

West Central Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2023, 7:00pm

Attendance: 35 people. It was a full room!

Board Members introduced themselves again due to the large group today.

Today's entire meeting will be devoted to discussion of the Home & Garden Tour. Joel Sauer, President, opened the meeting noting that the tour is for the association and organized by its members. We want to have broad participation and engagement from any and all.

Kelly Benton presented a slideshow on the history of the Home & Garden Tour and ArtsFest. Slideshow is also available on the Beyond Porch Parties Facebook Page. Old tour brochures dating back to the 1980s were available.

Changes to the Home Tour over the years have included:

- Used to be called the "House & Garden Tour"
- ArtsFest was added in 2012
- Began selling sponsorships to pay for the brochures
- At first there were only a few food options (handmade sandwiches from Swinney Homestead)
- The only bathrooms that were available were at St Joe Hospital or Swinney Tennis Courts
- We now have a storage unit to centrally locate all signs, merch, and materials for the tour. All files are now stored online for easy access, duplication, and transfer
- In 2022, \$400 in FB advertising resulted in 1000 visitors to our website and \$7000 in online tickets. We plan to add option for electronic tickets this year rather than mailing out paper tickets.

The Home Tour is our largest source of income for the neighborhood! In 2021, the tour brought in \$47K, with profit of \$25K. In 2022 sponsorships were down, and tour brought in \$37K and profit of \$11K. The money raised is used to pay for neighborhood programs and other mission-oriented activities (such as saving old houses).

Attendees shared input on favorite parts of the tour and suggestions for improvement.

Discussion included:

- Missed live music/performances during the whole day both days and a larger variety of food trucks
- Support for increasing ticket price
- Support for keeping ticket price low and focus on raising money through sponsorships
- Didn't like the move to Promenade Park for the Pre-Tour Party (too cold, not decorated)
- Discussion of putting tent over full music area on Union Street.

- Bad news from Mutton Rental: will not do set-up or tear-down on weekends anymore. We are waiting on a new quote for the price of Friday- Monday rental.
- Laura & Phil Jackson are open to putting their home on the tour as long as they can get the house painted in time. Laura also volunteered her daughter who just moved into the Wingspread Apts.
- Discussion of largest expenses: brochures (\$4,100), bands (3,000), stage & tents (2,000), trolley (\$2,600)
- Discussion of how to engage Do It Best as a lead sponsor
- Suggestion to work with Electric Works on scheduling tour so they are prepared for the influx of extra people during the tour
- Discussion of color brochure vs going back to B&W. Lots of support for sticking with the color brochure
- Idea to offer including band contact info for a discount on band fee
- Suggestion to consider the brochure as a directory to neighborhood businesses
- Discussion of avoiding burnout on tour committee: breaking up job responsibilities among more people so that the burden isn't on just a few.
- Goal to add more volunteers!!
- Is the big Saturday concert functioning as a "thank you" to the neighborhood and volunteers? If so, are we doing two events with the same purpose (Pre-Tour party)
- Option to allow advertising within homes- ex: staging services, interior design
- Suggestion to thoughtfully select volunteers for ticket booth- with working knowledge of neighborhood, Square technology, etc

Tour Positions Needed:

- Tour Chairperson (or co-chairs!)
- Digital Marketing
- Brochure & Print
- Sponsorships
- Food & Music (Andrew Stout is leading the Music, more committee members welcome!)
- ArtsFest (Connie Mettler is leading, more committee members welcome!)
- Logistics (This is most pressing current need!)
- Tour Stop Liaison (Ellen Sauer to coordinating docents. More committee members needed!!)
- Ticket & Merch Booth
- Farmers Market Liaison
- Pre-Tour Party Planner

Passed around sign-up sheets for volunteer opportunities!

Kelly drew numbers for Neighborhood Merch give-aways!

Neighbor shared concerns about lack of progress on fully restoring the College Street viaduct, including turning on the lights. Requested that a West Central representative call to advocate on behalf of the neighborhood. The Board will write a letter making these requests.

Kelly reviewed neighborhood programs that are available to members of WCNA. Go to the website to see information– applications are available online!

Save the Date! The **Easter Egg Hunt** will be on Sunday, April 9th at 4pm at Moody Park. 700 eggs will be hidden and they go fast! Invite any and all neighborhood kids and grandkids, etc

Sign up with Jo Buffalino to get on the Porch Parties email list. This email list is separate from official WCNA business.

Concluded: 8:12 pm