

RCCA Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 21 August 2025, 7:00 pm

University United Methodist Church, 1120 South Harrison Road

Board Members Present: Andrew Bassila, Sabrina Curley, Austin Kaufmann, Liz Schweitzer, Judi Suess, Marcia Van Ness, Jeff Wray

Board Members Absent: Brendan Boyle, Jeffrey Friedle

Guests: Nancy Boyce, Sally Wittler, Wendy Brown, Jim Jennings

1. Administrative Agenda Items

- a. Call to Order
- b. Attendance
- c. Approval of Agenda
 - i. Motion to approve by Liz, 2nd by Sabrina
 - ii. Unanimously approved
- d. Approve June Minutes
 - i. Motion to approve with amendment by Liz , 2nd by Marcia
 - ii. Unanimously approved
- e. Welcome & Introductions
- f. Announcements
 - i. Sabrina Curley has a new job in Delaware. Her last meeting with RCCA will be the September meeting, moving
 - ii.

2. Comments from Guests

- a. None, they will submit comments during the agenda.

3. Reports:

- a. Native Plant Group (Nancy Boyce, Sally Whittler, Wendy Brown)
 - i. Started as a community group to connect. The group has evolved into some more social aspects of the group.
 - ii. Idea 1. Potluck dinner prior to the annual meeting. They have someone willing to coordinate this. Tentatively October 16th
 1. Discussion:
 - a. We can bring food, but UUMC does not want us to use the kitchen in the large hall.
 - b. Concern about indoor potlucks versus outdoor potlucks. Possible wording about acknowledging this concern and encourage to bring their own food or just come for the company.
 - iii. Idea 2. Questionnaire at Annual Meeting to solicit
 1. Discussion:
 - a. Judi and Andrew are interested in helping and meet with Nancy.
 - b. Electronic version to send out prior and bring paper copies.
 - iv. Idea 3. Communications. Utilizing the RCCA mailing list.
 1. Discussion:

- a. There is an idea to have the Native Plants and Social Group be a committee of RCCA, possibly chaired by a board member. Making them able to utilize RCCA resources.
 - v. Idea 4. Welcoming Committee. This used to be something that was done. Sally received a cake and pie upon move in. Perhaps an information sheet or packet to help bring people in and connect with others in the neighborhood. This was done similarly in the past with a letter and information on how to join Nextdoor, etc. Perhaps welcoming them with this information flowerpot.
 - 1. Discussion
 - a. Good idea, but finding the time, volunteers, and funds to do so.
 - b. Andrew reiterated having a Plant & Social Committee to help get this off the ground.
 - c. Perhaps partnerships with the Trowbridge Business Association (coupons, etc.) for new neighbors
 - vi. Idea 5. Pre-Meeting Dinner at local restaurant that precedes the RCCA Meeting. Or perhaps a set time that is set with the location announced in the future.
 - 1. Discussion
 - a. Lot of this was there before
 - vii. Idea 6. Native Plant Yard Signs. To encourage planting, have signs in the yards to encourage others to plant yard signs. Sample signs and survey at the meeting.
 - 1. Discussion
 - a. Complete the survey and have the Native Plant group continue the discussion with this extra feedback. Jim Jennings has a contact who can do signs as well.
- b. Police (Jeff Horn, Adrian Ojerio)
 - i. No report.
 - ii. Resource officers to take over as liaisons, instead of patrol officers.
- c. Treasurer's Report (Brendan Boyle)
 - i. Via email: Balance remains \$1476. No transactions for July.
- d. School Board Update (Austin Kaufmann)
 - i. August 25th is first day of school for MSU and ELPS.
 - ii. No superintendent report yet, next meeting is Monday the 25th.
 - iii. Construction of ELHS underway. School Board meetings to be held at middle school in the interim.
 - iv. COVID-era funds are drying up and there will be some changes.
- e. Trowbridge Business Association (Austin Kaufmann)
 - i. See email. Tuesday, September 2 at 8:30-11:30 am (time may change)
1019 Trowbridge Rd, Chalgian & Tripp Building
(Lower level Community Room)

Please consider selecting one to two members to attend and help us with this activity to explore strong ways to support the Trowbridge Business corridor.

 - ii. Sabrina and Marcia are interested in attending this as RCCA Reps, even if the date and time changes.
- f. Project Updates (Jeff Friedle)
 - i. Emerson Park

1. Substantially complete. The drinking fountain is the only remaining item to be installed, possibly some additional native plants in plant beds.
2. Plaque for iNaturalist QR Code is not in the works, but could be installed by other groups.
3. Park Director vacancy interviews will start September 5th.
- ii. US-127
 1. Cars continue to use Ivanhoe as an exit in confusion, then speed through in frustration when realizing it's not an actual exit.
 2. Likely not completed before MSU/UM date - tentatively November.
- iii. Ivanhoe Emergency Egress
 1. Swing gate to be installed between Red Cedar Elementary and Emerson Park
- iv. Water main replacement
 1. No update.
- v. Trowbridge Rd.
 1. Intersection Reconfiguration (Woody's)
 - a. No update.
 2. Place making Project
 - a. No update.
 3. Chalgian-Tripp Digital Sign
 - a. No update.

4. Old Business

- a. MSU Gateway Project (see email from Liz)
 - i. Seeking approval to send this email to the EL City Council.
 - ii. To add to Council Notes, there is an email (council@cityofeastlansing.com) to use so it's part of the record.
 - iii. Motion to send email to city council and city manager by Liz, 2nd Austin.
 1. Unanimously approved.
- b. City Web Page and Google Drive updates
 - i. RCCA Minutes and History Booklets to be uploaded to website and Google files.
- c. Communications Discussion (see Comm Guidelines below)
 - i. Andrew added content in yellow highlights.
 - ii. General consensus that nothing controversial is listed. The goal is to beef up the communication guidelines.
 - iii. Motion to table to next agenda Sept 18th with clarifications by Liz, 2nd by Austin.
 1. Unanimously approved.

5. New Business

- a. Bylaw Changes
 - i. Commenting was an issue so Andrew will move to a Google Doc for shared commenting, etc. Need to have these finalized.
 - ii. Motion to visit and discuss electronically by Austin, 2nd by Jeff.
 1. Unanimously approved.
- b. Annual Meeting - Proposed October 16th with Board of Directors Meeting to Follow
 - i. Native Plant Group Potluck Organization
 - ii. Motion to have Annual Meeting on October 16th starting at 7 pm, preceded by potluck and followed by Board Meeting by Liz, seconded by Judi.
 1. Unanimously approved.

- c. Native Plant Group - Committee Formation
 - i. See above.
 - d. Welcoming Committee - Committee Formation
 - i. See above.
 - e. Pre-Meeting Dinners
 - i. See above.
 - f. Yard Signs for Native Plant Owners
 - i. See above.
6. Board Member Comments and/or concerns.
- a. Look at the civic website, not current.
 - b. Perhaps invite faith, school, and business leaders to our meetings - especially the annual meeting.
 - c. If police officers are not coming back, a thank you letter or card to them for their service and time. Same for Jim Jennings.
 - i. Liz to send note to city manager as well.
7. Motion to adjourn by Austin. Second by Marcia.
- a. 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.