



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes January 8, 2026

Present

Qianna Decker (remotely), Dana DeLuca, Zach Ehmann, Steve Glista (remotely), Valerie Leith, Jim Ratliff, Wilson Xu

Absent Lynn Lupini, Lanny Potts, Craig Vaughan

Guests: Jimmy and Sam (on behalf of Asylum Lake Preserve Rezoning Proposal)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:50 pm by Wilson Xu, Board President.

Approval of Agenda

January 8 meeting agenda approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

December 4, 2025 meeting minutes approved unanimously.

Finance Report

None provided due to Craig's absence.

Discussion Items

Public Comment/Guest Presentation

Guests Jimmy and Sam attended the meeting. Jimmy introduced himself as a Westnedge Hill resident (over 2 years) and thanked the board for its community work. Sam attended mainly as support to Jimmy and to find out more about how our Board meetings are conducted and the work we do. Jimmy attended tonight's meeting on behalf of the Asylum Lake Rezoning Proposal to request that WHNA send a statement to the City of Kalamazoo, recommending rejection of a rezoning proposal at/near Stadium & Drake, adjacent/visible to Asylum Lake Preserve.

Key points raised:

- Approval could set a precedent to lower the bar for future rezonings that could affect Westnedge Hill
- Claimed the rezoning fails the City's rezoning criteria (community need, logical development patterns, etc.)
- Criticized the application quality and the City staff report as relying on weak logic and appearing overly supportive of the applicant
- Cited that other neighborhood associations have already submitted statements (named: Parkview, Parkwood, Oakland, Winchell) and noted Stewards of Kleinstuck may also be preparing a statement
- Expressed concern about environmental/ecological impacts and property values

Board discussion / guidance:

- Board asked about deadline for submission. Jimmy believes the City Commission meeting is set for January 26th, and a statement deadline might be January 14th (but not fully confirmed)
- Recommendation from board members: Email submission is best; send to City Clerk and/or Mayor's office, and potentially all commissioners
- Jimmy provided contact info (email stated in meeting; not repeated here for privacy)
- Board agreed to discuss it internally via email since not all board members were present; Wilson will follow up with Jimmy on the Board's decision on a statement
- Jimmy offered to share draft language or supporting write-ups for WHNA to borrow and he will follow up with Wilson with details
- If the Board agrees, they will craft a statement by the January 14th letter deadline

Neighborhood Plan Update ("Imagine Westnedge Hill Neighborhood Plan")

Valerie provided a report from subcommittee meeting which included Valerie, Jim and Steve and noted the following:

- Subcommittee completed a brainstorming draft, solicited board feedback, and requested guidance on remaining questions before engaging neighbors
- Outstanding needs/questions included:
 1. Vision statement is still needed
 2. Question whether to split "Safety" and "Well-Being" into two separate goals:
 - Concern: insufficient strategies/measurable outcomes to support a split right now.
 - Subcommittee recommendation: keep combined for now, revisit later after neighbor feedback.
 3. Clarification on the purpose and placement of a business list:
 - Is it for public-facing promotion on the website, or internal partnership/fundraising, or both?
 - Concern about ongoing maintenance burden (keeping links/current info updated; need a board liaison for oversight).
 4. Timeline for finalizing plan and executing "mini meetings" to gather neighborhood feedback.

Board direction and discussion:

- Board agreed the plan should be polished before launching neighborhood “mini meetings,” to ensure feedback can map to existing goals/pillars
- Suggested approach:
 - Set a deadline for January 18, 2026 for Board feedback
 - Assume “silence = consent” after the deadline
 - Allocate significant time at February meeting for deeper discussion
 - Consider a separate working meeting between now and February due to limited monthly meeting time

Action Items: Valerie to send recap email including:

- latest plan draft
- proposed vision statements (from Dana, Wilson and Valerie’s suggested versions)

Valerie/Jim made a motion for Board members to review and provide final feedback on the 2nd draft plan and proposed vision statement(s) by January 18. Motion passed with no objections.

Annual Meeting Planning (Presentation + Logistics)

Presentation materials:

- Wilson shared draft of annual meeting PowerPoint
- Feedback included:
 - Consider splitting financial slide into two slides for readability when projected.
 - Add event dates under 2025 events (bike repair, clothing swap, inter-neighborhood bike bus, National Night Out)
 - Consider adding household count to contextualize survey response numbers (204 responses vs total households; estimate mentioned ~800–900 households; to be confirmed)

Logistics for annual meeting (Parkwood):

- Wilson will bring projector; may project onto wall
- Wilson to meet custodian/janitor at 5:45 p.m. at the back/basketball court door
- Need signs directing attendees to back entrance; include “knock hard” (door cannot remain open due to cold)
- Plan to set out 15–20 chairs in advance; avoid making elderly attendees set up their own seating
- A few Board members planned to arrive at 5:45 p.m. to assist with setup
- Supplies:
 - Stickers and yard signs for attendees
 - Donation QR code for onsite giving
 - Water (leftover cases from National Night Out) and possible snacks.

Annual meeting agenda (as discussed):

- Welcome/introduction, how WHNA operates
- Mission statement
- Board introductions (stand/wave)

- Financial transparency overview
- 2025 highlights
- 2026 goals
- Audience feedback / closing remarks
- Invite ongoing participation and reinforce plan is “a living document” and will be updated.

New Business

Compost Drop-Off / Food Scrap Recycling Site (Exploratory)

Dana reported contacting Chris Broadbent (at the City) regarding establishing a food compost drop-off site for Westnedge Hill.

Key points:

- Program involves weekly pickup (Tuesdays mentioned)
- Partnering contractor accepts broad food scraps including meat/bones
- Need to identify a host site with adequate parking and willingness to participate.

Potential sites discussed:

- Centerpoint Church (Dana to contact pastor; if open, connect to Chris Broadbent at City)
- Girl Scouts building (possible partnership/education angle, earn a sustainability badge etc.)
- City property near water pumping station discussed but inadequate parking/access concerns noted

Action Item: Dana to contact church first and report back.

Neighborhood Trash Cleanup Proposal (City-supported)

Dana reported responding to a City request form for organizing a Neighborhood Cleanup and subsequently heard back from Chris Broadbent at the City. Chris offered support from the City for the Cleanup and will provide vests, gloves, trash grabbers, buckets, and a dumpster. The dumpster location requires owner approval, and it must not be placed in the right-of-way. The proposed route is to go along the S. Westnedge corridor (starting at Walgreens at Westnedge/Whites and proceed up/down Westnedge Hill toward Midtown Fresh, ending at Happy’s Pizza, where the dumpster will be located.

- Scheduling discussion:
 - Due to other spring events and weather concerns, the Board agreed to start with one cleanup and consider broader strategy later (inside-neighborhood streets, inserting other parties such as neighbors or Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts for a fall cleanup).

Decision: The Board set a tentative cleanup date for Saturday, April 25 from 11 am – 1 pm and will request an 8-yard lidded dumpster from the City.

Action Item: Dana to coordinate with City contact and confirm logistics.

Business List

Valerie posed the question about how best to utilize the Westnedge Hill Business List. Qianna suggested creating a landing page on the WHNA website for the Business List so we won't have to update phone numbers on a spreadsheet every six months.

Board Candidate Application – Nate Hawthorne (Realtor)

Wilson reported that Nate Hawthorne applied to join the board.

Discussion:

- Board noted Nate's interest/experience listed (community boards/church committee, etc.)
- Suggested vetting/interview process even if not specified in Bylaws

Decision: Table decision until February Board meeting when more board members are present. Wilson had previously extended an invitation to Nate to attend the annual meeting if available.

City "Design It" Meeting Promotion (Imagine Kalamazoo 2035)

Christina Anderson requested WHNA help promote an upcoming City "Design It" meeting. Wilson noted concern about confusing residents with too many emails before the annual meeting. A general teaser could be posted on Instagram; more details to follow. Christina is expected to attend the annual meeting on January 9 and share information then.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m. by Wilson Xu.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 5:45 pm at the YMCA on Maple Street.

Minutes submitted by Dana DeLuca, Secretary