



WAMM CIVIC ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY MEETING

December 10, 2025

Bering Memorial United Church of Christ

MINUTES

Lane Llewellyn, President, called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

1. Introduction of Officers

Board members present included: Lane Llewellyn, President; Mary Alice Carpenter, 1st Vice President; Maria Morandi, 2nd Vice President, and Kevin Sokol-White, Treasurer.

2. Order of Business

2.1. Introduction of Guests.

Lane Llewellyn expressed that the time had come for passing of the baton to a new WAMM President and Board, and reminded the members present that she was retiring from the Board but not moving away from WAMM.

Lane introduced Cole Wilbur, Infrastructure and Planning Coordinator for the Office of Council Member Abbie Kamin, who had requested to give a brief presentation and District C updates. He asked to talk at the beginning of the meeting due to other commitments. Lane asked Mr. Wilbur to introduce himself to the audience and then proceed with his presentation.

2.2. Presentation by Cole Wilbur, Infrastructure and Planning Coordinator for the Office of Council Member Abbie Kamin.

Mr. Wilbur indicated that he has been with the office of Council Member Abbie Kamin since 2022, starting as an intern for 7 months and moving to permanent, full-time positions. He came to the meeting covering for Anna Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff, who could not attend.

He told the audience that COH investigators have determined the diagonal parking spaces in front of the former laundromat are illegal, as they lack permits. Similarly with the parking spaces used by delivery trucks on the Mt. Vernon side of the building. District C is working with Park Houston and the Department of Public Works to address this issue.

Placement of a speed limit sign on Lovett Blvd. will be done. Anna Smith is following up on the placement of the sign. Kevin Sokol-White indicated that he had received two different responses from COH personnel regarding placement of the sign, one was positive and one was negative.

Lane Llewellyn asked if there were any news about fixing the alley that floods due to an old, leaking pipe that should have been sealed or removed. Mr. Wilbur responded that he did not have any news but will follow up on the issue. Lane thanked him and remarked that it is an important, long-standing problem for surrounding property owners.

Mr. Wilbur reported that a publicly available data dashboard (SAFEWatch Houston) recently launched by the COH provides information on firearm-related injuries compiled from data collected by multiple organizations such as Level 3 trainers, hospitals, law enforcement, and others. Development of the dashboard was strongly supported by Abbie Kamin, who is highly committed to gun safety. To this end, she will continue distributing gun locks and safes.

Finally, Mr. Wilbur presented Lane Llewellyn with a certificate of recognition from District C for her over 12 years of contributions to WAMM and District C. Lane thanked Mr. Wilbur, Abbie Kamin, and the staff at District C. She asked whether anybody needed to speak to Mr. Cole, and to do so on the side (Daan Hekma indicated he did).

Lane Llewellyn reported that she had some good news and some bad news. The good news was that she brought homemade Christmas cookies and 3-leches cake to share at the end of the meeting. The bad news was that she could not bring coffee because the coffee machine at the local Starbucks was broken.

2.3. Voting to Confirm New President and Board Members through December 31, 2026

Lane indicated that this was the most important event at the meeting: the confirmation of slate of members for the new Board. She read the applicable sections of the bylaws for election of officers (Article V – Section 8). She nominated:

1. Kevin Sokol-White to serve as president until the next regular election to be held in December 2026.
2. Mary Alice Carpenter 1st Vice-President will continue in this position and does not require a nomination.

Ann Miller nominated the new President. The nomination was seconded by Sasha Baab. It was approved unanimously by the members present.

Lane Llewellyn turned over the meeting to the new President, Kevin Sokol-White.

Kevin Sokol-White thanked Lane Llewellyn for her work and dedication to strengthening the WAMM Civic Association. He also thanked Maria Morandi, Mary Alice Carpenter, and Diane Baker for their contributions.

Kevin indicated that he is comfortable with the organization, especially its financial stability.

He asked the other candidates for positions on the Board to stand up and describe themselves briefly:

3. Linda Starr, candidate for 2nd Vice President, has been a long-term resident of the WAMM area, owning a townhome at the corner of Harold St. and Mt. Vernon.
4. Chis Sokol-White, candidate for Treasurer is Kevin's husband; he has led the work on the esplanades and the trash pickup campaigns.
5. Daan Hekma, candidate for Secretary is a 5-year long resident of WAMM with a home on Marshall and Yupon St. He is now retired. He met Kevin and Chris at one of the trash pickup events.

Kevin reminded those present that the new Board will be interim through December 2026. He requested nominations. Tom Dawson moved to approve the 3 candidates for their respective positions. Kevin Begnaud seconded. The nominations were approved unanimously

2.4. President's Remarks About Activities for the Coming Year.

Kevin Sokol-White indicated that the next quarterly meeting will be held in March. He will send the agenda in advance of the meeting. He is also going to talk about the expansion of the WAMM Gazette and will ask for feedback.

In terms of the treasurer report, he indicated that:

1. The association is in a solid financial position.
2. The current cash balance is approximately \$20,000. In large part this is due to the efforts of the prior Board at keeping expenses low.
3. Membership during the last year has increased. Historically, the maximum number of paid members was 92. This year, paid memberships reached 104 members, including:
 - a. 4 sponsors (Park Condos, AOS, Covenant House, and Bradshaw-Carter). Kevin is working with other potential sponsors.
 - b. 5 business members (James Heyland, Pondicheri, Scorpion Studios, Southern Yankee, and Sweetgreen).
 - c. 87 single family property homeowners

d. 8 renters.

He is hoping to come back to the Board with an assessment of the membership potential for all properties. Bill Kelly is the contact for the Parc condos, and he (Kevin) will work with Bill to increase their membership numbers. Ann Miller indicated that there are 184 units at the Parcs. Kevin added that he is planning to do something similar with the Tremont Tower; Tom Dawson serves on their board.

2026 Membership dues are payable in January 2026. He added that he forgot to mention the Residences at La Colombe D'Or and the Hanover, although the later could be a hard sell.

He will be promoting the use of Zelle and credit cards for paying dues.

Lane Llewellyn indicated that she wished to become a sponsor for 2025 and wrote a check for \$500.

David Soderberg described that he is in a civic organization in Wisconsin that uses PayPal.

Maria Morandi said that payment by check does not incur credit card fees, unlike credit card payment using Square. When the credit card payments were set up with Square, their fees were the lowest of any other provider, including PayPal, but they have been increasing significantly. Credit card payment providers may need to be revisited to find the lowest fees.

Kevin Sokol-White indicated that he would look at all details in the 2026 Budget, which he will share after the Board meeting in January. He said that sharing information is important. He will try to build a calendar of WAMM activities early in the year.

Kevin asked whether keeping the quarterly meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm is attractive to those attending. He added that together with Mary Alice Carpenter they had talked to other people about holding it later, mainly to allow more parents to attend. However, a later time appeared not to be workable. Kathy Conti asked why the day had been changed from Tuesday to Wednesday. Kevin and Lane responded that it was because of requests, although the requesters have not attended meetings on Wednesday either.

Kevin indicated that there will be a plan for social events but wants to get more feedback and wants to develop some social activity that is attractive for families with children.

He is trying to get in contact with the University of St. Thomas (UST) and neighboring civic associations. He is increasing contact with the Neartown Association. Lane

Llewellyn mentioned that UST wanted \$500 to provide a space for WAMM quarterly meetings. Maria Morandi added that WAMM had one of their meetings at their campus before UST was asked about providing the venue and they responded that there would be a charge.

Daan Hekma asked which meeting times would be preferred by families with children. Mary Alice responded that she feared changing the meeting time to later in the evening would not result in more attendance. Kevin indicated he is opened to holding the meetings at 7pm. David Soderberg indicated that, for him, holding the meeting at 7pm is doable, but no later than that. Linda Starr suggested to do polling about meeting days and times. Kevin responded that we would do a poll.

Kevin asked the attendees whether they like having speakers at the quarterly meetings. He wanted to move the speakers towards the end of the meeting because he felt we are always rushed when discussing association's business. There was a uniform response that they like having invited speakers.

Kevin continued saying that the Board will be working on the 2026 plan during monthly meetings for the next 3 or 4 months. Strategies to improve membership will be a priority. There is a need for specifying in more details the roles of block captains and set up a newsletter committee. Members need to come forward and volunteer.

Kevin asked Chris Sokol-White to give an update about ongoing activities. Chris indicated that:

1. The application submitted to maintain the esplanades was well received and that the COH had only requested a clarification which will be submitted shortly.
2. The esplanades have been adopted with the help of the COH. Watering for the first 3-6 month will be paid for, but it will be free after that.
3. The busted-up curve of the esplanade at Yoakum/Hawthorne has been repaired by the city. Kevin had been told that no repairs would be done by the city or even a privately paid contractor for the last 2 years. Mr. Wilbur and others helped resolved the issue. Somebody at COH waved fees and fast tracked the application for adoption with the help of the Parks Department.
4. Adoption of the Lovett Triangle is in the works. It will be discussed at the next Board meeting. There is no water source in the Triangle. Bill Kelly indicated that the city could bring water by truck. Chris responded that the Triangle will be planted with native plants, thus relying on rain for most of the watering.

Lane Llewellyn asked about details of the grant application. Chris responded that some fundraising will be necessary. David Soderberg indicated that Wisconsin has a pay program for volunteer hours and asked whether Houston does. The response was negative, but the COH helped by expediting the adopt an esplanade process.

Kathy Conti asked whether new contractors will be doing anything on the esplanades or the Triangle. Chris responded they will not be using them as staging areas, unlike in the past.

Kevin explained about the arborist that had helped with the trees on the esplanades will be consulted about removing anything from the Triangle Park.

Kevin informed that Mathew, his contact with the Southeast Development project, told him that the northbound lane closure in Yoakum is only temporary. Kevin described to him the esplanades projects. He hopes that in the future Southeast may help support the esplanades. Currently, Southeast is laying the 2nd level of the 2-floor parking area. There will be nothing below ground level. Dumpsters are inside the parking garage. There are two entrances, one on Hawthorne St., and another on Lovett.

Kevin continued explaining that Skanska is negotiating with the TIRZ about some tax abatement for their Starling project. It will have 30,000 square feet of retail space. They have been approached by a boutique grocery company. Linda Starr asked Kevin about his contacts with Skanska.

Kevin explained the formation of the WAMM Business Coalition that includes several businesses north of the Charity Guild, as well as 3 police officers and Covenant House, in addition to him. They have been discussing crime issues and assaults in the area and talking to HPD about improving security. McDonald's has the worst problems. There was a recent event where they took pictures of an assailant and sent them to HPD; the assailant entered Sweetgreen and physically assaulted the manager. Most recently, an individual was rolling joints in the parking lot. Pictures were sent around and the individual was recognized. Kevin will be talking to Covenant House to determine if they know him. A group of individuals set a tree on fire at the Pizza Hut. One of them was a young adult from Covenant House. It was reported to Covenant House and they were responsive. Kevin continues to talk to Covenant House about these issues.

Ann Miller said that this level of incidents is the same as before Covenant House moved into their new campus. Kevin responded that he is in communication with the new leadership team at Covenant House, and they seem to be more focused and responsive. Kevin asked everybody to be patient because they are overwhelmed to some extent. Lane Llewellyn added that their corporate leadership appears to be employing new fundraising strategies. Lane has seen advertisements on TV requesting youth sponsorships for \$99/month. Somebody in the audience replied that nothing will change. Kevin responded that he is very positive. Unlike Lane, Kevin thinks they have a plan and just need time to make it work. Anthony Flynn will be speaking to their board and putting a good word for WAMM membership. He will be inviting WAMM to hold their quarterly meeting at Covenant House, probably in June.

David Arpin asked whether the level of crime has increased since the new Covenant House campus started accepting young adults. Kevin responded that he has a good rapport with Eugene Hall, the director of the day program, and he (Eugene) is very responsive. There is a general sense that the level of crime has increased but many of these problems are not caused by young adults residing or accessing day-only programs at Covenant House. Chris Sokol-White added that a lot of unhoused people are being pushed out of downtown due to the homeless programs being implemented by the mayor. So, as they are pushed out of downtown they move into other areas such as Montrose. Ann Miller added that part of these efforts by the mayor relates to the upcoming World Soccer Cup. In addition, people who are inclined to violence are not likely to go to Covenant House. Lane commented that she does not want to be misinterpreted. She (Lane) supports Covenant House, but they are yet to explain their plan in terms of working with the community.

Mary Alice Carpenter explained the needs of the newsletter and asked for any volunteers that can contribute content and/or to become members of the Newsletter Committee. Those interested should send her an email. Kevin added that they are open to feedback for the newsletter. Sasha Baab indicated that he has a degree in journalism and is interested in the newsletter.

Kevin reminded everybody to use the 311 app. It is fast, easy to use, and they are very responsive.

Kevin asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53pm.