

West Central Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes

August 19th, 2024, 7:00pm

Attendance: 37 people

Joel Sauer (President) welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced board members, and reviewed the mission and vision of the WCNA:

The vision of the West Central Neighborhood Association is to create a friendly environment that is rich in history, culture, diversity, and community that is valued by its residents, business owners, and visitors.

Guest Speakers: Creager Smith, Fort Wayne Historic Preservation Commission

- “The Bicentennial Year of 2024: and the story of West Central Neighborhood- A Journey from 1824 to 2024”
- Creager has been in this position for 32 years!
- A copy of this full presentation is available on the website along with other information on the history of the neighborhood. [Click here.](#)
- Discussion included:
 - Tip on research: some historic photos of homes can be found in creative ways, for example: photo from fire department at the scene of an accident
 - Addresses changed in Fort Wayne in 1902. The 1902 Sanborn Fire Maps are crucial for historical research because it shows new and old addresses

Public Art Support

- Hemphill Smith Foundation has requested a donation from WCNA.
- They have had their first fundraiser and are planning more.
- Mark Smith attended a WCNA membership meeting in March to discuss the project. Joel showed updated photos from the June membership meeting.
- There is a proposed limestone marker that will be a sign for the entrance into the neighborhood (“Historic West Central”). For over 10 years, there has been a goal in the Neighborhood Plan to add a gateway marker to the entrance to the neighborhood.
- The sculpture is based on one of Jody Hemphill Smith’s pieces (Amaryllis). It is meant to honor all of the history of art in the neighborhood
- Total costs are estimated \$200k, and the sign is estimated at \$30K
- The WCNA got estimates for signs 10+ years ago, \$30-\$50K. WCNA did not move forward with a sign at that time

- Thoughts from the board: there has been a long-standing desire to create a gateway sign and this would fulfill this goal.
- Board suggested support: \$15,000
- Comments: neighbors on Swinney Park Pl expressed concern about the height of the sculpture being higher than the height of the homes on that street, and concerns that it does not fit with the historic character of the neighborhood
 - Creager Smith verified that it was approved by the HPC.
- Question about current finances. We have about \$215,000 in the bank. On a good year, the Home Tour nets about \$25,000 after expenses.
- Laura Jackson introduced a motion that we approve \$15,000 with a letter of concern about the height of the sculpture and maintain support regardless of their response. Brian Clifford seconded.
 - Opposed six, remaining (approx 29) in favor.
 - Discussion of opposition.
 - Include in minutes the links to other organizations that are in control of the project.
- [Full list of links and resources with details on the project.](#)

Home & Garden Tour Update! The tour is only three weeks away. Posters are available to advertise. Business cards are also available to hand out. We are still in need of 40 docents to work in the homes. There are QR code sheets available to pass around to go directly to Sign-Up.

Reminder! Wayne between Rockhill and Jackson will be closed along with Union between Berry and Washington for the weekend of the tour.

Notice: The board approved a \$300 donation to Washington Elementary for a new food bank. The former food bank was vandalized.

Upcoming Events

- No Meeting in September!
- October Meeting will feature history of Jaenicke Gardens of Swinney Park
- Friday Porch Parties, organized by Jo Buffalino. We are in need of more hosts!
- Neighborhood Cleanup: September 4th in the evening
- Home & Garden Tour: Sept 7-8

Concluded: 8:31 pm