



Minutes
Westcott Neighborhood Association
June 9, 2025

Board Members Attending: Sam Gruber (co-president), Carol Johnson (Vice President), Kevin Montgomery (Treasurer), Adam Felleman, Kim McCoy, Marilyn Zaleon

Other Attendees: Charles Tremper, Chrissy Burd, Hanah Ehrenreich, Joe Carter, Andy Leahy, Corey Williams, Jane Pusch

On Zoom: Paul Harvey Judy Jerome, Lynne Odell

Summary: The meeting began with a review of previous minutes and discussion of upcoming events, including the Westcott Street Cultural Fair and various neighborhood projects including the kiosk installation and cleanup initiatives. Financial matters were addressed, including memberships, donations, and the need for liability insurance, while the Board explored fundraising opportunities and community engagement activities. The meeting included updates on city budget issues, property tax assessments, and announcements of upcoming community events, followed by a presentation from Hannah Ehrenreich, a candidate for Syracuse Common Counselor at Large.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for April and May meeting were approved with allowance giving for small corrections and additions.

Financial Report: Treasurer Kevin Montgomery presented the financial report. So far in 2025 WNA has received \$510 in memberships and donations and has paid for various administrative costs. WNA has signed a contract for the poetry events, which will provide more funds than expected. This extra money will be used to purchase board liability insurance, which is necessary for upcoming events. The insurance is estimated to cost around \$550. The board also discusses recruitment strategies for new members and potential sponsorships for future events, particularly the Halloween Dog Parade. Soliciting sponsorship donations from businesses such as Wegmans was discussed, but it was noted that WNA may be ineligible due to their non-501(c)(3) status. It was decided to revisit this at the August meeting. revisit in August meeting.

The creation and sale of "swag" was also discussed. The Thornton Park Association was given as an example of successful fundraising through events and merchandise sales. It was suggested the WNA collaborate with Thornton Park Association on selling Westcott-branded merchandise.

The Westcott Street Cultural Fair and The Barry Park Association also market T-shirts. The potential of these initiatives was recognized, but the challenge of finding volunteers to manage these projects was noted.

Beautification: Sam reported that the renovation of the Harvard Place “kiosk” was mostly complete, but that scraping and painting would be done later in the summer. He asked all Board members to keep an eye on the bulletin board to make sure it was kept neat and up-to-date.

Andy Leahy and Adam Felleman reported that the next neighborhood clean-up day will be Saturday, June 14.

Events: The Westcott Remembers event is reviewed, noting a smaller but meaningful turnout.

Kim reported on the organization of the Halloween Dog Parade and the coordination with Second Line Syracuse for music. Sam advocated obtaining whatever permits are needed for the event, even if that just meant informing the police department and neighbors.

Plans were confirmed for setting up a table at the Art Trail. Members were encouraged to sign up for shifts. Plans were also discussed for the summer poetry readings (and the need to secure insurance).

WNA has paid for a table spot at the Westcott Street Cultural Fair. It was decided to make decisions about the Fair and other events at the August meeting.

Communications: Improved Email communications were discussed and it now seems that all members receive updates. More communication from WNA is still needed.

Updates: An update was given on the Westminster Stairs – essentially there has been no progress. Voting on funding for the repairs continues to be blocked at the Common Council. SEUNA and WNA have submitted a petition, but there has been no response from most Councilors, especially Rasheeda Caldwell, the chair of the Parks Committee, who will not calendar the item.

The board noted the upcoming installation of LED lights on Westcott Street, with a suggestion to turn them off during bird migration season. This project has to be fully contracted by the end of June, and work will take place in the summer.

UNPA reports that 1% Home Improvement loans will be available soon, possibly by the end of June, pending receipt of funds from the city.

Sam reported that homeowners increasingly are tax credits for home repairs. There was concern about the size and content of signs required for commercial tax credits as members reacted to the large signs on the University Hill Realty properties.

Recent incidents at the Westcott Theater, including after-parties and gunshots were discussed, especially the permitting process for events and the importance of proper compliance to maintain both a thriving cultural scene and neighborhood safety. The conversation emphasized the need for businesses to report incidents to the police to create a paper trail and ensure appropriate resource allocation.

Syracuse Common Council Candidate Introduction

Hanah Ehrenreich introduced herself as a candidate for Syracuse Common Counselor-at-Large, emphasizing her progressive stance and focus on city revenue, safety, and equal opportunity. She discussed her vision for improving local amenities, including extending pool hours and revamping playgrounds, and stressed the need for a more diverse and sustainable city revenue model. Hanah explains the voting process for the upcoming Democratic primary on June 24th, where voters can select up to two candidates, and mentions her endorsements from various organizations.

City Budget and Community Events

Councilor Corey William's presentation covered various topics including city budget issues, property tax assessments, and upcoming community events. Corey discussed the city's budget deficit and explained the challenges of balancing tax increases with spending cuts. There was lively about the need for property reassessments and the difficulties in accurately valuing properties, especially rentals.

Paul Harvey announced several upcoming events in Thornden Park, including Rose Day, an art trail, Shakespeare in the Park, and a concert on Father's Day.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.