

West Central Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes

June 16th, 2025, 7:00pm

Attendance: __ people

Kelly Benton (Vice-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: Scott Ferguson, Union Street Market

- New tenants at EW: AON moved in late last month
 - Also known as K&K, long history as insurance company in Fort Wayne
 - 200+ employees
- Indiana Tech: Acquired building 36 (as in bought it and own it, they are not leasing) Construction is imminent. Opening fall of 2026. Will have about 700 people there on any given day.
- Union Street Market Update:
 - The Berry: now open! Fresh fruit blended with Kuehnert Dairy Ice Cream. They are interested in feedback if you've had it. And they are hosting yoga on the rooftop!
 - Carmeli's Dough: 70% wholesale- which aligns with the incubator concept of USM. Baked doughnuts, cinnamon rolls, mediterranean baked goods, Chapman's pizza dough
- Berne Apparel: 'pro' gardener and apparel. They will have a full line-up of their apparel and will serve as a test market for new products.
- A study looked at how people are using USM: Half people who show up on campus came from work or home, and then go home, meaning it is a destination
- USM merchant pipeline/curation: looking for a salad bar operator (similar to the SweetGreen chain), test kitchen, retail lab (similar to Painted Tree concept)
- Elex Update: First block of apartments will be open at the end of July or beginning of August. 56 units are 78% leased already. \$450/month for 55+ with income verification
 - Second block of apartments will be open market: 1,2, bedroom units www.elexliving.com
 - A contract is imminent for a gym on the first floor
 - The childcare is currently being built

- Q: Can you verify the facade on the end of Jackson St? A: Scott is also looking for answers from Biggs. Will follow up
- He would like to offer a private tour for the neighborhood.
- Farmer's Market/Public Market Trust Update:
 - Joel Sauer (WC Board President) joined the Public Market Trust board
 - Farmer's Market is now year round
 - Stacking event on to market days to boost attendance
- Growth over last year- focus on community engagement
 - 80% of events done at zero or reduced cost
 - Goal is over 100k people at community events vs 60k last year
 - West Central Wine Club: Going to start wine flights, appetizers, and presentations from the distributor on the Third Thursday (starting in July)
 - Second Tuesdays: spirit flights, appetizers, presentations
- Home & Garden Tour
 - We hope to have a curated GE history exhibit in The Forum (with cash bar that gives a percentage to the WCNA)
 - Volunteer pre-tour party on the Roof
 - Hope to have Elex tour
 - More wayfinding and promotions for people with a home tour ticket
 - Sponsorship from Chapman's.
 - More details to come!

Yesterday in West Central: How to research your historic home

- Presented by Shelley Rothgeb
- Researched her own home.
- LOC.gov have best images of Sanborn Fire Maps (10 years available for Fort Wayne)
- There are numbers in front of the house- Street numbers changed in 1902. The 1902 maps have old & new addresses
- Archive.org Search: "1890 Fort Wayne City Directory" (like a phone book) was published every year
 - Can search address to find who was living in the home. Tells who is a resident and who is a boarder (adult children are listed as boarders). Includes occupations
- Findagrave.com
- Determined she lives in "The Frederick and Sophia Wellmann House" built in 1873
- Googling: Google Maps goes back to 2007 with photos
 - Tip: Try Google Earth for even older photos!
- Tip: try ACPL website and go to their photo archives!
- Slides will be available on the website!

Committee Reports

- Treasurer (George Taylor): May Expenses: \$1,954.89; Income: \$1,782.82; Total assets: \$231,967.91
 - Net -\$172, which is very normal for this time of year
 - Can find financial reports on the website!
- Memberships (Anita): not much changed since last month. We're still reaching out to new folks- let Anita know if you have new neighbors!

Neighborhood Promotion:

- We designated money for this at the last meeting. We have audacious goals!
 - Identify WC boundaries and unite disparate areas, build engagement
 - Amplify the brand & historic designation, strengthen historic preservation
 - Remind "visitors" this is a neighborhood, lower noise and speed, enhance safety
 - Pursue membership priorities, use our financial resources
- We are re-thinking new signs based on feedback we received at the last meeting.

New concept: Jersey Barrier Artwork (introduction with decision at July meeting)

- 19 very functional and necessary barriers on the western gateway of west central
- Functional, but not attractive
- Want to cover them in public art (similar project to covering the utility boxes in 2019)
- Build on the investment in the Amaryllis sculpture, further beautify the gateway
- Try to calm traffic as it enters our neighborhood
- Looking to do an RFP for artists, specifically who have experiences painting outdoor murals.
- We would hire one artist for all 19 to make one continuous mural, can be different on street facing side v sidewalk facing side
- The board is not asking for anything today. At the July meeting, we will ask for approval of \$10,000 total budget that includes artwork, paint, and RFP payments
- Comments: the barriers are already in disrepair, consider the wishes of the residents facing the barriers
- Reminder: we are bringing more proposals and requests to the membership because of the feedback we got that we are not doing enough with our considerable funds

Announcements

- Block Party: Saturday, July 26 11am-2pm
- Jackie Jones is coordinating and looking for volunteers!

Home & Garden Tour Updates

- Joel sent out a special edition newsletter. At that time we had 5 committed homes, we are now up to 7. We'd still like to get to 10. Don't wait for your house to be perfect! It never will be!
- Lots of folks at the meeting who have been on the tour who are happy to talk to anyone interested in being on. Will post more potential tour stop info on the website
- Tour is September 6 & 7!
- Headliner for Saturday night is URB and there will be food trucks at night!

June Gift Designation

- Every month we give \$250 to a cause of the choosing of the membership. Last month we gave to Wellspring.
- Ideas for gifts for June: Inasmuch Ministry, Food Pantries at Washington Elementary, Emmanuel Lutheran Church food pantry (happens once a month for residents of 46802, serves about 40 families)
- Voted: Emmanuel received the most votes.

Announcements: Derek Camp from City Assessment- today is the last day to file an appeal! This year is West Central's turn for updates for property records. Expect to see assessors around this summer!

Concluded: 8:10 pm