

## January 2010 OHMHA Meeting Notes

Members present: Stuart Baggeley, Henry Brysk, Wendy Carman, Emily Eisbruch Neal Foster, Monica Hanna, Anne Karabakal, Peter Mooney, Phil Savage, Margie Weiss

Stuart opened the meeting.

Margie introduced two guests from the City of Ann Arbor who attended to discuss median improvement possibilities for Georgetown Boulevard.

Matthew Naud, an Environmental Coordinator and Emergency Manager with the City of Ann Arbor and Jason Frenzel, Coordinator for Volunteers, Natural Areas Preservation (NAP), which has been in existence for over 15 years. It was mentioned that the Bromley neighborhood is involved in the Adopt-A-Park program through the City.

- Matt Naud spoke about the City's low success rate with maintaining street medians as they desire, they appreciate the opportunity to work with a neighborhood who wants to take an active role in being involved in a new median construction. He emphasized the City's desire to create inexpensive, low maintenance medians that are aesthetically attractive and environmentally helpful in the retention and drainage of the City's storm water. The City is also working to meet a Federal mandate to correct storm water drainage according to Federal guidelines.
- The Ann Arbor City Council has specific guidelines for the maintenance of city green spaces that City workers have to follow and volunteers (like OHMHA) would have to follow these same guidelines. As a rule, City workers do not use many herbicides or pesticides in City green spaces, except in a few areas necessary for turf maintenance.
- The City is planning on repaving the north-bound side of Georgetown Blvd. along with Plymouth Road. The City will also put in a new water main at the same time. Given cost effectiveness, The City is looking to see if storm water funding is available to redesign the median-possibly as a rain garden. The water main is advantageous to replace while resurfacing. Additionally, placement underneath the median would make future repair easier as well as the surface drainage features would be readily accessible. A federal loan may allow for the forgiveness of 40% of the cost of the median redesign. The City says the median is 10 feet wide and 2,000 feet long; this totals about ½ acre in area and would make a real positive impact on the neighborhood storm water management. Essentially, two problems would be solved by a median redesign; 1) storm water would be "slowed down" in its disbursement and 2) it would improve water quality in storm water drained into the Huron River. The City's Water Commission is very eager to correct these flaws in design that have become more apparent over the last few

decades; the next opportunity to correct these flaws may be in 30 years if the City does nothing now.

- An example of a similar redesign is at Pioneer High School in which \$2.5 million is being spend on an area of several acres and involving 3 story sanders that will be utilized to filter storm water before going into rivers. Matt Naud promised the email other locations to the OHMHA board as well.
- Matt Naud will inform OHMHA of the probability (he thinks 80%) of getting the money for a new median design from federal or other sources. Another issue mentioned was existing Crab Apple trees; an informal neighborhood survey described them as an “attractive nuisance” is that they need maintenance and are prone to dying off. Matt said the City only assessed them as in “fair” condition; replacement trees would not include maples as they already inhabit 40% of City lands. The OHMHA board also made clear that speed bumps should not be considered by the City in any street improvements.
- Neal Foster mentioned that the Thurston Nature Center has applied to the EPA for a \$100,000 grant for funding repair of Thurston Pond.
- Treasurer’s Report from Wendy: OHMHA took in an additional \$105 since the last meeting; some expenses were paid, an \$8 accounting correction was made in the Report. Additionally, OHMHA has 138 paid members at present. Money has not been moved into the Legal Fund yet due to no interest being offered by the bank. A positive note on the bank: they allow bank officers to sign new signature cards without requiring social security numbers. Peter moved to accept the minutes, Neal seconded, and the Board approved.
- The November 2009 OHMHA minutes were reviewed. Stuart moved to accept them, Wendy seconded, all approved.
- 501©4 Peter Mooney commented that there was not much to report. OHMHA will be tax-exempt for what we do and spend, though OHMHA members will not receive a tax exemption for their donations.
- Burbank Entrance: Peter spoke to his neighbor Denise who felt it really wasn’t in bad shape but that OHMHA should focus on the Georgetown entrance. Emily observed that on of the trees was partially “missing” though others commented that it wasn’t too obvious unless you looked closely. Amy Seetoo mentioned that the Washtenaw County Extension Office could provide a tree for a couple of dollars and it would be low maintenance and height appropriate. Peter moved to drop the issue and Wendy seconded, all approved.

- Anita Jones Memorial: Stuart informed OHMHA of options he'd researched: benches were available from \$200-1000; a \$500 model seemed appropriate for our proposal, plus the cost of delivery and installation. Placement to be considered would not include the City due to onerous costs; OHAC has given permission for placement on their property in a mowed area. Amy Seetoo suggested a gravel base would afford lower maintenance as weed trimming would be minimal. Funding may include \$300 from OHMHA with private donations to supplement the remaining cost. If funding was not sufficient for a bench, a tree planting, or large rock with a plaque were offered as alternative memorials. Neal suggested putting an article in the OHMHA newsletter asking for neighborhood contributions to fund a memorial for Anita Jones.
- Neal Foster mentioned a recent issue of a neighbor cutting down 2-3 trees that technically were Thurston Nature Center property. The issue seemed small at the moment but the Board mulled a response. This may warrant further looking into.
- OHMHA Newsletter: Emily offered article ideas including on the 2010 Fall Festival, Anita Jones Memorial article to be written by Peter, Garage Sale May 15, 2010 announcement, Thurston Nature Center yearend wrap up, written by Neal and including photos. An article update on the Plymouth Crossing development by Wendy is possible. She mentioned that several units have been rented out though occupancy certificates have not been issued pending required payments totaling \$300,000 from the developer to the City; they may negotiate a lesser amount. A final article may feature Ward 2 council member Tony Derezinski's update of City issues to OHMHA at the November 2009 meeting.
- Letter of Support: Neal asked that a letter from OHMHA supporting the Thurston Pond restoration be submitted to the Ann Arbor Public Schools. He will advise if he feels this may be helpful to their cause in the future. The Board moved to adjourn at 9:12pm