



Meeting Minutes
Westcott Neighborhood Association
September 9, 2024

Board Members Attending

Adam Felleman, Sam Gruber, Carol Johnson, Kim McCoy, Heila Martin-Person, Kevin Montgomery, Galyn Murphy-Stanley,

Other Attendees

Gabriel Calloway, Ryla Daley, Paul Harvey, Alex Marion, Dorcas Rodriguez, Jane B. Scott, Marilyn Zaleon, **By Zoom:** Virginia Felleman, Ann Kornblush, Chris & Mark Riley

Welcome/introductions

Approval of August Meeting Minutes August meeting minutes were not yet distributed. They will be approved at October meeting.

Financial Report – Kevin Montgomery

As of 8/31/24, of the \$3,500 grant, \$1,235 of Words & Music expenses was used – leaving us with \$2,264.20 for restricted grant funds remaining.

Restricted grant funds:	2,264.20
Unrestricted funds:	<u>2,352.44</u>
Total Ending Cash	\$4,616.64

OLD BUSINESS / COMMITTEES (old business)

Executive

Sam reminded the board that nominations of new board members are needed.

The November meeting date was moved to November 18; Nov. 11 being Veterans Day and library is closed.

Membership: Communications

Kevin has an updated membership list and can help with updating memberships. There is a link on the WNA website where people can enter PayPal and MailChimp to pay/sign-up. We need see how to verify new emails being submitted to MailChimp. Heila will investigate. Sam suggested members email friends to encourage them to join and direct them to the links where they can sign-up.

Sam and Heila presented a rough draft of text that will go on the new WNA flyer for people to look over. When finalized Heila will design a flyer with photos to print at Syracuse Blueprint in time for the Westcott Fair.

Beautification

Neighborhood clean-up: Upcoming clean-up on Saturday, September 14 at 9am, then breakfast at 10am.

Kiosk Update work is in progress. Zeke Leonard has purchased materials (receipts on Sam's credit card). The goal is to have it completed by the Fair.

City Aid for Gardening?

It was noted that the City has allocated up to \$25,000 towards a Community Gardens in Eastwood. —. We asked "Why not us?" Perhaps WNA can identify an appropriate project for the Common Council's attention.

Greenspace Inventory

Sam has mapped "leftover" green spaces in the Westcott area. Last year the Community Gardeners received \$5,000 from TNT for the Harvard Place Garden. Are there ways to plant and/pr beautify some of these identified parcels? Kate Auwaerter with the city will put us in touch with people who will help us with mapping.

New: Decorate Westcott for Holidays

Ryla Daley brought up the need for holiday decorations in the Westcott business district this year. Per Sam, overhangs are prohibited. Flags and Banners are appropriate. Ryla suggested fresh greenery. She has a supply source and a garland machine and could hold a workshop on making wreaths and garlands – then use for Westcott décor. Wire wreaths to trees. Let store owners have some to hang. Would need donations of supplies; ribbon, florist wire, etc.

Sam said there was lamenting about lack of holiday décor for Westcott but more in the idea of lights. Perhaps WNA or local businesses could raise donations for solar light strings. Members raised concerns that different religions and traditions being represented, and there was discussion about what types of decorations would be practical and appropriate. It was suggested that Ryla start a committee on this and report back. Gabriel offered to help. Dorcas offered ideas.

Events (WNA Sponsored/Partnered)

Upcoming Events

9/17/24	Greater Westcott Neighborhood Public Meeting on Safety and Crime
9/21/17	WNA Monthly Litter Pickup
9/22/24	WNA Table at Westcott Street Cultural Fair

Recap of Poetry

The event was moved from August to September due to Georgia's award acceptance in DC. Third Poetry Open Mic at Mom's Diner was Sunday 9/8. About 25 people attended. Over two years of the event there have been 19 poets featured, plus more who have read at the open mic. This has been a great effort Georgia, and by Eva Essi and her staff at Mom's Diner. After the last reading, Sam and Georgia making a poetry book from of the series. They'll look further into the feasibility of this and report back.

Upcoming: Westcott Street Cultural Fair (9/22)

It is important to man the WNA table at the Fair – and a sign-up sheet was passed around. Updates were given on table, tent, and supplies. Carol has the entry and set-up permit – and will send to Gayln and Sam.

Upcoming: Halloween Dog Parade (10/26) Kim McCoy

Band is confirmed - \$1000. If Ok with the Second line Syracuse performers, 11 a.m. was approved instead of 10 as starting time. Kate Palermo is designing posters to be made in time for the Fair. Summit Credit Union on board for funds to purchase cider and doughnuts.

Last year we had goodie bags and raffle tickets – donated by local merchants. Kim and Susannah are looking into this for this year. We discussed pros & cons about costume contest, and it was decided not to have any competitive event but to have a showcase instead – like a Hollywood red carpet. There will be either a stage walk, or some other place for with owners and their dogs to show off.

The band, **Second-Line Syracuse** New Orleans jazz band is worthy of publicity of itself which could give double advantage.

If \$\$\$ still available – a music pop-up?

There will still be some money available in the CNYArts Grant after the parade, so some other small events can be scheduled. Adam raised the possibility of getting a mobile stage trailer, perhaps to apply for one at Parks & Recreations desk. Paul Harvy stepped out and called to find out cost of rental – which would be in the \$800-\$1000. That is more than our budget would allow but worth considering for the future.

The financing of the summer poetry events was \$1400 and of the Oct 26 event \$1200; which mean the as much as \$900 may be available from the 2024 CNY Arts grant.

OLD BUSINESS Cont...

Crime and Public Safety Meeting.

After the August meeting in which crime was discussed and the Board voted for WNA to host a public meeting, Common Councilor Corey Williams went to the mayor and very quickly the city joined in this effort. Dorcas Rodriguez secured Erwin Methodist's sanctuary (including sound amplification system) for the event. Attending will be the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Police Chief, Family Protection Services, Family Court, etc. Sam will make the introduction and Deputy Mayor Sharon Owens will moderate. WNA is drafting a list of people's questions ahead of time and will distribute this to the speakers to make the meeting run more smoothly.

Among the most common recent crimes: car thefts (especially Kia & Hyundai), business and home break-ins, package thefts, vandalism. Much of this has been done by two groups of kids in our neighborhood. This is a continuing problem as the juveniles can't be prosecuted. The police can identify and arrest them, but then they are sent home.

Artbox on Harvard

Susie and Adam, who are involved, aren't present at the meeting for in-depth discussion. Andrea volunteered to help set up. Talk about rotating artists - put out a call for all-artists?

Update on Barry Park-/ Meadowbrook Detention Basin

Updates will be given at the TNT meeting on Sept 10. Members can email questions for the meeting to Paul Harvey ahead of time. Andy Leahy has done in-depth research and discovered that the City of Syracuse owns most of the woods east of the basin. Our past conversations assumed the County was owner of that land. We need to update that information. The City and Shannon Harty, Commissioner of WEP need to be partners in the maintenance of this area. Syracuse University also owns part of the woods.

Music Series in Rise n Shine parking lot on September Thursdays

The first concert in the was very successful, drawing a lot of people who had a good time. There were only two complaints about trash. Sam will inform Joe Discroll and Mike Haggerty.

727 Comstock Protected Site Designation and SU new dorm project update

The City Planning Commission currently in session (Sept. 9). Nine houses were torn down. S.U. original plan to build a 2 pavilion- 4 story dorm. This design has been enlarged to 5 pavilion- 4-6 story dorm. This will be the largest dorm ever built on campus and will require tearing down former Estabrook House at 727 Comstock. The Syracuse Landmark Preservation board has designated this house as a Protected Site due to its history and architecture. Now negotiations are taking place about the future of the house, and the current dorm plan as presented. SU would like to open the new dorm in fall 2026. Mike Stanton of SEUNA wrote a letter requesting S.U. to provide large meeting spaces in the dorm, to curtail parties outside. Showed examples of new houses with courtyards. The City Planning Commission will hear the application but is unlikely to approve until the fate 727 Comstock is resolved by the Common Council.

Syracuse University has been shifting the location of residences for undergraduates to bring them closer to the main campus. They will vacate undergraduate student housing on South campus and moving them closer to main campus. Only athletes will be housed at Skytop. Councilor Pat Hogan is pushing S.U. for plans about the 727 Comstock but remains uncertain of the university's commitment. The University maintains the house in very bad condition (many others contest this claim). The University estimated 10 million to restore, but preservation experts say this is a grossly exaggerated number.

NEW BUSINESS

University-Westcott National Register Historic District

The National Register nomination was formally submitted September 2 by the City and the Preservation Association of Central New York. The City and the Preservation Association of Central NY (PACNY) are hoping for a December review before the State Review Board that could lead to approval of the designation.

Motorcycle noise in neighborhood

There is a marked increase of 'Quality of Life Disrupting Noise' in the neighborhood. We recurring incidents and complaints about groups of loud motorcycles and vehicles revving engines. Police can only follow up when locations are provided, and they can try to locate the noisemakers. Follow dirt bikes to their garage? Not much the WNA can do except complain to police and advocate for more enforcement.

Stickley House Phase II construction to begin after Fair

The Stickley House will be open for tours during the Fair. This will be the last time to see the interior before it is restored. Restoration and construction in the interior is scheduled to begin sometime in the fall.

CNY Arts Grant. Sam just received notice that it is time to reapply. They have much less funding than last year due to budget cuts. The Board agreed we should still apply for what we can get to continue “Westcott Words and Music.”

OPEN DISCUSSION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Issue: The future of UNPA and SEUNA

At the Westcott Leadership roundtable it was noted that both UNPA and SEUNA – long effective organizations in the University and Greater Westcott Neighborhood - are struggling with low w memberships and clearly defining their missions. At the WLR meeting the idea of merging organizations was briefly discussed. SEUNA as a 503C – a merger could help WNA get more funding. Sam will talk to Mike Stanton about this. WNA has done away with specific boundary requirements for membership and this has increased the membership, participation, and vitality of the organization. While WNA and SEUNA now overlap on boundaries, SEUNA is mostly focused on a set number of issues of importance to owner-occupants in the neighborhood. It is far from certain that the purposes and approaches of the organizations are the same. Cooperation is easy; merger might not be.

Efforts to reach out to local businesses were briefly discussed. Sam brought up the idea of WNA doing a Go-Fund-Me for Westcott Businesses in response to losses from robberies. This will be investigated.

Different but related issue: More about housing issues affecting the community:

Sheraton is now a dorm. Crown Plaza switching to apartments. Genesee Grand purchased by apartment developer. Community is losing house stock to AirB&Bs. Less houses for people who want to live and work here. Marty Masterpole just levied an Occupancy Tax to AirB&Bs. Does that include VRBO? Positive collection build-in for AirB&Bs?

Barry Park Association is planning a meeting Oct.2 at fieldhouse. Meadowbrook and Barry Park issues open. They planned to do art in the street near Ed Smith to “reinvent” the intersection, but this has been stopped due to ongoing road-construction.

Adjournment

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

Submitted by Heila Martin-Person