

WALNUT GROVE HOMES ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
April 12, 2010

Meeting took place at Lussier Community Education Center and began at 7:06 pm.

Board members attending: Jim Howard, Kathy McComb, Greg Peterson, Mary Nellis, Eric Lewandowski

Non-attending members: Deb Wynne, Tom Wall, Mary Kay Battaglia, Denise Clearwood

Committee Reports

Treasurer: No report

Greenways:

1. New proposal will be submitted for a Harwood Circle improvement plan.
2. One of the trees on the greenway near Southwick has woodpeckers. The neighbor is concerned that the tree overhangs into his yard and there is a woodpecker problem.
3. Trees/bushes behind Walnut Grove condos need trimming but it has not been determined that these are on WGHA property. The city will be called.

ACC: No report

Newsletter: No report

Social: The winter social was a success with more than 50 adults attending. Many people voiced approval for more social activities. One person wanted more information about being a block captain. Cost for the event: \$326 for appetizers.

Recommendations:

1. Do a mid-winter adult event next year.
2. Stay in the immediate area of Walnut Grove for events.
3. Host another adult event in spring or summer of 2010 to keep the momentum.

Block Captains: No report

Old Business:

Jim Howard attended the meeting about the access road at Walnut Grove Park. The plans will not affect our area but there was a lot of concern from the Sauk Creek residents. There will be a 12 ft. across gravel covered with dirt access road to allow maintenance of sewers.

There will also be paving, new sewers and speed bumps on Farmington Way west of Westfield this summer

New Business:

There may be a need to restructure the board. Should there be set positions or ad hoc committees? Possibly a committee on communications? The legal authority of the board is to enforce the covenants and deed restrictions and to collect dues. We must have 9 positions which include a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. There can be more positions on the board and those positions can be designated by the board.

Without board members attending meetings it is not always possible to organize and take care of the business of the organization. A clearer picture of each position on the board is needed and responsibilities delineated. Greater commitment from all board members to the activities of the organization is needed.

Since the winter social there have been more ideas for social activities. There are volunteers who have come forward with ideas and enthusiasm to carry out plans for greater internet connections, activities and fund-raising.

A meeting of the board will be called by Jim to discuss these concerns.

The meeting ended at 8:36 pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Mary Nellis
Secretary

Proposed Woodland Management in Walnut Grove Greenway

Volunteer Proposal.

I'm a retired parks employee and I'm volunteering in several parks, including Walnut Grove, to improve the quality of the woods. I asked to do volunteer work in the greenway early in 2009, but delayed any work until City staff resolved the plan for sewer maintenance access.

Most of the greenway is densely wooded with old oak trees and several species of younger understory trees. The objective for these areas would be to preserve the old oaks, and ensure that the best trees reach the canopy to be the future generation of forest.

Over the past 30 years, and in coming decades, we have many canopy openings being created. Large oaks are dying of old age, insect attack and oak wilt, which is exacerbated by stress from invasive gypsy moth. Elms are dying due to invasive Dutch elm disease. Ash will probably soon be dying from invasive borer. The number of native sub-canopy replacement trees is reduced due to excessive populations of the invasives black locust, mulberry, Norway maple, buckthorn, honeysuckle. Native reproductions may also be suppressed by invasive garlic mustard and soil changes due to invasive earthworms. The most common native understory trees are less desirable for the future canopy because they will die out (ash and elm, cherry with black knot fungus); or overabundant (box elder, cherry). Many of these less desirable trees, and other shade tolerant natives (hackberry), are also growing up through the old canopy oaks, shading out their lower branches and making them more susceptible to decline.

Management in the woods.

To compensate for the low number of desirable native trees positioned for growth into the next-generation canopy, a management strategy to promote the best available trees is recommended. This includes preservation of existing old trees by removal of competing/shading trees, and selective removals to promote the best available species to fill canopy gaps. The order of preference on what trees to promote: oaks & hickories, walnut, hackberry, cherry, linden, box elder, cottonwood, black locust, ash, elm, mulberry, buckthorn, norway maple. The order of preference might be adjusted slightly to increase diversity in any given woods (e.g. if lots of walnuts are present, promote more hackberry and cherry.) Removal of native grapevines is also recommended where they impair old oaks and young trees selected for the canopy.

This strategy does not include wholesale removal of all the less desirable species in the canopy or understory. If there is no better tree likely to benefit, or if the clear-cutting of large canopy trees is socially/culturally unacceptable, the existing canopy will remain (even though it may be black locust, box elder, cottonwood, cherry, ash or elm. If the future canopy trees are doing well, the understory may remain buckthorn and garlic mustard.

Management of Woodland Edges.

The Engineering Division mows the basins and access to the sewer maintenance structures once or twice per year. It would help preserve the old oaks and promote better future trees if the regular mowing also included the under the drip line of the large edge trees. Without such management, growth of invasive trees (box elder, mulberry) and shrubs (honeysuckle and buckthorn) will shade out the lower branches of large oaks and cause their decline. These areas would have to be cleared of trees and shrubs initially, and the stumps treated with herbicide to prevent resprouting. Then annual mowing would be used to prevent seedlings and resprouts from re-establishing the area. Some seeding of native groundcover species could be done in the cleared areas. The unmowed meadows at the edges of Walnut Grove Park are being managed this way, and will be expanded slightly in 2010.

Many edges that abut back yards are generally too wooded to mow, so they would be managed as woodland, described above.

Management Guidelines and Methods

Woodlands (by contractors, city employees or volunteers):

- 1-Order of preference of what trees to promote: oaks & hickories, walnut, hackberry, cherry, linden, box elder, cottonwood, black locust, ash, elm, mulberry, buckthorn, norway maple. Herbicides will be used on stumps to prevent resprouting.
- 2-order of preference might be adjusted slightly to increase diversity in any given woods (e.g. if lots of walnuts, promote more hackberry and cherry.)
- 3-don't cut large canopy trees of mid-quality to promote small ones.
- 4-don't cut too many canopy trees to create openings (we're not going to clearcut a medium-quality native canopy trying to make a better woods).
- 5-don't make a huge mess. If trees can't be girdled and left standing, there's a limit to how many big trees you can lay down in the woods.
- 6-property line treatments. Should we be preemptively removing elms and ash that will die and fall onto neighbors property?

Edges and Openings

- 1-cleared by contractors. Herbicides to prevent resprouting.
- 2-mowed 1-2 times year by Engineering staff
- 3-Mowing may be done less frequently after invasives are controlled.

Volunteer Work.

I will continue to work on park property, for which I already have permission. Work by volunteers can only be done in the greenway with the approval of City Engineering Staff, following all of their requirements. I would like to work as a volunteer on the greenway and would be happy to stay in email contact with others who are interested in the work or volunteering. You can contact me at si.widstrand@gmail.com or 831-2468.

-Simon Widstrand 4-8-2010