual meeting.
- Terms are two years.
- Residents of the neighborhood attending the annual meeting are eligible to vote.
- Board members may serve up to three consecutive terms.

Members discussed creating staggered Board terms to improve continuity and avoid the possibility of all officer terms ending at the same time.

**Action:** Steve will draft and circulate proposed bylaw language establishing staggered terms for consideration at the September meeting.

The Board also discussed actively recruiting new Board members before the January annual meeting. Ideas included:

- A notice in the fall e-newsletter.

- An informational session for interested residents.
- Short videos from current Board members explaining why they serve.
- Social media and website promotion.
- Emphasizing that residents may serve as general Board members without holding an officer position.

**Action:** Steve will develop suggested language for the fall newsletter announcing the January elections and inviting residents to learn more about Board service.

The Board will continue discussing possible short-form video promotion and the appropriate platform, including the website, Instagram, YouTube, or other social media channels.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Parkwood-Upjohn Back-to-School Event**

Wilson reported that Parkwood-Upjohn will hold several back-to-school activities later in August, including a kindergarten event and a larger back-to-school barbecue. The Board expressed greater interest in participating in the barbecue because it typically draws more families and would provide an opportunity to introduce the neighborhood association to parents.

Possible participation could include:

- A WHNA information table.
- Cotton candy for children.
- Stickers or association branding.
- Board members available to speak with parents.

Because participation may involve purchases and volunteer commitments, the Board asked Wilson to develop a more detailed proposal.

**Action:** Wilson will confirm the date of the barbeque and prepare a proposal outlining anticipated costs, activities, materials, and volunteer needs. The Board agreed that the proposal may be considered through an electronic vote.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Midyear Appeal Results**

Dana reported that the 2026 mid-year neighborhood appeal has generated at least **\$2,760** based on donations received and acknowledged to date. Craig noted that an additional contribution may have recently been received and not yet included in Dana's records. The Board expressed satisfaction with the results of the association's first mid-year appeal.

### **Westnedge Hill Gateway Sign**

Prior to the August 6 Board meeting - Dana requested via email on July 26 that the Board conduct an electronic vote to authorize moving forward with the proposed Westnedge Hill neighborhood sign, asking the Board to approve the following motion by July 31, 2026 (which the Board subsequently approved unanimously):

*To authorize Westnedge Hill Neighborhood Association to proceed with the permit process for the neighborhood sign and commit up to \$3,245 from available WHNA funds toward the project, contingent upon final costs and any additional funding received. Dana provided an update on the proposed Westnedge Hill neighborhood gateway sign.*

SignWriter is developing design mockups for Board review. The proposed location is on the grassy area near the top of Westnedge Hill, between Crane Park and the Westnedge Hill Apartments, so that the sign serves as a visible gateway when approaching the neighborhood. SignWriter requires an approximately 50% deposit of \$1,500 to proceed.

Dana also plans to seek outside funding to offset the cost through:

- Kalamazoo Community Foundation.
- Irving S. Gilmore Foundation.

The Community Foundation grant deadline is at the end of August. The Gilmore request will require a copy of the City permit before the application can move forward. The association has sufficient funds to proceed with the sign while seeking grant reimbursement or support.

The Board discussed holding a small neighborhood celebration when the sign is installed.

Dana asked Jim to join her when the final placement of the sign is marked so that more than one Board member is involved in determining its exact location. Jim agreed.

Dana has also invited former Board member, Lanny Potts, to provide input on the design, and he agreed to participate.

### **Fall e-Newsletter**

Wilson requested content ideas and submissions for the fall e-newsletter.

Planned topics include:

- National Night Out follow-up with photos (Wilson/Monica Harmsen photos)
- Neighborhood Plan updates (Valerie, Steve, Jim)
- Upcoming Board elections and Board-member recruitment with testimonial (Steve)
- Information about the new Kalamazoo City Manager, Malcolm Hankins (Dana).
- Neighborhood updates. (Board encouraged to submit any updates)
- “Pet Corner” feature. (Dana to recruit content)
- Possible Board-member promotional video content. (Board encouraged to participate in this initiative highlighting “why they serve on the WHNA Board”)

The Board established September 4, 2026 as the deadline for submitting newsletter content to Wilson.

### **OTHER**

#### **Property Maintenance – Former Happy’s Pizza Site**

Valerie reported significant trash and debris at the former Happy’s Pizza property near Westnedge Avenue and Crosstown Parkway. She contacted the City’s 311 service and reported the property, emphasizing the Board’s prior neighborhood cleanup efforts along South Westnedge Avenue and the property’s importance as a gateway into the neighborhood. Dana subsequently observed that the property appeared to have been cleaned.

#### **Guest Comments – Neighborhood Safety**

Guest Cindy Goodson, a Westnedge Hill resident of approximately 30 years, shared concerns about increasing property crime and neighborhood safety, particularly affecting older adults and residents living alone. Cindy described recent incidents on Edgemoor involving vehicle break-ins, attempted home entry, suspicious activity, and a broader sense of vulnerability among longtime residents. She noted that a significant number of households on her block are occupied by seniors, widows, or individuals living alone.

She encouraged the association to consider how it can better engage and support older residents, noting that neighborhood activities often understandably focus on children, schools, and families but that older residents also need opportunities for connection and reassurance.

Discussion included:

- The importance of neighbors knowing and watching out for one another.
- Encouraging residents to lock vehicles and homes and remove valuables from vehicles.
- Limitations in police staffing and resources.
- Concerns about online-only crime reporting and accessibility for older residents.
- Questions about whether reported incidents are adequately reflected in crime statistics.
- Potential revival or modernization of a neighborhood-watch concept.
- Inviting a Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety community policing officer or other representative to a Board meeting for a direct discussion with residents.
- Helping residents install or use home security cameras.
- Developing a neighborhood-based method for tracking reported incidents and identifying patterns.
- Finding meaningful ways to engage and communicate with older or vulnerable residents.

Wilson suggested two possible initiatives:

1. Organizing volunteers who could assist neighbors with installation or use of cameras and other home-security technology.
2. Developing a neighborhood crime-reporting database or tracking system that could provide a clearer picture of incidents reported by neighbors and potentially be shared with KDPS.

The Board agreed that a future conversation with KDPS should focus both on what residents can realistically expect from law enforcement and what residents and the neighborhood association can do proactively. Cindy indicated that she is willing to remain involved and help with specific projects, although she is not currently able to commit to regular Board attendance.

**Potential follow-up:** Explore inviting the neighborhood's KDPS liaison/community policing officer to a future meeting and continue developing strategies focused on neighborhood safety and support for older residents.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:051p.m. by Valerie Leith, Vice-President.

[The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 3 at 5:45 pm at the YMCA on Maple Street.](#)

Minutes provided by Dana DeLuca, Secretary