

West Central Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2025, 7:00pm

Attendance: 33 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 Speaker: Ermina Mustedanagic, CEO of Wellspring Interfaith Social Services

- Has been at Wellspring for 3 years (previously at Matthew 25 for over a decade)
- Pastor Bill Moody opened the first summer camp
- Mission: People of faith serving the social, physical, and educational needs of the community in Allen County
- Services (Wellspring does not charge for any of these):
 - Youth programs - they serve over 300 kids
 - After school program - includes transportation from a selection of FWCS schools, meals served, homeowner help
 - Summer day camp - STEM, arts and crafts, physical activities, reading and homework help
 - Overnight camps
 - Food pantry (open 5 days per week) and Wellspring on Wheels (twice per week) - served 15,051 individuals in 2024, 80% of which have children at home
 - Nutrition Program - started last year, dietician works with clients, sending the clients with the clients every week
 - Clothing Shoppe - open 3 days per week, appointment only, served 3,671 clients last year
- Q: Were you guys looking at moving somewhere to a different building downtown?
 - A: They looked at purchasing the Early Childhood Alliance building but the purchase and renovations would have cost \$8 million. They plan to stay put and will have an upcoming capital campaign to expand and renovate their existing building
- Q: Where does Wellspring's funding come from?
 - A: Most funding comes from local foundations

Yesterday in West Central: The Ewing House

- Presented by Shelley Rothgeb

- Ewing Mansion, NW corner of Ewing and Berry (now the parking lot for the Performing Arts Center)
- Built 1847-48 by William Ewing, who lived there until 1915
- Was the home of the American Red Cross from 1948-1962
- Neoclassical Greek/Roman Revival
- Second oldest residential property in Fort Wayne, and one of only a few built in the neoclassical style
- Inside, it featured a continuous stair railing that looped upward all 4 stories
- Mahurin documented in great detail the architectural structure of the home, which is now housed at the Smithsonian
- Was torn down in 1962 to house a parking lot for a car dealership
- Check the ACPL or Library of Congress for access to newspaper articles

Committee Reports

- Treasurer (George Taylor) - June expenses: \$2,808; Income: \$6,114; Total assets: \$235,745
- Membership (Anita) - nothing to report

Neighborhood Promotion

- Goals:
 - Identify the West Central boundaries
 - United disparate areas
 - Build engagement
 - Amplify the brand and historic designation
 - Strengthen historic preservation
 - Remind “visitors” this is a neighborhood
 - People live here
 - Speed and noise matter
 - Safety matters
 - Pursue membership priorities
 - Use our financial resources
- Reminder that we won the \$1 million grant from the city to work with 4 other northwest neighborhoods to improve pedestrian and bike safety
 - This money came from the sale of the Google land
 - We were required to work together with other neighborhoods, so we paired up with Bloomingdale, North Highlands, Nebraska, and Hamilton
 - We are looking to see how this pans out to see how we can work to supplement these efforts with our own plans
- The board meeting with some traffic-calming experts at our next meeting to brainstorm next steps

Jersey Barrier Artwork

- We have received some valuable feedback on this project and are still planning on it, but will need more time
- This project will now be pushed to 2026 as the Board does research and makes preparations
- Next steps: the board is putting together a Request for Proposals and is going to review portfolios of local muralists provided to us by Alexandra Hall before reaching out to a few
- Member comments:
 - A member suggested planting perennials and ground cover around the barriers to make them look better
 - A member asked if any other solutions had been explored instead of painting them
 - A member pointed out that a couple of the barriers have been hit enough times that they broke the sidewalks behind them
 - A member said maybe we need to talk to the City about how their “traffic calming” along Jefferson aren’t quite doing their job
 - Someone pointed out that we have lost some trees along Jefferson that are a crucial part of that traffic calming
 - A member pointed out that the sidewalk and curb on the south side of that bend is a more urgent issue

Announcements

- Block Party - this Saturday, July 26, 11am-2pm
 - We need a generator for a few hours! We will provide the gas
- Call in speeding on Washington and Jefferson - request that the city patrols the area more
 - Non-emergency line: (260) 427-1222

Home Tour Update

- Presented by our Tour Chair, Ryan Benton
- September 6 & 7, 11am-5pm
- Sponsorships
 - Key sponsors: Lutheran Health, MBN Properties, Electric Works, Chapmans, Bippus State Bank
 - We are at a near-record high for sponsorships
- Tour Stops
 - Stop 1 - 1313 Rockhill
 - Stop 2 - 801 W. Washington
 - Stop 3 - 1016 Broadway (apartment above Good Bread)
 - Stop 4 - 826 Union
 - Stop 5 - 914 W. Wayne
 - Stop 6 - 1128 W. Berry

- Stop 7 - 818 Rockhill
- Stop 8 - 1026 W. Washington
- Stop 9 - 915 Nelson
- Also Opens / Bonus Stops
 - 801 W. Berry (was a work in progress in 2018)
 - Swinney Homestead
 - The Elex (apartment)
- 8 Art Spaces
- Music Lineup - URB will be our headliner, see the website for the full lineup
- ArtsFest - 35 artists along W. Wayne
- Food & Drink - we have 2 dedicated "Saturday night" food trucks, Mad Anthony's will provide a cash bar
- Volunteers
 - The sign up list will go out publicly around August 1
 - Get on our email list, watch our social media, or look for the link in Beyond Porch Parties
 - Volunteers get a free ticket and an invite to the Pre-Tour Party (on Electric Works rooftop)
 - Interested in being a House Captain in the future? Get in touch with us to shadow someone
- Ryan has posters for anybody who can or will hang them up throughout the community - art provided by Karen Moriarty
- Email tour@westcentralneighborhood.org to get in touch with the Home Tour committee

July Gift Designation

- Every month we give \$250 to a cause of the choosing of the membership. Last month we gave to Emmanuel Lutheran's food bank.
- Ideas for gifts for July: PBS Fort Wayne, WBOI, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Inasmuch Ministry, Washington Elementary pantries
- Ellen asked if the 13th Step houses in our neighborhood need funding - she may give them a call to ask
- Voted: PBS Fort Wayne received the most votes, George will issue a check

Concluded: 8:05pm