

West Central Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2025, 7:00 pm

Attendance: 31 people

Joel Sauer (President) welcomed everyone to the meeting 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.

Announcements

- New Member Welcome

Yesterday's West Central: Unlocking Historic Tax Credits

Presented by Dodd Kattman and Craig Leonard

- The birth of the historic preservation movement happened during the nation's bicentennial, 1976
- Indiana is one of a few states that offers a 20% investment tax credit for owner-occupied historic properties
- Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation is used as guidelines for historic preservation - find this at [in.gov/dnr/historic](https://www.in.gov/dnr/historic) or Google "Indiana Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit"
- General idea: it's better to repair than to replace
- Two types of properties: business/income can pursue federal tax credits, and owner-occupied residential can pursue state tax credits
- The building must be at least 50 years old, it must be listed on the historic state register OR be within a recognized historic district, and you need to spend more than \$10,000 on the project to qualify (call the phone number and talk to Ashley if you're unsure if you qualify)
- You can apply for a one-time project or break it up into multiple years
- You can apply for both interior and exterior work
- You have 24 months to complete a one-time project or up to 5 years to complete a multi-phase project
- The application is for projects that have not yet happened - not for projects that are already complete
- Important Note: Recently, they added a note on the website that says applications are currently closed until July 1, 2025 due to lack of funding - they are now capping funding at \$10,000 per homeowner

Officer Reports

- George Taylor, Treasurer
 - \$343 in income
 - \$2,052 in expenses (Green Team supplies, rental unit, accounting services)
 - Total assets are \$232,169
 - You can find quarterly financial statements on our website - Residents > Meeting Minutes & Financial Reports (December 2024 is the most recent we have on the website)
- Anita Kuker, Membership
 - 208 current members
 - 28 welcome bags delivered so far this year to new residents (reach out to Anita if you know someone who needs one)

Branded Sign Project

- Crime and car speeding are repeat concerns for residents over the years
- An elected official recently said they don't want to slow down people heading through downtown
- How can we present West Central as an actual neighborhood and make people want to slow down?
- Our Goals:
 - Identify the West Central boundaries, unite disparate areas, and build engagement
 - Amplify the brand and historic designation
 - Remind "visitors" this is a neighborhood
 - Pursue membership priorities by using our financial resources
- We installed 20 signs in 2019 that are mostly 10"x10" and are hard to read
- The newest neighborhood signage being used in other areas are 16" wide and hang from a bracket
 - Located $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way up from the ground
 - \$350-\$400 per sign, including bracket and installation
- These signs would be phase 1 of a bigger initiative - unsure what this looks like going forward
- The WCNA board will be asking the Association for a \$25,000 max budget to fund 40-60 signs, with installation starting in Area 5 (south of the train tracks, west of Broadway)
 - We would also potentially use some funds to develop a campaign around our other goals (possibly engage a professional firm to assist)
 - The board would present monthly updates to the membership
- There was a motion to approve, and passed with a few opposing votes

Connected Neighborhoods Initiative

- The Mayor wants to use the money from the sale of land to Google to benefit the neighborhood of Fort Wayne
- Two neighborhood groups will be awarded \$1 million each this year, and 2 more groups will be awarded in 2027

- The city is hoping to build long-term and meaningful relationships with neighboring regions
- Our neighborhood group consists of Bloomingdale, Hamilton, Nebraska, North Highlands, West Central
- We identified our main objectives as improving pedestrian and bike safety in our neighborhoods
- We submitted our application in late April, they will review applications in May, and make an announcement in June

Announcements

- Neighborhood cleanup in early May was successful - there was noticeably less trash because of the Green Team's efforts
- Neighborhood Yard Sales are June 6-8
- Block Party is Saturday, July 26 from 11am-2pm
 - We need a volunteer to help plan it! Tyler Bowers has headed this for years and is moving away
 - We have an Assistant volunteer, but need someone to lead it

Home & Garden Tour Update

with Ryan Benton

- Sponsors, artists, and food trucks are coming in
- We are a little behind on getting homes for the tour - lots of people have said "next year"
 - If you're interested or have a neighbors and friend who might be, please reach out to vp@westcentralneighborhood.org
- This event is our biggest fundraiser
- The tour is always looking for volunteers

May Gift Direction

- Each meeting we designate \$250 to be donated to a charitable organization
- January: Plowshares
- February: Friends of the Parks in Allen County
- March: Washington Elementary School
- April: ARCH
- Suggestions for May: Emmanuel Lutheran food pantry, Wellspring, Miss Virginia's food pantry, Inasmuch Ministries (we donated to them in November 2024)
- Wellspring will be receiving this month's donation

Concluded: 8:23 pm