Please support this ordinance with everything you have to help protect Asylum Lake. We can’t loose anymore of our green spaces.
Thank you.
Anita Lawson
Parkview Hills resident

Sent from my iPhone
As a homeowner whose property will be included in the Natural Features Protection Plan, I want to express my strong support for it. It is needed to protect the remaining natural areas of our city. Please pass my comment on to the Planning Commission.

Dave Chadderdon
Dacchad@aol.com
2524 Waite Ave.
Neal Conway  
Communications Coordinator  
City of Kalamazoo  
(269) 337-8080  
conwayn@kalamazoocity.org  
www.kalamazoocity.org

From: Donna Keller <rdawkeller@ameritech.net>  
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 6:03 PM  
To: hello <hello@kalamazoocity.org>  
Subject: [External Email] Citizen Comment for 7/1/21 Planning Commission Meeting

Dear Planning Commission,

Our family has lived for 18 years on a nearly one-acre parcel in the Winchell neighborhood. For many of those years, we have worked tirelessly to restore native plants and trees in the wooded, rolling hills of our back yard. In that time, we have observed in and around our yard more than 85 bird species including Pileated Woodpeckers, Black-throated Green Warblers, and Barred Owls, as well as foxes, coyotes, box turtles, and many more animals. Butterflies and bees visit our native plants providing important pollinator services. We consider ourselves incredibly fortunate that our yard abuts a larger woodland. An isolated one-acre wood certainly couldn’t host this diversity of species. For these reasons and more, our family is thrilled that our property and the woodland of which it is part are included in the proposed NFP Phase 2 Plan.

With great interest, I’ve followed this NFP Phase 2 process during the last year, and I’ve heard a great deal of support but also some concern. This Planning Commission expressed concern that landowners didn’t have enough time to react to the addition of their land to the Phase 2 Map, that communication from the city was lacking, and that economically disadvantaged people would be disproportionately affected by the extra layer of regulation. Some landowners whose property is being added have called it governmental overreach and assert that their property values will drop.

To address some of these concerns, the Natural Features Protection Board, comprised of highly knowledgeable people with expertise in this field, revisited the map and, with the help of city staff, carefully examined specific parcels to ensure the accuracy of the map. They adjusted NFP language to accommodate concerns that were raised by homeowners. Further communications were sent to landowners whose property falls in or near the Phase 2 map outlines so that they had more time to study the issue.

Regarding “governmental overreach”, I think those concerns have been addressed as well. The purpose of the NFP district is to ensure that “natural features within the city are protected long term for the enjoyment of the public and health of the environment — with special focus on properties being developed or redeveloped.” Additionally, it exists to “collaborate with neighborhood associations and residents to develop a strategy that encourages best management practices on private property and incorporates natural feature protection into neighborhood plans.” In addition to addressing concerns of specific property owners by adjusting the map where appropriate, going forward the NFP Review Board will entertain requests for variances in specific situations, thus making the process nimble and responsive to residents’ needs while still honoring the spirit of the overlay district. As for property values, would a potential buyer of my house be more or less inclined to pay a premium for it knowing the neighbors can’t
cut all of the trees on the slopes the properties share, thus protecting my house from erosion and water issues? Time will tell, but I’m betting that the NFP protections will only enhance my property values.

Earlier in this process, some members of this Planning Commission expressed concern that residents at the lower end of the socio-economic scale will be disproportionately affected by the NFP Phase 2 overlay because of the extra layer of regulation it puts in place. But if you listen to the residents of the Stockbridge/Lake Street area, you understand that it is precisely because of lack of regulations regarding natural features protections that there is increased flooding in that part of the city. Failure to implement Phase 2 increases the chance that the last remaining green space in that area will be developed without attention to natural features protection and the effects on area residents. Much has been written lately about the environmental devastation that economically disadvantaged people and People of Color have experienced precisely because no one cared enough to put protections in place, resulting in significant health challenges for these populations. Expanding the Natural Features Protections during Phase 2 is a small step toward righting those wrongs here in Kalamazoo, so long as Phase 2 is approved.

For far too long in this city, little or no attention was paid to natural features protection as development took place. While it is impossible to undo damage caused by past development, your role on the Planning Commission is to affect current and future land use within the city. That is precisely what you will be doing if you vote to recommend this to the City Commission. Conservation is a long game. By putting natural features protections in place now, you ensure that future generations of Kalamazoo city residents will have a better environment in which to live their lives and raise their families.

I strongly urge you to approve the plan without delay.

Sincerely,

Donna Perry Keller
2117 Crosswind Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
We live in Parkview Hills and enjoy having the Asylum Lake property close to us. It is a beautiful Natural spot and no businesses should be allowed to build near the lake. We definitely want Asylum Lake property to remain as a nature spot for walkers, bird watchers, fishermen, etc. Please do not let a car wash or any other business cut down those beautiful trees and mar the beauty of that natural area. Elaine and Gerald Roberts 3649 Woodcliff Dr. Kazoo.

Sent from my iPad
I support NLP. Gary Niemeck, Former Kalamazoo City Planner.

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPad
Mr. Eldridge - Thanks for the kind words. Pics were taken with a cheap I-phone, by an amateur. Asylum Lake is beautiful.

I'm pretty sure, but not completely, that my letter, reprinted below, was for the original ordinance. Note the date, if it is important to determine the stage of this process. The letter is a simple personal statement, so the stage may not be important. Here is my letter:

Bobby Hopewell, Mayor and Kalamazoo City Commissioners
241 W. South Street, Kalamazoo, Mi 49007

December 4, 2018

My wife and I attended the Commission meeting of December 3, 2018 – my first time. Almost everyone who addressed the commission had some level of expertise or held some office pertinent to the Asylum Lake issue. I wanted to express the simple views of a plain citizen.

I’ve lived in Kalamazoo for over forty years, and have “used” Asylum lake perhaps only twenty or thirty delightful times, mostly because I live so close to Kleinstuck Preserve. Still, it is important to me for many reasons.

First, the corner of Parkview and Drake, only 3 miles from my home, has long represented the beginning of “country” for me – the point from which I could wind by multiple gorgeous non-urban routes to reach my wife’s parents’ grape farm in Lawton. I am a mix of urban and rural. I had grown up in a big city suburb, but had farm backgrounds on both parental sides, and traveled through countryside to visit first and second cousins. I adore country.

Today, of course, Parkview is developed – magnificently – by an engineering school campus that is itself a delightful place to walk. And right across the street, is Asylum Lake, magnificent in its minimum of development, which retains that sense of “country” for me. Whenever I go by it, probably once a week, I re-enjoy it being there and available, re-appreciate the preservation efforts, and feel proud of Kalamazoo for its diversity.

Second, and likewise, the view of the stream and lake from Drake as I drive North towards the stop light at Stadium allows a little glance at beauty every time, and reminds me to walk to the lake again.

Third, when I do walk to the lake, it is natural perfection. I have a Costco membership, but I don’t want to look at Costco. The view is unspoiled. Beauty survives in my city.

I’m a capitalist, but I can’t understand how any commercial enterprise could be allowed to threaten such a treasure. After the Commission meeting, I blurted out how is it that the United States doesn’t have a Constitutional Amendment to prioritize the value of natural beauty over commercial interests. The burden is in the wrong place. If a commercial project can’t occur without damage, it should not occur.

I was impressed by the Commission. By its intelligence and efficiency, by its regard for both sides of the issue, but mostly by its admission of responsibility and its correctability. If the proposed moratorium allows for a successful natural features protection overlay to place the burden where it belongs, it will add the City Commission itself to my list of "Wonders of Kalamazoo."

Respectfully, and thankfully, I am
Mr. Opdyke,

First of all, incredible pictures of Asylum Lake. In regard to the letter previously submitted, was that for the original Natural Features Protection Ordinance or was it more recently for the NFP Phase 2 Amendments? I don't see your letter with the other correspondence received. Would you be able to resend the letter?

Thank you,

Peter C. Eldridge, AICP
Assistant City Planner

PH: 269-337-8806
FAX: 269-337-8513
EMAIL: eldridgep@kalamazoocity.org

Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) - Planning Division
City of Kalamazoo
245 North Rose Street, Suite 100
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

The Community Planning and Economic Development is not open to the public at this time. However, CPED staff are working remotely from home to the best of our ability. Please excuse any delays in returned calls and emails. Most City services are available online at: www.kalamazoocity.org.

If you need immediate information dial 311 or (269) 337-8000.
I've written a letter and attended multiple commission meetings. So as to not repeat myself...

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Dear City Staff and Officials,

I am proud to support the Natural Features Protection Overlay District. I encourage the Planning Commission to approve the Phase 2 expansion of the NFP Overlay. As a lifelong resident of Kalamazoo, I am so thankful that our city is finally taking action to protect our plentiful woods, creeks, wetlands, lakes, and beautiful river.

In particular, as a condo owner in Parkview Hills, I am in favor of the expanded protections on the WMU Business, Technology, and Research Park, which is behind my house. It is amazing to see such a healthy assemblage of native prairie species, including both flora and fauna.

As a Parkview Hills resident, I also serve as the Chair of the Natural Areas Stewardship Committee. We work hard to restore and improve the health of the natural areas in our neighborhood. Having gotten close to all these special places, I was thrilled to see that your amended map includes enhanced protections for parcels in Parkview Hills, including parcels: 06-31-407-001, 06-31-438-014, 06-31-400-001 and the surrounding smaller parcels that buffer each of these.

The chain of lakes through Parkview Hills provides important habitat along the West Fork Portage Creek habitat corridor, which connects natural riparian and associated upland areas all the way from Al Sabo and Rota-Kiwan to Asylum Lake. It is critical that all the currently included parcels in our neighborhood remain in the NFP.

Thank you.

Hilary Hunt
3824 Greenleaf Circle
Kalamazoo MI 49008
Director of Land Protection, SW Michigan Land Conservancy
Chair, Parkview Hills Natural Areas Stewardship Committee

--

Hilary Habeck Hunt
City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission,

I would like to encourage the Planning Commission to adopt Phase 2 of the Natural Features Protection overlay which will protect additional natural features, such as important concentrations of trees, slopes, waterways, and more within the city. In this time of climate change we need to be adding trees instead of removing them for development. This will make the city more livable for its residents and help reduce environmental degradation.

Ilse Gebhard
4105 Persianwood Dr
Kalamazoo MI 49006
Neal Conway  
Communications Coordinator  
City of Kalamazoo  
(269) 337-8080  
conwayn@kalamazoocity.org  
www.kalamazoocity.org

From: Jenn Gorman <jdyann@aol.com>  
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 7:53 AM  
To: hello <hello@kalamazoocity.org>  
Subject: [External Email] NFP Phase 2

Hello,  
I am writing this in support of passing Phase 2 of the Natural Features Protection Overlay. In protecting what is one of Kalamazoo's greatest assets, we can ensure a promising future for Kalamazoo's vibrant neighborhoods.

Thank you,  
Jennifer Gorman  
2312 Shelter Pointe Drive  
Kalamazoo
Please support the NFP. Please read this article. Judy Rowe 3743 Cedaridge Road

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jonathon Dilworth <dilworth.jon@gmail.com>
Date: June 7, 2019 at 7:47:48 PM EDT
To: Judy Rowe <kraftrowe@sbcglobal.net>
Subject: A Greener Path to Equality

https://www.chronicle.com/paid-article/A-Greener-Path-to-Equality/265

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Regards,

Jon Dilworth
June 27, 2021

To the Kalamazoo Planning Commission:

I would like to voice my support for the Natural Features Protection Plan that has been carefully crafted during the past couple of years. As Kalamazoo moves ahead, it is crucial to protect land as it continues to be developed in this area. Having rules and guidelines for reasonable development, using scientific considerations and protections to protect slopes, waterways, trees and so on is long overdue. Responsible development must be the way of the future.

There is ample evidence that humanity has had a negative effect of the health of the globe and its many ecosystems and we cannot continue to forge ahead heedlessly destroying every natural feature in our path.

Please put the new Natural Features Protection Plan into law so that Kalamazoo can have some forward thinking as it continues to grow. It will make this city a better place to live and work and will be something we can be proud of developing and using.

Sincerely,

Mary Spradling
Resident
3823 Ruthin Road
Kalamazoo MI 49008
Dear Ms. McCarthy,

I am writing to express my support for the extension of the Natural Features Ordinance, Phase 2. I implore you to pass this very important proposal to further protect Kalamazoo’s natural areas which are so important to the health of the environment, its wildlife, and to the people living here.

With thanks and appreciation,

Melody Allen
The Neighborhood Association of Parkview Hills (NAPH) supports the NFPO2, designed to expand and protect the natural features in Kalamazoo, including our close neighbor, the Asylum Lake Preserve. Parkview Hills and Asylum Lake Preserve are more than neighbors; we are connected by water, as Little Asylum runs under Parkview Ave. into Cherry Creek on Parkview Hills property.

NFPO2 was always part of the plan, as NFPO1 had a 6 month timeline for completion. The city commission, the planning commission, citizens, the NFP Review Committee all recognized and understood the need to expand the map and the guidelines beyond the original done under time constraints. Kalamazoo’s Natural Features Protection initiative was awarded the Environmental Planning Award by the Michigan Association of Planning. Kalamazoo is on the right track in presenting NAPO2.

For all these reasons, the Neighborhood Association of Parkview Hills supports the NFPO2.

With best regards,

Bonnie Alkema, President
Karen Schmitt, Vice President
John Piper, Secretary
Marcy Ohs, Treasurer
Belinda McDougal, Communications

Directors
Dean Hauck
Amelia Falk
Good Afternoon Jamie -

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of the Oakland Drive - Winchell Neighborhood Association (ODWNA). Please include the following statement as part of the public input for the Planning Commission meeting.

The Board of the Oakland Drive – Winchell Neighborhood Association supports the Natural Features Protection (NFP) Phase II Map and proposed Ordinance changes. The Board commends and thanks the NFP Review Board, Ms. Jamie McCarthy (City Sustainable Development Coordinator), and Mr. Nolan Bergstrom (City Intern – specializing in GIS applications) for their diligence and perseverance. In the opinion of the Board, the documents described above: 1) align with the City Master Plan; 2) align with the Oakland Drive – Winchell Neighborhood Plan; and 3) set a logical and equitable foundation for managing and protecting the natural features in the City of Kalamazoo, both now and for generations to come.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you and best wishes,
Diana

Diana Morton-Thompson
ODWNA Board Member
FYI, another NFP 2 comment for PC.

From: Richard Stewart <richard@2693457000.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 7:02 PM
To: McCarthy, Jamie <mccarthyja@kalamazoocity.org>
Subject: [External Email] Re: [External Email] Re: [External Email] NFP2

I am working so I can't join meeting but I would like to make a public statement of support for the inclusion of the parcels to the NFP2 between lake and stockbridge in the southtown neighborhood. This is the last remaining natural greenspace, natural watershed and natural wildlife habitat in Southtown neighborhood. I am particularly concerned by the statements board member Sylvester has made downplaying the parcels inclusion in the NFP2 when he has a previously undisclosed financial interest that benefits his client, mayor david anderson/lisc, if the parcels are not included. I would like to know what actions The Southtown Neighborhood residents can take to file an ethics complaint about this obvious conflict of interest. While inclusion in the NFP2 site will not prevent his group to destroy our natural greenspace, I believe his position on the board could also be used to minimize Andersons obligations to protect the site upon his destruction of it. The natural watershed the site has on the surrounding area is being minimized for the purpose of keeping costs down to develop it for maximum profit to the developer.

Richard Stewart
REO Specialists llc
828 Portage St
Kalamazoo MI 49001
269-345-7000 Phone
269-585-5922 fax
www.RichardStewart.com
Dear Planning Commission,

My wife and I have lived on our nearly one-acre parcel in the Winchell neighborhood for 18 years. During that time, we have taken steps to restore our property with diverse native plantings, both in the sloped and wooded back yard and in the sunny, open front yard. We take immense pride in the progress we’ve made, and we celebrate the wide variety of bird and pollinator species that visit our yard. The addition of our parcel to the Phase 2 NFP Overlay Map is reason for celebration, assuming that it is ultimately adopted, as it ensures that our sliver of nature will be part of a larger natural corridor in perpetuity.

I strongly support the NFP Phase 2 plan as it currently stands, and I urge you to approve it without delay.

Sincerely,

Rob Keller
2117 Crosswind Drive
Kalamazoo, MI  49008
From: Bob Sholes
To: Eldridge, Peter
Subject: [External Email] Fwd: Delivery Status Notification (Failure)
Date: Monday, June 28, 2021 10:24:14 AM
Attachments: icon.png

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Mail Delivery Subsystem <mailer-daemon@googlemail.com>
Date: Mon, Jun 28, 2021 at 10:02 AM
Subject: Delivery Status Notification (Failure)
To: <bob.sholes@gmail.com>

Address not found

Your message wasn't delivered to EldridgeP@kalamazooithy.org because the domain kalamazooithy.org couldn't be found. Check for typos or unnecessary spaces and try again.

The response was:
DNS Error: 928804 DNS type 'mx' lookup of kalamazooithy.org responded with code NXDOMAIN Domain name not found: kalamazooithy.org

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Bob Sholes <bob.sholes@gmail.com>
To: mccarthyja@kalamazoocity.org
Cc: EldridgeP@kalamazooithy.org
Bcc: 
Date: Mon, 28 Jun 2021 10:01:58 -0400
Subject: Natural Features Protection Ordinance

Jamie,

I am writing to urge you to approve extension of the Natural Features Ordinance to properties bordering on the Asylum Lake Preserve, as well as other precious green spaces located throughout our city. I believe the ordinance is essential to protect these precious green areas from adverse environmental impact caused by property development and management.
activities. Please vote to approve the extension.

Sincerely,

Robert Sholes
2407 Highpointe Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Dear Members of the Planning Commission for the City of Kalamazoo and Planning Staff,

Thank you for your continued work in developing a thoughtful and effective approach to the protection of the natural features in our City in your planning work.

I have reviewed the revised Natural Features Protection Plan – Phase Two documents and maps and followed the work of the NFP Board resulting in recommendation for its adoption. I urge you to accept the revised plan and to vote for its adoption in your meeting this week.

I am encouraged that, although our City has precious little in protected natural areas, the expanded plan provides thoughtful and clear guidance for development and construction while sustaining the natural features we still have. Our City has utilized the guidance of trusted, experienced, and informed people to develop these standards for you to be able to implement in sensible ways while protecting essential natural elements. Modern cities that are effective in attracting and retaining talented workers understand the importance of these natural features in creating a balanced approach to growth and development while cultivating and enhancing quality of life.

In the past several years I have learned a great deal about the critical importance of these natural features for the future health and well-being of all life in our City and surrounding area. This has led a group of us to help remove the life-choking invasion of non-native honeysuckle and other invasive plants and restore the common space owned by the Cliffs Association within Parkview Hills to native plantings. We have made great progress that is very heartening to witness, but it is far better to protect these natural features and sustain them in the first place, as the expanded NFP does, than to lose them or attempt to manipulate their recovery and return, if that is possible at all. It is clear that the sensitive natural features “next door” to the north and east of Asylum Lake are extremely vulnerable to this fate, without the expanded overlay and thoughtful zoning.

Please preserve the natural features of our community by adopting and implementing the revised overlay and standards, and help educate our citizens so that they come to understand their direct self-interest in this endeavor.

With my thanks for your service and this good work,
Rochelle V. Habeck, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, Cliffs Association Landscape Committee
Member, Parkview Hills Natural Areas Stewardship Committee
3638 Woodcliff Drive
Kalamazoo MI 49008
269-341-0381
Hello!

I sincerely hope the City will continue to support greenspace, wildlife and nature preserves within city limits and approve the expansion of the Natural Features Protection overlay. This expansion would protect countless well used natural resources and spaces. A loss of this would be a tremendous step backward in making Kalamazoo a city in which our residents are able to be healthy, in so many ways.

I strongly support the expansion of the NFP and hope it will be approved and recommended to the City Commission for their approval.

Best,

Suzanne Schma Lepley
Hello,

I am writing to express my support of the expansion of the Natural Features Protection overlay. I own property within Phase 2 of the NFP, and am thankful for the work that has been done to protect the green spaces within our community.

Alyse Pagano
2330 Shelter Point Dr, Kalamazoo, MI 49008