

## **Meeting Summary for Westcott Neighborhood Association November 10, 2025 Meeting**

Board Members Attending: Galyn Murphy-Stanley (co-president), Carol Johnson (vice-president), Kevin Montgomery (Treasurer), Adam Felleman, Kim McCoy, Marilyn Zaleon, Chrissy Burd, Virginia Felleman, Heila Martin-Person

Other Attendees: Lisa Lehmann, Thomas Kiernan, Rhonda Vesey, Andy Leahy

On Zoom: Corey Williams, Andrea, Maxine

Absent: Sam Gruber (co-president traveling)

### **Quick recap**

The meeting began with introductions and administrative updates regarding surveys and membership information, followed by a financial review and discussion of community initiatives focused on food access and transportation barriers in Syracuse. The group addressed various neighborhood concerns including future programs, parade planning, and lighting installations, while also touching on ongoing construction project at the library and historic district matters. The board conversation ended with discussions about tax-related issues and governance matters, including bylaws review and board member additions.

### **Branch Meeting: Surveys and Updates**

The meeting began with informal introductions. Carol Johnson, announced that Sam would not be present due to a presentation in Poland. Guest: Anni Bellows: Lead a presentation about barriers to fresh food access in Syracuse. The group discussed a survey on barriers to fresh food access in Syracuse, which Carol mentioned needed to be completed and returned. They also touched on the need to update membership information, which WNA agreed to address the following day. The conversation ended with introductions around the table.

### **Community Food Access Updates**

The meeting began with introductions and technical adjustments for participants joining remotely. The October meeting minutes were reviewed and approved. Kevin presented a financial update, highlighting t-shirt sales as a new revenue source, the purchase of liability insurance, and a cash balance of \$3,189. Annie Bellows discussed a survey on barriers to fresh food access in Syracuse, detailing community efforts and partnerships to address food insecurity. The group also discussed plans for a new grocery store, approved through a \$1.7 million grant, with a projected opening by May 2026, and plans for a wellness center in Phase 2.

## **Syracuse Community Survey Initiative**

The meeting focused on a survey initiative aimed at understanding transportation access, mental health, and language barriers in Syracuse, with plans to distribute it in different community areas. WNA emphasized the need to address the city's impoverished status and discussed potential locations for survey distribution, including Westcott Communities. Technical issues with the QR code were mentioned, and the group considered hosting workshops and events to promote the survey. The meeting also touched on energy efficiency programs and collaboration with University Hospital, though details were not fully elaborated.

## **Community Market and Wellness Initiatives**

The discussion focused on community market initiatives and educational programs in a low-income area, including weekly Saturday markets and workshops with City Conserve and Food Forest. The speaker highlighted challenges such as limited transportation access to nearby farmers markets and the need for better communication about highway construction and roundabout changes. They also discussed plans for a future wellness center and various speaking engagements with schools and universities, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts to make meaningful community changes.

## **Halloween Dog Parade Review**

The group reviewed the Halloween Dogs Parade, which Kim organized, noting it was successful despite smaller attendance than previous years due to less favorable weather. They discussed potential improvements for next year, including publishing the parade route on their website and considering inviting the City School District's marching band. The conversation ended with a brief mention of Business District Lighting.

## **Lighting Challenges and Website Updates**

The group discussed challenges with lighting installations, particularly around transformers and trees of inappropriate sizes. The group emphasizing the need for creative problem-solving despite aesthetic concerns. They explored the possibility of using solar lights for smaller trees but acknowledged limitations with transformers and large trees. The team also discussed website updates, with Marilyn and Sam identified as having access to make changes, and Adam and Chrissy reported on ongoing cleanup efforts at Huckster Hill scheduled for Saturday at 9am. A complaint was mentioned regarding the grease pick-up service, though the filer remained anonymous.

## **City Issues and Political Updates**

Andy alerted Corey Willams to the ongoing issues with grease traps and garbage behind local restaurants, which he agreed to follow up on with the Codes team and potentially involve the fire department due to safety concerns. He expressed optimism about the new political climate in City Hall and confirmed that the Rose Garden renovation would use pavers rather than bricks. Corey also clarified that the upcoming council seat vacancy would be filled through an open application process, and he anticipated that the landmark preservation legislation would likely be defeated by the Planning Commission and Council.

### **Neighborhood Updates and Upcoming Projects**

The meeting covered several neighborhood updates and events. Corey discussed the county's transition to the state cycle and encouraged attendees to reach out if they have issues. WNA mentioned an upcoming Zoom meeting on November 20th about battery storage and a joint neighborhood watch. The group also discussed the SEUNA neighborhood meetings, which are held on the first Wednesday of each month. The conversation then shifted to the library's upcoming construction project, which will likely impact parking and access. WNA shared that Sharon Sherman has been in touch about the project and Carol will provide more details once bids are awarded. Finally, the group briefly touched on the annual meetings of WCC and Outer Comstock, noting the timing of funds for the University Neighborhood Preservation Association.

### **Neighborhood Initiatives and Updates**

The group discussed several neighborhood initiatives, including a mortgage program that remains active but there are questions as to available funds for buyers. They reviewed Westcott Business District lighting improvements, for which Andy took photos that Heila Martin Person might use in the next MailChimp mailing. Sam was tasked with following up on Art Box on Harvard and obtaining photos for publicity purposes. The group also touched on historic district tax credits, noting a lack of public information about their implementation.

### **Tax and Governance Board Review**

The board meeting focused on two main topics: tax-related issues and governance matters. Regarding taxes, a discussion took place about challenges with tax preparation and credits, with suggestions to consult Chris Capella Peters for guidance. The board also discussed bylaws review, particularly regarding officer term extensions and the need for indemnity clauses, and voted to add Ginny Felleman to the board. There were technical issues with the sound system persons attending via Zoom could not hear the speaker or guests that were not sitting at the table.