

West Central Neighborhood Association

Meeting Minutes

August 17th, 2026, 7:00pm

Attendance: 37 people

Welcome & Introductions

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

To preserve and promote a unique, historic neighborhood defined by its connected community, rich architecture, and outstanding livability for all.

Yesterday in West Central: Part II: Fort Wayne Art School with Shelley Rothgeb

See slides on the website:

<https://westcentralneighborhood.org/association-board-meetings/2026-minutes/>

- The launching of the Fort Wayne Art School was initiated by a group of women.
- In 1892 they moved to a carriage house on Lewis & Barr Street (no longer standing)
- Jessie, Agnes, and Moira Hamilton took over when Adams and Forsyth left.
- In 1897 a board of control was created and the school was formally organized
- Shelley's grandmother attended the art school. Showed a photo of her diploma from 1933
- The school moved to Peter Kaiser House on Webster when the old property sold to build a high school (now Anthis Career Center) and later moved to the Thieme House
- Neighbor comment: there should be a marker in front of the old art school to help educate new neighbors on the history of the building and neighborhood

Recap of Block Party (Anita Kuker)

- Approx. 80 attended, including neighbors with children who don't typically attend neighborhood events
- Anita thanked all who volunteered and encouraged anyone who wants to get involved to help out next year.
- We welcome any input or feedback!

We now have 250 members! Anita has distributed 26 welcome to the neighborhood bags. Please tell Anita if you know of anyone who has newly moved into the neighborhood

Vacant Homes in West Central (Kelly Benton)

- The board decided a few months ago to begin tracking vacant homes to gather data about the status of vacant homes over time.
- Vacant@westcentralneighborhood.org Send address and any other information you have available! Including pictures

2027 Election Preview

- Joel led conversation in place of Al Hofer, who serves as Past President and presides over elections
- We must have a minimum of 5 officers (president, VP, secretary, treasurer, and membership chair)
- We will present a slate of candidates at the October meeting and there will be an open call for nominations.
- The election will be held at the November association meeting
- To vote you must be 18 years of age or older, a resident, property owner, or business owner within the neighborhood, must be a dues-paying member, and have attended at least 3 of the last 12 membership meetings (or events where attendance is taken)

Home & Garden Tour

- It's going to be a great tour! 10 stops, 8 art spaces, and 45 artist booths!
- We still need lots of volunteer docents!
- Pre-tour reception will be at Abstract on Friday night from 5-7pm for volunteers
- Sept 12th & 13th: let Ryan know if you are around in the mornings and can help out with set up or any needs that come up
- Posters are available to take and put up anywhere you like!
- There are 2 food trucks and the Mad Anthony bar for the party on Saturday night. Let's help them all sell out!
- The Green Team will spearhead clean up of the neighborhood the week before. There are supplies available to make clean up easier if you'd like to help! Email: greenteam@westcentralneighborhood.org

Upcoming Events:

- September 12th & 13th: Home & Garden Tour
- Art This Way Fest: Oct 2nd & 3rd
- October 10th: Movie Night (movie TBD)
- Holiday Party: December 7th at 6pm
- No Association Meetings in September or December

August Gift Direction

- Every month we give \$250
- Last month the donation went to Miss Virginia's Food Pantry

- Gifts must be to a 501(c)3 nonprofit and not used for religious or political purposes
- Nominations: Literacy Alliance (they facilitate the reading program at Washington Elementary), Wellspring.
- Literacy Alliance won the vote

Other Announcements:

- Guest Speakers at upcoming Oct/Nov Meetings: Geoff Paddock 5th District City Council, Dan Baisden, Fort Wayne Trails
- 2027 Priorities
- 2027 Officer Elections
- Share your input on the Downtown Strategic Plan on Engage Fort Wayne:
<https://engage.cityoffortwayne.org/make-it-downtown>

Other concerns:

There was a tree destroyed as part of the Amaryllis statues installation that has not yet been replaced.

Is there a plan or timeline to fix the holes along W Wayne and Rockhill?

Concluded: 7:55 pm