

RCCA Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 15 May 2025, 7:00 pm

University United Methodist Church, 1120 South Harrison Road

Board Members Present: Brendan Boyle, Sabrina Curley, Jeffrey Friedle, Liz Schweitzer, Judy Sues, Marcia Van Ness

Board Members Absent: Andrew Bassila, Austin Kaufmann, Jeff Wray

Guests: Jim Jennings, Adrian Ojero, Jeff Horn, and Emma (Officer), Nancy Boyd

1. Welcome/Introductions

- a. Approval of Agenda
 - i. Motion to approve by Brendan, seconded by Judy. Motion approved.
- b. Approval 20 Feb 2025 Minutes
 - i. Motion to approve by Judy, seconded by Liz. Motion approved.

2. Comments from Guests

- a. Native Plants group report:
 - i. Nancy Boyd reports that their group of 8 to 10 neighbors has been meeting monthly. The goal for the next 5 years is for all neighbors to have native plants in their yards. (There are 465 kinds of native bees in our state.) She explains that they have resources available to residents regarding native plant information and support. This effort promotes interaction between neighbors. Sabrina is collecting data on this project.
 - ii. They are looking for younger people to help on this project. Suggestions are made as to possible contacts.
 - iii. Liz Harrow has purchased 3 yards of mulch for people to use who purchased kits of native plants.
 - iv. Marcia was asked by someone to suggest we bring back the welcome club that greets new members. Jeff notes that we need those people who suggest new activities to step up to help with them.
 - v. Maybe we can consider funding native plants signs. Jim Jennings orders to help suggest the best kind of sign structure to consider. Sabrina says that a bout 25% of Arbor Forest residents have plants on their balconies.

3. Reports:

- a. Police (Jeff Horn, Adrian Ojerio)
 - i. Internal candidate, Jen Brown, was selected as our new police chief.
 - ii. One unlocked car was robbed on Arbor.
 - iii. Two fights reported in apartment building.
 - iv. Drunk driver stopped at Harrison/Trowbridge.
 - v. Phone scams have been reported regarding unpaid road tolls - but the only toll we have in the state is for the Mackinac Bridge.
 - vi. It is national police week.
 - vii. 6 cadets are going to the police academy. We have 44 officers and budgeted for 51. More retirements are coming up.

- viii. Emma will be doing the police report at future RCCA meetings. Mouffa Ba will be our contact for sector 33 and attend our meetings.
- b. Treasurer's Report (Brendan Boyle)
 - i. Brendan notes that our current balance is \$1,626.48 with relatively little recent activity
- c. School Board Update (Austin Kaufmann)
 - i. [Superintendent's Report](#) (nothing particularly relevant to RC to report)
 - ii. [School Board Minutes \(Apr. 14\)](#) (nothing particularly relevant to RC to report)
 - iii. Austin Kaufmann facilitated collaboration between Mighty Uke Day and Red Cedar Elementary School admin and teachers, culminating in the entire 5th-grader class participating in the Mighty Uke Day Opening Strum at Blue Owl Coffee last Friday, an event that the Trowbridge Business Association co-hosted. The event was a huge success and brought a lot of media attention to the neighborhood and school:
 - iv. Lansing State Journal: [Video](#) WILX: [Video](#) WLNS: [Video](#) Fox: [Article](#) | [video](#) ([More photos and video here](#)).
 - v. Red Cedar's last day of school is June 6 (half day)
- d. **Trowbridge Business Association (TBA) Liaison Report:**
 - i. The TBA meets from 12-1pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Austin is happy to continue to be the liaison, and anyone else is welcome to attend on behalf of the RCCA.
 - ii. The TBA group is now meeting every month, becoming more active, engaging more with the city, and planning more events, and working on branding and promotion.
 - iii. The TBA co-hosted the Mighty Uke Day Opening Strum and also the Wake-up Concert (which the RCCA helped to sponsor). ([photos and video](#))
 - iv. At their May 8 meeting, the TBA hosted an in-person presentation meeting from Janet Lillie and others from MSU to discuss the MSU Gateway Building project and its impact on Trowbridge Businesses. (Reactions were varied, but overall, mostly positive; it will bring many more patrons to the plaza both during construction and afterwards. All agreed it is likely to make real estate more valuable and should help fill empty storefronts in the plaza. Some are concerned that it might mean rent increases and lead to parking issues.)
 - v. Austin reminded the TBA folks that any member of the TBA — particularly anyone who wasn't able to attend *their* presentation from MSU — is welcome to join our Zoom Presentation on Tuesday, May 20.
 - vi. The TBA invites everyone on the Red Cedar Board to follow them on [Facebook](#) and/or [Instagram](#) so that we can stay connected to what they're doing.
 - vii. The TBA has another event coming up soon: **We Become: Spontaneous Connections**
 - 1. *What to Expect:*
 - a. *An expressive, interactive art installation and activity*
 - b. *Take-home projects; local mental health pro introductions*
 - c. *Educational + wellness resources*

d. *Who Should Come?*
Youth, caregivers, families, educators, mental health advocates—everyone's welcome!

- e. Emerson Park Report (Jim Jennings)
 - i. Jim Jennings says that phase 3, the final stage, is slated to start in late July and will only take a couple of weeks. The merry-go-round has been ordered as well as two more benches and a new water fountain to accommodate water bottles. Jim is working on native plants for phase 3. He reports on summer activities.
- f. US 127 & Trowbridge Rd. (Jeff Friedle)
 - i. Summaries were emailed by Jeff last week on various projects. Agreement between the city of EL and EL schools regarding emergency egress from Emerson through the Red Cedar school yard is scheduled to be on the May 27 council agenda.

4. Old Business

- a. Andrew will be asked to update some of our minutes on the city website.
- b. Communications - Judy asked businesses to post RCCA info and got agreement from Starbucks, Woodys, Blue Owl. She needs help designing it. Fresh Thyme said no. Sabrina will draft a one-page about RCCA event/planting to post.
- c. Jeff notes that Austin has suggested a Facebook page for us but it requires someone to give it lots of attention/maintenance.

5. New Business

- a. Jeff shared info on the Zoom mtg with MSU for May 20 regarding the MSU Gateway project.

6. Board Member Comments and/or concerns

- a. Marcia shares that the white stakes at Marigold/Kalamazoo are MSU plantings some of which may be moved elsewhere.
- b. Judi wonders if MSU might allow neighbors to use the new Recreation and Wellness Center. MSU said it will not consider that at this time.

7. Next Meeting 19 June 2025

8. Motion to adjourn by unanimously approved.

RCCA Communications Guidelines

Drafted by the RCCA Communication Guidelines Subcommittee (Ruth Stump, Liz Schweitzer, and Austin Kaufmann) on Monday, Nov. 7, 2022; Discussed and revised at the RCCA Board Meeting Thursday, Nov. 10, 2022; Updated in September, 2023

Andrew added comments in this highlight.

General Principles

1. **Respect and Inclusivity:** Ensure all communications are respectful, inclusive, and considerate of all community members.
2. **Transparency:** Maintain transparency in all communications to build trust and keep residents informed.
3. **Consistency:** Use a consistent tone and style across all communication channels.
4. **Privacy:** Protect the privacy of residents by not sharing personal information without consent.

Newsletters:

GUIDELINES:

1. Newsletters will be sent out as often as deemed necessary by the board (and as the newsletter editor has time for), as determined at RCCA Board Meetings and/or by email.
 - a. Andrew says: A monthly newsletter should be our cadence with special editions as needed. The Secretary should be able to compile and send the newsletter as it is their duty in the current bylaws. If we create a Communications Officer in the bylaws, the Secretary and Comms Officer should be each others backups.
2. Newsletter content is determined by the RCCA Board at meetings and/or by email, with Board Members or assigned neighbors contributing copy.
 - a. **Welcome Message:** A friendly note from the association president or board members (rotate message writer).
 - b. **Upcoming Events:** Information about community events, meetings, and activities.
 - c. **Important Announcements:** Updates on community projects, maintenance schedules, or policy changes.
 - d. **Resident Spotlights:** Features on residents, such as new members, achievements, or interesting stories.
 - e. **Local News:** Relevant news affecting the community, such as local government updates or nearby developments.
 - f. **Safety Tips:** Advice on staying safe within the community, including emergency contact information.
 - g. **Photos:** Pictures from recent events or around the community to add a personal touch.
 - h. **Contact Information:** Details on how to reach the association board or management.
3. The newsletter editor (Austin Kaufmann, currently) will compile and edit copy, and distribute the newsletter.
 - a. Andrew says: see above 1a.
4. Newsletters are distributed via the RCCA Email List (currently under reconstruction by Liz and Ruth) from the official RCCA email account, and via Nextdoor. (If the newsletter serves as an important announcement, for example for the Annual Meeting, it may also be distributed door-to-door.)
 - a. Distributing via East Lansing Neighborhoods mailing. Text messages are available to distribute news of note with a link.
5. If the board is approached and asked to advertise events by third party groups within the neighborhood, inclusion of that content in the newsletter will be decided by the board.

Email List

1. **Purpose:** Use email lists to share timely updates, event reminders, and important announcements.

2. **Subscription: Allow residents to easily subscribe or unsubscribe from email lists.**
3. **Content: Keep emails concise and relevant, with clear subject lines and a call to action when necessary.**
4. **Frequency: Avoid overloading residents with too many emails; aim for a balance between keeping them informed and respecting their inbox.**
5. **Privacy: Use blind carbon copy (BCC) to protect residents' email addresses and ensure compliance with privacy regulations.**

GUIDELINES:

1. The list is comprised of:
 - a. Neighborhood residents, business owners, places of worship, etc.
 - b. A few long-time *past* residents who want to stay connected
 - c. Individuals who liaison with the board (Officer Ojerio, City reps, MSU Ambassadors, etc.)
2. Content sent out from the Email List falls under several categories:
 - a. RCCA board announcements, newsletters, and emergency information
 - b. Relevant city or MSU press releases and information (relevance determined by Ruth and/or the Communications Guidelines Subcommittee)
3. Content that the board will **NOT** send out:
 - a. Advertisements or events from third parties (unless they are deemed immediately relevant to the neighborhood). Third parties will be encouraged to post such information on Nextdoor.

Google and Gmail Account (redcedarca@gmail.com)

GUIDELINES:

1. The following roles/people will receive access to the official RCCA Google account/password:
 - a. Board President (current, Jeff Friedle)
 - b. Board Vice President (current, Ruth Stump)
 - c. Newsletter Editor (current, Austin Kaufmann) – should call Communications Officer
 - d. Secretary
2. All active board members will receive “Editor” access to the Shared RCCA Google Drive

Nextdoor

GUIDELINES:

1. Board members will clearly identify on Nextdoor when they are posting on behalf of the board.
2. When asked to forward on advertisements or events via the Email List, RCCA Board members will encourage third parties to use Nextdoor.