

West Central Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2023, 7:00pm

Attendance: 36 people

Guest speakers: Creager Smith and Nate Lefever, Historic Preservation Commission
Creager shared information about the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

cityoffortwayne.org/preservation

The ordinance that created the HPC has established guidelines for historic properties; the guidelines are available on the website. There are a number of historic districts in Fort Wayne (The Landing, Williams Woodland, Columbia Ave, etc) 980 parcels total. Nate discussed the post card sent to all local historic district properties. Any changes to properties within the public view must be approved by the HPC and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness. They are working proactively to reach out to properties to inform of guidelines. HPC has power to issue Stop Work Orders. He asked that LHD properties call the commission **before** starting any exterior projects– they may be able to guide you through the project at the staff approval level. They are also looking to update the guidelines to include new means of construction developed since the guidelines were written.

Q: What is the process once you call the HPC? A: Can call or apply online to receive COA. HPC reviews applications (yes, no, or needs to go to the commission). If it needs to go to the commission, they will help homeowners prepare to go in front of the commission. Must have COA in order to receive a Building Permit. Calling ahead of time can save a lot of money!

We can also call the HPC to check on properties under construction to review

Q: Do you need approval to paint a house the same color that it was previously painted? A: No– it is not a change.

Q: Previous violations such as a satellite dish? A: There are so many that it has been difficult to monitor/police them. The HPC has taken the position that they will go away on their own and technology advances.

Q: Regarding windows, do most companies understand the guidelines for LHD? Is there much pushback from window companies or contractors? A: there are companies that do make appropriate windows, and those that don't. But it does happen that reputable companies put in windows without approval.

10-15 point inspection for windows. Please call about windows! They want to help!

Q: Guidelines for the National Register? A: There are no guidelines or review process, unless the project is a federal undertaking.

Next year will be the 40th anniversary of the LHD in West Central.

#HPFW23– contest (on the website, Beyond Porch Parties)

Q: What authority does HPC have if windows are replaced incorrectly? Can issue fines, require the City to take the property owner to court.

Q: Are you a good resource if the homeowner is trying to repair a historic element? A: Yes, HPC can make connections with contractors, etc

Guest speaker: Katy Silliman, Senior Experience Director at Electric Works

Oversees Union Street Market and Public facing events across campus. The focus has been getting the campus open and establishing daily operations. Excited for the first summer season. The farmers market will move to Dynamo Alley starting next Saturday (May 20). Dynamo Alley will be closed each Friday evening through Sunday to facilitate pedestrian traffic. There will be live music outdoors on weekends and they will be partnering with other Broadway businesses. Broadway Street Stroll July ?? All events will be uploaded to the calendar very soon. Newest tenant is New Millennium (division of Steel Dynamics).

Phase 2 is still on track (apartments) should be breaking ground soon for construction around the existing parking garage. Phase 3 will start at the end of this year with the planning phase. Probably won't break ground on Phase 3 for about 5 years. There will be residential components in Phase 3. They are going to continue to engage with neighborhood associations. One idea is a Neighborhood Card that would provide discounted or free admission to special events. They are collecting feedback from the community and sharing with independent merchants.

Q: Is there a way to gauge foot traffic? A: They are looking into ways to collect data on foot traffic. POS at market has recorded 125,000 transactions since they opened.

Q: Is Chapman's going to be in one of the historic buildings? A: Yes. They will be in building 27 (same building as Parkview).

Q: Do you know about College Street? A: (from Joel) it is slated with no timeline in place. He is trying to nail them down on a date.

Major sewer line project on Swinney is slated to start— will be torn up for a long time.

Other initiatives: Tracking Broadway traffic and speed. Trying to slow traffic as pedestrian traffic increases. Taylor and Broadway is slated to become a roundabout. Concerns about safety of pedestrian and bike traffic in a roundabout. In discussion with DOT to stay on top of increases in # of people on campus.

Q: Public spaces, like rooftop patios? A: Working on having community days that would open up other spaces for the public to see. The Forum has an information desk that is staffed, and is used as a public space.

Q: What's happening with the bowling alley? A: Currently looking for an operator to be more of a late night lounge option. The gym has been restored and is open for rentals.

Q: Where is there bike parking? A: Bike racks are around the front of Union Street Market. Will consider adding bike racks on the Union Street tunnel side. Recent bike audit identified issues with bike traffic around EW.

Q: Do all merchants have different hours? A: No– it is the goal for all merchants to be open during the hours listed. Katy has this as a topic at the meeting tomorrow. Meat market is closing– they are actively recruiting another meat merchant. Committed to fresh food.

Membership Update: Goal to have 200 members this year. We are having a membership drive this weekend on Saturday starting at 10am. Vicki passed around a sign up sheet to join on Saturday. The more the merrier!

Financial Update: Most of income came from memberships and HG tour sponsorships, etc. Spent money on HG tour needs– trolley. Net change: -89 cents.

Surprise commitment from Community Foundation: \$500 sponsorship.

Tour Update: 9 confirmed stops! Sponsorships at \$9000. Andy is doing great with getting music solidified. ArtsFest vendor applications are open! Connie would like to offer free places for traveling artists to stay– if you'd like to volunteer your extra bedroom for an artist, please let Connie know!

Chinese sister city is sending artists to FW in late August– more info to come on Beyond Porch Parties.

Concluded: 8:00 on the dot.