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October 2010

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE ARCADIA COMMUNITY OF KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

ARCADIA NEIGHBORHOOD

ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

ARCADIA ELEMENTARY—OCTOBER 27, 2010 AT 7:30 P.M.

Please attend the annual meeting of the Arcadia Neighborhood Association on Wednesday, October 27, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the gymnasium at Arcadia Elementary. The main focus of this year's meeting will be the election of Board members and officers. All residents of the Arcadia neighborhood are invited to attend and participate. ~*Rex Brueggemann*

ONE BOARD MEMBER'S PERSPECTIVE – BE AN ADVOCATE FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

by Rex Brueggemann

On a personal note, I can tell the readers of this newsletter that I will be leaving the Board of the Arcadia Neighborhood Association. Given that fact, I wanted to take this opportunity to make a few observations regarding one function of the neighborhood association as presently constituted: as a club for activists dedicated to advocating for their neighborhood as they see it and as they imagine it could be.

The City of Kalamazoo is loaded with active neighborhood associations. I believe that this fact has partly to do with the reality that our City Manager form of government, and our political and economic culture as a City, has a tendency to focus on certain issues of general concern (e.g. public safety, perceived budgetary sound-

ness), to the exclusion of issues of more immediate concern (e.g. maintaining and enhancing Arcadia as a largely owner occupied neighborhood, preserving natural open space areas on the west side of Kalamazoo) to many people who live in the City. While lip service gets paid, and many a planning forum is held, often-time issues of heartfelt concern to City residents are treated by City leaders as of secondary importance, unaffordable to address, or both. While my examples pertain to Arcadia, I think the phenomenon is general: the neighborhood associations have arisen to a great extent to advocate for neighborhoods with their own City government.

Having made this rather gloomy observation, I would build on it with a second, more positive observation: sustained engagement with our City government on issues of concern makes a difference. We may not retain 80 acres of open space north of the Arcadia neighborhood, but we do have the relative protections of the 2004 West Side Land Use Plan. Arboretum Parkway is built north of our neighborhood, but we avoid cut through traffic and get a nice walking path. West Michigan is widened, and its use becomes more intense, but apartments are not built immediately adjacent to our neighborhood on West Michigan Avenue. The list goes on. The Board members of the Arcadia Neighborhood Association have been engaged with all of these issues and more.

We may hardly ever get exactly what we want, but we usually get something. Some of the worst ideas get stopped, or deflected. A positive aspect is added, reflecting something requested by neighborhood residents.

We don't get the whole loaf, maybe not even half a loaf, but we do get something more than what we would get if we all just stayed home.

The Arcadia Neighborhood Association is a relatively informal group, a kind of club, really, dedicated to the Arcadia Neighborhood. It has by-laws, but it is not (at this time) formally incorporated. It is extremely cost efficient, and gives great value to the residents of Arcadia, who are asked to donate \$10 a year to the Association when they feel like it. We support and

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WHO TO CALL:

Public Safety - Emergency 911
 Non-emergency 337-8120
 Animal Control 383-8775
 Zoning/Trash Violations
 337-8221
 Parking Violations 342-6383
 Public Works 375-8808
 Silent Observer 343-2100
 KVET (suspicious drug activity) 337-8880
 Weed & Tall Grass Violations
 337-8847

Board of Directors

2010

Rex Brueggemann
 806 Ellendale
 372-2087
 Hans Engelke
 640 Weaver
 344-1463
 Bill Fritsch
 925 Boswell Lane
 375-5067

Ken Larson
 530 S. Kendall
 344-6585
 Mark Longstroth
 936 Ellendale
 375-3723
 Terri Thomas
 1104 Berkshire
 344-7333 ext. 12

