

## **West Central Neighborhood Association**

### *Meeting Minutes*

*November 18th 2024, 7:00pm*

Attendance: 17 members, 3 non-members

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 Speaker: Mary Ann Mings from Inasmuch Ministries (IAM)**

- She runs IAM and Circles of Allen County
- Mary Ann: was previously COO for a mid sized plastics manufacturer in Illinois. Was significant because there were no women in leadership in the industry at the time!
- She hired 98% people with felonies from work release who were also homeless. Five years with this workforce with no lost time. And the company was sold for 10 times what it was valued when they started. Then the company was sold to investment bankers and Mary Ann moved on. The pastor of Broady Christian Church called her and convinced her to come to Fort Wayne
- Changes she's made:
  - From 0 to 14,000 referrals from 211 in the past 18 months.
  - See an average of 300 people per week. A mix of homeless and housed
  - Highest poverty rate in Indiana is Allen Co.
  - 85% come for food, 60% of these people are dual income households
  - Food pantry (food for cooking and food specifically for homeless), clothing bank, bus passes, birth certificate retrieval, financial assistance for housing and utilities, haircuts and shaves for homeless folks
  - Once a month, PRC does HIV and Hep C testings
  - Super Shot does vaccines twice a month
  - Housing is with us once a week
  - Health Visions Midwest
  - Emergency Rental Assistance Funds: Community Development got \$175,000 for covid emergency rental relief and wanted to give it to IAM to administer
- So far in 2024, seen over 750 unique homeless individuals
  - 53% are employed and have been
  - 33% either currently or formerly addicted
  - 11% untreated mental health issues

- These numbers match national data
- Many come just to have someone listen, hang out in the lobby,

Most homeless folks get their mail at IAM

Shared the story of a man she and IAM helped to escape homelessness after 10 years.

Circles of Allen County: working with generational poverty through mentorship and education. Lots of success building emergency funds

Future Plans: Day Shelter, Employment, Community, Housing and implementing a model used to reduce homelessness

Q: Where to bring coats?

A: To IAM at the garage door (pull up on the sidewalk) or her front porch!

Q: How can people get involved as mentors for Circles of Allen County?

A: The mentors meet weekly on Monday nights at Broadway CC at 5pm for a meal and community. Folks are welcome to drop by to see if they'd like to be a mentor.

### **2025 Elections, run by Ben Walhi, acting past President**

- Minimum of 5 officers
- Officers must be an eligible voting member
- Nominating committee presents a slate of candidates
- Qualifications for voting: 18 years or older, resident, property owner, or business owner, attendance at 3 neighborhood events, plus current paid membership.
- Slate for 2025:
  - Joel Sauer, President
  - Kelly Benton, Vice President
  - George Taylor, Treasurer
  - Anita Kuker, Membership
  - Bethany Pruitt, Secretary
- Open Call for Nominations: no one spoke to nominate themselves or others.
- Vote on Current Slate: 16 yeses, none opposed.

### **Spending Policy:**

- This is a refresh of the policy first developed in 2017.
- We are unique in the amount of money we have in the bank, primarily because of the H&G Tour
- Purpose of the policy is to:
  - protect the financial solvency of the WCNA.
  - Ensure that our resources are invest in the neighborhood

Policy details: (Will be on the website!)

- Maximum spending per year will be the total of excess revenues minus expenses (margin) from the previous two years
  - Based on the last several years this would be approximately \$60,000 - \$70,000
  - Multi-year commitments will go against this maximum and will be included on the company balance sheet
  - Any expenditure in excess of \$2,500 must receive membership approval (per the bylaws)
- Aggregate liquid assets will not go below 1.5 times the annual operating budget
  - Including H&G Tour expenses
- Full financial statements, including the Income Statement, will be shared with membership via the website on a quarterly basis
- Focus areas for the next 5 years will be:
  - Transformative neighborhood projects (public art, gateway signage, riverfront landing, Thieme Overlook, Moody Park, etc.)
  - Infrastructure repair & maintenance (historic street lights, historic street signs, brick streets & alleys, parks, sidewalk & curbs)
  - Member programs
    - Including \$250 per membership meeting with the benefactor determined by the member attendees; money must not directly benefit a for-profit, political or house of worship)
- A member survey is available on the website to get input on the 2025 spending priorities! It will go out on Facebook after the meeting
  - <https://forms.gle/QxnkVPsKiZkBHjGv7>

### **November Gift Direction, Connie Mettler**

- Choices: Food pantry on West Washington, Inasmuch Ministries, Washington Elementary Clothes Closet
- Votes: unanimously voted for Inasmuch Ministry for \$250 donation this month

Next Month: Holiday Party on 12/9 will replace the December meeting!

Cookie Swap hosted by Ellen & Sonia: December 4th

Concluded: 7:52 pm