

West Central Neighborhood Association

Board Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2024 6:00pm

Call To Order - 6:05 pm

- Attendees: Joel Sauer, Kelly Benton, George Taylor
- Absent: Bethany Pruitt, Anita Kuker, Alan Jones, Connie Mettler, Al Hofer

Presentation from Mark Smith, Hemphill Smith Art Foundation

- Mark would like the Board's support for a sculpture to be placed in the triangle park bordered by W. Jefferson, Garden, and Swinney Park Place to symbolize West Central as an art center in the neighborhood.
- Would include a sculpture, new sidewalks, and a sign as you enter West Central. No trees will be impacted.
- The sculpture design is based on a floral painting by Jody Hemphill Smith, approximately 30-40' tall and 20' wide. The materials would be an iron rim with aluminum and painted cut steel.
- The Hemphill Smith Art Foundation will raise money to pay for the sculpture and sign and the city would be in charge of maintaining the space. The sculpture will include a plaque with names of donors and a way to pull up audio.
- The proposed sign says "West Central Historic Neighborhood" but the Foundation is open to suggestions from the neighborhood association. The sign will be about 15-20' wide and will hide uplights pointed at the sculpture.
- The Foundation is not looking for money from the WCNA, just a letter of support at they can show potential donors.
- They still need final approval from the city and the Arts United Public Arts Commission.
- The approximate cost is \$175,000
- The sculpture will take about 6 months to actually create, and if the fundraising goes well, it could be up in a year.
- There were suggestions from others that the artist make the sculpture look less like a tennis racket, especially being so close to the tennis courts, so they are revising the design. It may end up rectangular instead.

Solar Panel Policy

- Our Historic Preservation Committee drafted a policy letter regarding solar panels and other energy efficiency installations. (See attached)
- Once approved by our board, this will be sent to the City of Fort Wayne Historic Preservation Commission to push them to tighter restrictions on solar panels in historic neighborhoods.
- Both Williams Woodland Park and Northside will be joining us in this effort.
- The board members discussed this letter via email and in person and had no changes.

Association Meeting Signs

- There has been a request for us to buy more yard signs to remind people about monthly association meetings.
- We have \$300 budgeted for this for 2024. The metal signs are more expensive but last longer. The plastic ones are cheap but will scratch and fade. Kelly will look into pricing.
- Our concern is we don't want someone to have to take on the job of putting out and collecting all the signs every month - we would rather it be done by individuals. The downside to this is signs can get lost or forgotten about.
- It was suggested that maybe we give them to board members, just 1-2 per member to put out in their part of the neighborhood as needed.

Thieme Overlook Graffiti

- The city is going to spruce up the Thieme Overlook - weed removal, etc.
- They offered to remove the graffiti but said it'll likely just come back, so they suggested a mural. Board members like this idea, but know there may be some push-back due to the historic nature of the overlook.
- It was suggested that we could put out a request for designs and do a vote on a final design.
- We will need to establish a budget and a process. This will need to be discussed further when more board members are present.
- Joel emailed out this note after the board meeting: "The Thieme Overlook is part of a larger historic 'parks and boulevards' system that was designed by a prominent architect in the early 1900s. All of the faux Sycamore trees along Thieme were part of that same initiative. It has a lot of historic significance as a Fort Wayne landmark so I feel like we should be generally supportive of any improvements to it and to the preservation of its historic integrity. In my opinion, any artwork on it (which I support personally) should consider its history and "blend in" with the design and style of it. I'm not creative enough to know what that even looks like, but am guessing we have artists that will."

Concluded - 6:40 pm