



## Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods Alliance Meeting Notes

February 13, 2023, 6:00-7:00 p.m. at Oshkosh Senior Center

**Neighborhoods Represented:** Menominee South (Cynthia Thrope), Historic Fourth Ward (Sara Russell and Misty Braun), Millers Bay (Reni Lynch and Polly Kimball), Congress Field (Dawn McKone), Bent Woods (Mary Jo and Steve VanderLoop, Carol Haag, James Karoses), Historic Jackson (Shirley Brabender Mattox), River East (Kathy Webb), Green Acres (Zach and Sam Fritschel, Sarah Nelson), Menominee North (Patti Waldecker and Dee Walter), Sawyer Paine (Jeanne Tondryk), Midtown (Alana Erickson), Historic 6th Ward (Tim Ernst and Paulette Feld), Stevens Park (Renee Lautenschlager)

**City Representatives:** Anne Schafer and Brandon Nielsen

**Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods Staff:** Reni Lynch (Board Member), Tom Fojtik

**Guest Speaker:** Jennifer Skolaski - Read Elementary School Playground Project

**Neighborhoods Not Represented:** Ferry Crossing, Fox Chase, Lumber River, Marina District, Middle Village, Sacred Heart, Woodland Park, North Park, Northshore, Downtown

**Welcome and Announcements (Tom Fojtik, Executive Director):** Tom welcomed everyone with a very humorous joke. All in attendance laughed uproariously. We have Welcome Bags available - please contact Tom or Cora if you need some. If you haven't already, please get your neighborhood "contact" information to Cora. Thanks to those who have already done so! If you have information to add to the "Neighborhoods" section of the website, please contact Cora as well. It can be a great resource! Finally, let us know when you are having your NA leadership team meetings. Cora wants to attend as many as possible!

**Guest Speaker - Jennifer Skolaski:** Jennifer presented extensive information regarding plans to significantly upgrade the playground at Read School, which serves children from eight of our neighborhood associations. Her presentation covered the rationale for the improvements, described in great detail what the plan is, and explained the overall cost. The planning group needs to raise over \$400,000 to complete the project. They currently have raised \$127,000. They are seeking funds via a Great Neighborhoods Program Grant through the city of Oshkosh.

Jennifer asked for neighborhood support, in the form of letters originating with as many

NAs as possible, especially the ones who contain the children who attend the school. We discussed how to do that, including support for the idea of an electronic vote of NA leadership teams, which can be shared with Jennifer, and ultimately, the city officials who will decide on the use of any Great Neighborhoods funding. The group is in support of the effort, and discussed ideas on both the project itself and how best to express said support.

A long discussion ensued regarding the Great Neighborhoods Program, the funding of which is not well understood. Members wondered if there is an annual spending limit. If the city supports one project, is it at the expense of others? We were unable to answer these questions, and for future reference, we will invite Mark Lyons from the city planning department to attend an upcoming Alliance meeting to provide answers.

Jennifer will provide the group written guidance on how to frame letters of support, should individual NAs decide to provide them. She has a March 1st deadline for the letters to be completed.

**City Updates (Anne Schafer, Brandon Nielsen):** Brandon provided an overview of the City Loan Programs event that occurred at the convention center on January 26. Over 90 people attended, and much positive feedback was shared by Alliance members who were there. He provided descriptions of some of the programs to our group and encouraged us to spread the word and encourage interested residents to contact the Planning office with specific questions.

We also continued our discussion regarding the Great Neighborhoods Program during this portion of the meeting. One member asked if the city could provide a “usage report” on how previous grants have been used. Brandon will take this request back to city leadership.

**Neighborhood Discussion:** Due to time constraints, we did not engage in a discussion regarding strategies to re-engage less active NAs. Tom will reach out to a few veteran leaders in the Alliance group to get some tips on how to bring people back into the fold. Cora and Tom have composed a letter to be sent to residents of the least active NAs, in which we remind them of the benefits of being active, and offer support if they would like to maintain official recognition.

It was pointed out that our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 13, which is also the date for the annual State of the City event. It is “in-person” this year. Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods will have a display table, and some of our neighborhood associations will be recognized during the program. As a result, we will NOT hold an Alliance meeting on that date. Cora or Tom will be in touch regarding the next meeting of this group.

The meeting ended at 7:08 p.m. Several individuals were still discussing the Read Playground Project with Jennifer as the group disbursed.