



Karen Breen-Bondie, President  
Carol Frederick, Vice President  
Lisa Canada, Second Vice President  
Darcey McLaughlin, Secretary  
Phil Kauffmann, Treasurer

## **Minutes**

### **Tuesday, April 16, 2002**

The annual meeting for the Woodland Park Improvement Association was brought to order at 7:00 in the Roosevelt Elementary School Media Center.

President Breen-Bondie made introductions and welcomed Ferndale Mayor Robert Porter who proceeded to give a "State of the City" address which included but was not limited to discussions regarding a few of the downtown area vacancies: Pronto leaving and a new software firm moving in which will have approx. 30 full time employees which means more people frequenting Ferndale businesses during the day. Another vacancy – the Downtown Grill Room, which will now be occupied by the Blue Nile Restaurant. He reminded everyone present that it is critical to do our best and frequent and support our businesses downtown.

Some of the city's goals included strong police enforcement and code enforcement; examples included discussion regarding Cobalt, the noise traffic, etc. – Cobalt is closing the 1<sup>st</sup> of June and that liquor license has been put in escrow. The Pronto liquor license will stay downtown and is being considered for either Nami or Assaggi.

The city's infrastructure is the best it's been in 40 years. The roads still under construction are Hilton which is being finished, and Pinecrest from 8 to 9 mile is currently under construction. The construction is financed by the sale of bonds and state grants. There are no additional grants available. There will be no roads in Ferndale over 6 years old. All drain and water work is complete.

Programs – The community center is doing well, there are many new programs and lots of rental space at the community center, and participation is high. There is a new youth delegate program to get youths involved in city activities. The youth delegate program sent a representative to conventions in Washington DC which cost \$1,500. The last delegate sent was paid for by many Ferndale businesses – these businesses should be applauded.

Police Dept. – School Liaison Officer, Mayor Porter strongly supports the retention of this officer in the High School and will do everything possible to keep him there.

Budget – Media plays gloom and doom, but in actuality, it is not all that bad. 2003 budget projections were \$300,000 which was critically low; however it is currently at \$800,000 due to police department early retirements, fire, etc. Next year will be even better. Any cuts come across boards, and they are attempting to use grant subsidations. It's important to note that we can't stop development in the downtown, or the properties will do the same.

The Ferndale to Birmingham "bike path" was granted at \$82,000 – this is terrific news. There are \$210,000 potential monies available from Debbie Stabenow and other elected officials for the continuing development on Downtown Woodward concerning safety on Woodward.

Courts – positive news. Our court operating budget comes out of city funds, and Judge Joe Longo continues to do a marvelous job in supporting our city. The court will actually be returning \$200,000 more than it will cost to run back to the city.

From a City perspective, we are in good shape, we are not unique in our budget difficulties, Berkeley, Royal Oak, Madison Heights, Hazel Park, etc. are all in same boat. State has

changed the revenue sharing process, and Proposal A and the Hedley Amendment are all factors. The improvements we see in our City and schools are all provided for by a bond vote.

City salaries are up. In the 90's the police, fire and municipal workers all took pay cuts. We need to look closely at health care insurance costs which are a 16-17% increase.

All in all, things are positive, we must trim to be solvent, and be creative in our development. Example: proposed overlay zoning programs without changing downtown. Allows for expansion above existing downtown buildings for residence/business.

It's also important to stimulate more volunteer involvement. Mayor Porter will continue to have Town Hall meetings – the next Town Hall meeting regarding Commercial and Industrial Business and discussion about what business deals can be made. In addition, Mayor Porter would like to form alliances with other surrounding cities to build strength. Many of the cities in the United States, who have recently made comebacks, have all formed these alliances, Cleveland, Grand Rapids, etc. There have already been offers made to fund these efforts. People's involvement – there are many talented people in Ferndale and in the future, Mayor Porter would like to include more people in planning. Would like to see committees containing one member of council and the rest citizens.

Questions were posed to Mayor and there was a discussion regarding mail delivery in Ferndale. There was a major push in the early 1990s to try to get resolutions to the problems at the College Park Station of the US Postal Service. Mayor Porter stated that it is not impossible to get changes made, but very difficult. Discussion over the Ferndale zip code being 48220 and how it affects both mail delivery and insurance rates as well. Many residents would like to see changes made. If the Woodland Park Improvement Association gathers consensus and sends letter to Mayor Porter, he is willing to take to Washington and perhaps Lansing. Nelson House was contact for last uprising. Perhaps some noise could be made with the Mirror/Tribune and cable station. Ferndale's population in 1970 was 30,000 and today it is 22,000.

Question regarding Justification of city manager position – we don't want to end with state takeovers like Hamtramck and Highland Park. Mayor Porter contended that there is not a local city around which does not have a city manager. Mayor Porter stated that what is happening in Ferndale today is much more proactive than in the past and certainly the other cities mentioned. People are more committed to this City, and have made improvements in both the City and the schools through bonds. Mayor Porter is always available and always wants to hear comments. Call him anytime at his home number 544-7130.

Introduction of Officer LaRowe with an update on the WPIA's traffic concerns. LaRowe completed his traffic study and it was determined that Maplehurst has the most traffic due to the Woodward turnaround. The speed study determined that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile average was 35-34 MPH which was high. Can use a radar trailer which slows traffic down while it is up but traffic generally returns to "normal" when the radar trailer is relocated. The worst times of the day are 4:00 – 6:00p. Lots of discussion regarding what can be done regarding additional stop signs, speed bumps, street direction closures, etc. but final determination and recommendation was to request for increased enforcement.

The traffic study was well received. Both Officer LaRowe and Captain Tim Collins (WPIA resident) suggested the WPIA send a letter outlining concerns and asking for increased enforcement. It was also suggested that our neighborhood "gain a reputation" for enforcement. In addition, once letter is sent and police force is stepping up its traffic enforcement in this area, perhaps the group should get some advertising via the Mirror and Tribune and spotlight some articles which stated that the residents in this area wanted this increased enforcement due to the historical problems in the area and concerns for the safety of the children in the area. Question regarding the process for a private citizen to issue a complaint on a frequent offender. Captain Collins explained that there must be 10 proven instances where the driver of a vehicle can be properly identified. This is a longer process, but it can be done.

Question regarding the no left turn during 4-7 sign at the corner of Drayton and Pinecrest, what is the process for having that sign removed. The answer was that City Council needed to be petitioned, but if that language were added to the letter to the police regarding enforcement, that the mayor could take it to council on the association's behalf.

Recommendations were to use the power of the press and state the WPIA was working in conjunction with police to reduce speeding and traffic violations in the area. Press coverage should include the fines associated with traffic infractions.

Minutes from previous meeting were read and accepted. Suggestion to read previous year's annual minutes as well, suggestion denied.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Phil Kauffmann stated that all known expenses were finished for the year. President Breen-Bondie suggested moving WPIA's accounts from Comerica to Credit Union One where we would not be incurring high service charges.

President Breen-Bondie initiated the block director election which must be done each year at the annual meeting. Block Directors to be elected were: Nicole Cotter and Judy Garlock to replace current Upper West Drayton block director; Darcey McLaughlin for Lower Drayton; Lisa Pawloski and Diane Dengate for Upper Maplehurst, and Allen Liggett for Lower Maplehurst. Vote took place and all directors were voted on unanimously.

We were reminded that we also need to re-elect the current executive board of the association at the annual meeting. President Breen-Bondie informed that she would be stepping down from the presidency. Nominations for this position came from the floor for Bill Frederick – denied, Carol Frederick, also denied. Several names were thrown out including Allen Liggett and Phil Kauffmann being co-presidents. The election was tabled to discussion/advertisement and the calling of an additional meeting to elect executive board.

WPIA Block Party: tentatively set for June 22<sup>nd</sup>, from noon to 4:00p. This year will be on Livernois only between two blocks, want to make it tighter and closer and include a live band, potentially artists setting up displays, fire truck escape presentation, moon walk and many other children's activities.

Beautification Awards: Anne Williamson will head up Beautification Committee – looking for committee members. Allen Liggett and Darcey McLaughlin were both interested as well as mention in next WPIA newsletter.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20p.

Respectfully submitted,

Darcey McLaughlin, Secretary  
Woodland Park Improvement Association