

Link to WHNC Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/spokanewesthills/>

WHNC City of Spokane page: <https://my.spokanecity.org/neighborhoods/councils/west-hills/>

WHNC Website: <https://westhills.spokaneneighborhoods.org/>

ONS Newsletter: <https://my.spokanecity.org/neighborhoods/news>

WHNC email: whnc99224@gmail.com

WHNC Meeting August 12, 2025

Meeting Recording: <https://westhills.spokaneneighborhoods.org/documents/>

55 Neighbors in Attendance including board members Chair Robert Thompson, Vice chair Ryan Oelrich, Treasurer Paul Bundy, Secretary Bryn McNabb, CA Representative Kathy Hagy, CA Representative Alternative and Clean Up Coordinator Mike Gifford.

Also in Attendance were City Council President Betsy Wilkerson, District 2 City Councilman Paul Dillon, and Interim District 2 City Councilperson Shelby Lambdin

1. Meeting called to order at 6:01 by Robert Thompson
2. Neighborhood Vote taken to record the meeting
 - a. Vote passed, meeting recorded
3. June meeting minutes given by Bryn McNabb
4. Discussion of Bylaws
 - a. Required to hold quarterly meeting
 - b. Ryan Oelrich on bylaws – we meet every other month, need to update bylaws
 - i. Elections typically in December but bylaws call for elections in fourth meeting of the year
 - ii. Mike Gifford: originally met every month, he was part of creation of WHNC
 1. When interest fell off, they moved to 4 times a year meetings, then moved to every two years they would have elections
 2. Want to move election nominations into October and then do actual elections in December so new board can start in Jan 2026
 3. We are due for an election at the current meeting, want the neighbors to vote on that being moved to October instead

4. New board would not be implemented until Jan. 2026 even if we did elections today
5. Ryan moves for executive team to move elections to October 2025
 - a. Mike seconds
 - b. Voice majority vote taken, no objections, motion passed unanimously
5. Neighborhood Resource Officer Micah Prim – Public Safety Updates
 - a. Micah email: mprim@spokanepolice.org
 - b. Crime stats updates
 - i. Sunset and Rustle
 1. Code enforcement Monday and Tuesday working to mitigate issues
 - a. Trees near motel 6 are actively being cut down and is being covered by the city
 - ii. Sunset and Lindeke warrant arrest made
 1. Want to connect them with services and programs are being developed
 2. He works with social worker from catholic charities, Christine
 3. Micah has been working with her to talk to these people to try and help get them help and housing
 - iii. Patrol team on south side made arrest of arson suspect for fire set at People's Park
 - c. Areas of concern discussed with Micah
 - d. Neighbor Questions for Micah:
 - i. Does SPD work with railroad safety officials?
 1. The answer is yes but railroad doesn't have many officers, so it makes it difficult to coordinate responses
 - ii. What should someone do if they see someone actively using drugs?
 1. 911, 311, 311 app, Crime Check.
 - a. Active emergency, ongoing unsafe situation, concerns about a child, etc. call 911
 - b. Otherwise call code enforcement, crime check, etc.
 - c. HOT team can go to certain locations
 - iii. What's happening across from sunset market?
 1. Encampment has been around for about 2 weeks, recordings have been taken

2. Micah made an arrest there recently, but will continue monitoring the area
 - iv. Calls made about the area near the arboretum behind catalyst and no response made
 1. Other neighbors have also called about it
 2. New set of codes that law enforcement is working through
 - a. Trying to give people a reasonable amount of time to get help, etc.
 - b. Try to get social workers into those areas and get those people help
 - v. Can we get a link to those codes to be posted on the WHNC site?
 1. They will be posted on city municipal codes website
 2. Link: <https://my.spokanecity.org/smc/?Chapter=18.05>
 - vi. Urban forestry was called and they did something to move people
6. Shandra Fox and Sarah Nuss Presentation
- a. Discussion on Indian canyon road being closed
 - i. Sarah Nuss: snuss@spokanecity.org
 1. Fill in gaps about Indian canyon road situation
 2. Emergency evacuations discussion
 3. Indian canyon road is a concern because of dumping, not open for entrance/exit in case of an evacuation
 - a. What are next steps?
 - i. There are blocks placed by the county to prevent dumping, the road is not in usable condition
 - ii. Strain about who will develop the road to become usable
 - iii. Road is outside city limits but comes through city parks land
 1. Trying to work through those questions
 - iv. City doesn't oversee emergency evacuation.
That's the county's responsibility
 - b. Concerns from a neighbor about wildlife urban interface. There was a parks meeting he attended in 2023 where this road was discussed. Are there notes from that meeting?
 - i. The evacuation August 2023 was bottle necked, and people were going through the barriers there to get out of the neighborhood

4. The biggest question is about money and where this will come from.
 - a. Unlikely that the road will be used in emergency situations
- ii. Shandra Fox – Spokane County
 1. Wildfire evacuation zones are determined by fire incident commanders
 2. Routes are not pre-identified and areas are not pre-identified due to not knowing which way the fire will go
 - a. This is due to logistical constraints with fire preparedness
 - b. People need to be prepared to evacuate and know multiple routes in and out of their areas
 3. In red flag weather and in our wildlife urban interface corridor, you may not get a level 1 or 2 notice depending on when/where the fire happens
 - a. Be prepared that a level 3 notification may be the first alert given depending on the fire.
 - b. It is up to neighbors to know their evacuation routes
 - c. There are lots of places around the city and county that don't have as many entrances/exits as would be ideal for wildfires that were not considered when things were being built
 4. It is incumbent upon neighbors that we have our evac plans for ourselves
- iii. Neighbor Questions:
 1. Where is the nearest fire department for West Hills?
 - a. Browne's Addition
 2. What about the sunset bridge and us being provided a proper entrance/exit from the neighborhood?
 - a. The bridge will be shut down when repairs begin and this raises a lot of concern with neighbors for fire evacuations in particular, also for getting in/out of the neighborhood in general.
- iv. Neither of the speakers are in infrastructure so cannot immediately answer these questions
 1. The Indian canyon road is still considered a private road

- v. City has a contract with wildfire evacuation modeling to help understand the bottlenecks to better understand for development and to communicate with the county
 - 1. Public version of this platform will be available tomorrow
 - a. Neighbors can participate with us
- vi. Neighbor Questions:
 - 1. Is city or county working with railroad to clear out underbrush along their right of way
 - a. It is an ongoing conversation
 - 2. Pallet community – has the city done a fire assessment of how these homes could be a fire risk?
 - 3. Question about Watch Duty and how it could inform people of which way the fire is going and which way people should evacuate
 - a. It interfaces with our SHREK to give information to people through the Spokane emergency alert system
 - 4. Comments made about us as a neighborhood managing our own plant matter to keep ourselves and each other safe
 - 5. We have a program with Fire Department to help discuss mitigation of
 - a. Nick at FD
 - i. Link:
 - 6. Are there any other roads in the city or county that are closed due to potholes?
 - 7. How is the road private?
 - a. This is a question for the engineering department
 - i. City and county
 - b. County is not responsible for land on either side of the road
 - c. No other road closures known of for the above reasons
 - 8. Discussing last time neighborhood was evacuated, organizing as a neighborhood to help target those who are unable to evacuate themselves
 - 9. How can we organize and help those people?
 - a. West Hills has been selected to have a wildfire evacuation drill
 - b. The city will organize that and will need some neighborhood residents to help organize it

- i. Interested Neighbors should contact Sarah Nuss at snuss@spokanecity.org
 - c. The drill at Grandview/Thorpe was done this year
 - d. It has to be manageable since Sarah is an office of 1
 - e. This gives people a chance to practice, gives city and county info about bottlenecks etc.
 - f. Report from the Grandview/Thorpe drill
 - i. Neighbor comment - There was a bottleneck at the sunset bridge from this drill
- 7. SEPA action for gas station on Sunset
 - a. An email was sent out
 - i.
 - b. 2 story gas station in front of Ascenda space
- 8. SEPA action regarding St Agnes
 - a. Those were:
 - i. Sunset Bridge
 - ii. Pedestrian safety on Government Way and Sunset
 - iii. Water contamination of Latah creek
 - iv. Conflicts between vehicles and trail use
 - v. Future use and environmental spillover
 - 1. These are being passed along to CC
 - vi. For the bridge specifically they said it was based on weight not on use, but we will continue to express neighborhood concerns about the bridge
 - vii. Rob makes a motion to raise these same issues regarding the gas station
 - 1. Want to include the potential environmental concerns as it regards Ascenda
 - 2. Ryan seconds the motion, Simple voice vote taken, no objections, motion is passed unanimously
 - b. Neighbor asks questions about SEPA process and how we could continue to stay engaged with the process and if there is a possibility of staying engaged in the process of the SEPA application
 - i. SEPA comments are posted on WHNC website under documents tab
 - 1. Link to website provided at the top of the meeting minutes
- 9. Waters Meet Foundation - Pallet Shelter
 - a. Thanks to neighbors that went to public meetings with Waters Meet
 - b. Reached out to Zeke at Waters Meet about holding more meetings

c. Ryan with notes on community meeting

- i. They're on the official WHNC Facebook page and were emailed out
- ii. Waters meet responded in writing to the list of questions compiled by Ryan with further input from neighbors
- iii. Research has been done, and Ryan will give the information from all the meetings he and Rob have had with this group



- 1.
 2. Specifically, neighbors are concerned about a good neighbor agreement
- iv. Neighbor spoke to Waters Meet who said they are under no obligation to engage in a good neighbor agreement
1. Neighbor response – she spoke to Zeke and she is unsure if they know what they're doing and what their plan is
 2. She has been offered the position to run the facility and is unsure if she wants to be a part of it but will likely be on staff there
 3. Ascenda likely is not big enough to stop it
 4. She wants to meet with people running shelters and try to get insight into what will happen and who will potentially be in charge of running it
 5. Wants there to be more solutions for the neighborhood instead of living in fear
 6. Sober living Ascenda will be highly affected

d. Spokane building and planning has been met with

- i. No permits have been pulled for this specific project
- ii. Water/sewer, permits for each individual structure must be pulled as far as we know. There is a lot of work to be done on this project before it can actually begin construction.
- iii. One thing they are considering is to review this as congregate housing/living shelter
 1. No other place in Spokane has this designation
 2. We are trying to get answers on how this works
 3. In this case, bureaucracy is possibly our friend and we encourage neighbors to keep reaching out to city council, city departments, water, sewer, building, planning, etc. to have them define congregate living and how that is appropriate for this project.

4. We encourage neighbors to reach out, ask these questions, and continue to be curious about this project.

10. What can we do to form a coordinated community response?

- a. See above
- b. Questions from neighbors:
 - i. Do they have to pull permits?
 1. Yes. The area is zoned for this/the zoning has been approved.
 2. They still absolutely must pull permits and have not yet as of Thursday of last week.
 - ii. Is the operator of the facility going to be the one to pull the permits? It seemed that way per their answer.
 1. It should be Waters Meet who pulls the permits and not the operator
 2. Just to get sewer and water access will take 6-8 weeks per the city
- c. Kathy wants our NC to fact check whether anyone has written a good neighbor agreement?

11. CM Dillon on good neighbor agreements

- a. Good neighbor agreement as part of public ordinances, in effect July 30, 2025
 - i. It should apply to this facility
- b. He will follow up what this would look like for SPD and city council
- c. Problem before is they were not enforceable
- d. There is a template for what the good neighbor agreement looks like
- e. New ordinance is stronger and “has teeth”
- f. Looks at everything 20 beds and above
- g. Neighbor Questions:
 - i. What is the legal recourse?
 1. They could lose funding
 2. It is part of the signed contract between the city and the operator
 - ii. Neighbors concerned because they were told by Zeke that it would not be legally binding
 1. CM Dillon is reiterating that it is legally binding
 2. By virtue of it being in city code it is enforceable
 - iii. People have reached out and are not getting a response from their city officials so what do we do?
 1. What about the scattered sight model?

2. We're being dumped on
 - a. Response from CM Dillon
 - i. He spoke on the phone with this neighbor
 - ii. The neighbor sent an email and didn't get a response
- iv. Rob's response to the above question:
 1. We have to keep advocating for ourselves, but this may not be the best forum for that when we have our city council members speaking to us
- v. After the Waters meet site meeting CM Dillon was contacted and he set up a meeting with these neighbors
 1. Some people have received a response
- vi. Old abandoned Alberton's site proposed as a shelter and it got squashed so how did that happen?
 1. The city didn't own the building and the property owners didn't want to lease it to the city
 2. Since being designated as Muv fitness and an issue with the pool it has been sitting empty
- vii. How can we set more meetings to discuss more of these issues facing our neighborhood? Discussing more of the good neighborhood agreement? Can we get someone on the Waters meet neighborhood advisory committee?
 1. We don't know about the community advisory committee yet
 2. On holding another meeting, potentially September or as things come out
 - a. Rob thinks it's early to set a date for that but if we get more info, we can set additional meetings
 - b. Per our bylaws Ryan wants to create a subcommittee on Waters meet, Ryan makes a motion to create said subcommittee and it was seconded
 - i. Simple majority vote taken, none opposed, motion passed unanimously
 - ii. Ryan will start a list on this subcommittee and help coordinate keeping community members informed, but another neighbor is being asked to lead that group
3. Why are there so many transitional shelters coming to this area?

- a. We will get a map about the distribution
 - b. The money came from congress, the governor wants to build more housing
 - c. The money has to be used legally and this is within the purview of legality
- viii. Neighbor who came out of addiction and homelessness
 - 1. Waters Meet said they couldn't drug test because of the money coming from federal sources
 - 2. He wants Waters Meet to drug test
 - 3. President Trump EO ending crime and disorder on America's streets
 - a. To the extent permitted by law ending housing first programs to encourage drug testing at these facilities
 - b. Not sure how the EO will affect state and county law
- ix. Definition of scattered site?
 - 1. CP Wilkerson and CM Dillon
 - a. A facility of 20 people or less
 - b. Idea is that people want to end up in communities that they came from and help them reintegrate
 - c. A lot of the sites are churches and in district 3
- x. Hasn't West Hills taken on their fair share? Has the city considered us when these groups discuss these shelters?
 - 1. Per CM Dillon, if the groups own the land, they can do what they want. There is RFP and RFQ CHHS board rec to city council and that takes 60 days
- CM Dillon asks if people are familiar with Shelter me Spokane website
 - o Link to Shelter Me Spokane: <https://sheltermespokane.org/>
- 12. City Council President Betsy Wilkerson:
 - a. Map of the city where all the homeless shelters are located and it will be distributed
 - b. Tiny homes in the Valley
 - c. Sunshine facilities campus
 - d. Licensed through DSHS and are considered assisted living
 - e. Fire marshal has to sign off on Waters Meet site
 - f. On closed road at Indian Canyon
 - i. It is a private road that is barricaded and there are no barricaded city streets

13. Question from Chair Robert Thompson: Small group breakout sessions so we can discuss and use these concerns to write a neighborhood letter or continue asking questions to city council?
- a. People voted to continue asking City Council members questions for the remaining time
 - b. Will also leave posters up for anyone to write their concerns if we cannot get to their questions
 - c. Neighbor Questions:
 - i. Concerns there will be several hundred people moved into the West Hills neighborhood directed at CP Wilkerson
 - 1. She was referring to the TRACT shelter and 300 people
 - d. How many are too many in her opinion?
 - i. She believes in scattered site because of the facility she runs and there are a number of mental health facilities already in neighborhoods coexisting
 - e. Where did the money come from for these shelters?
 - i. Money came from commerce and ARPA funding, etc. Dedicated to addressing housing and homelessness 1.8 million given to Waters Meet and our understanding is that they previously owned the land
 - ii. It was set for moving to scattered site model
 - f. Seems like since they already own the land and have bought the homes that this is a done deal?
 - 1. Empire health foundation, Zeke was hired to be president
 - 2. Land was bought in 2019 and was supposed to be part of Ascenda
 - g. Asking CM Dillon and CP Wilkerson to listen to our concerns and take the neighborhood's concerns into consideration
 - i. We are skeptical and we don't have definitive answers for a lot of questions
 - ii. The answers we do have are not great regarding drug testing, the wildlife urban interface
 - 1. Please be advocates on our behalf publicly at city council and beyond
 - iii. CP Wilkerson Responds:
 - 1. A lot of what we want will be negotiated when the provider takes over and those are things that will be in the agreement
 - 2. Some of it is 100% outside of council's purview and they hear us and continue to advocate for us

- a. Waters Meet owns the land, the zoning requirements exist and there is only so much they can do
- 3. CM Dillon Responds:
 - a. Chick fil A got eliminated because of concerns about pedestrians who had been killed on 29th
 - b. A lot of things will be decided in the RFP
 - c. He encourages neighbors to continue asking questions
- h. Does the city have a hand in approving grants to catholic charities?
 - i. Not grants but some budget items that have to go through RFP process
- i. What about the expansion of catalyst? Can council put a moratorium on building and Catalyst expanding?
 - i. Rob: At CC community meeting and the site plan that was shared with WHNC in April
 - 1. Last WHNC heard from CC on the tiny homes project they have said in writing that they were not planning on moving forward with the tiny homes plan but likely still want to expand the catalyst housing at their current location
 - 2. No site plan has been submitted by CC yet
- j. Kathy as CA rep has been trying to get a moratorium regarding our bridge
 - i. We are at 25% of these shelters in our neighborhood and it feels like our socioeconomic tilt is moving toward a lot of foundations and nonprofits that do not pay taxes
 - ii. The neighbors are frustrated, and Kathy feels like City Council does not hear our concerns despite us not having services in this area except a bus route and gas station
 - iii. Wants city council to consider that the Monroe street bridge failed previously, and our bridge is on its way to that
- k. We as a neighborhood support Ascenda and we wish it could be expanded and asked why Water's meet facility couldn't be put under Ascenda control
 - i. Previously Ascenda had been told they would be able to expand
 - ii. However, the program, despite being successful and based on accountability, has been told there is no money that fits what their model is
 - iii. Ascenda works with a similar population as the Waters Meet people plan to work with and doesn't understand why we can't hold people accountable

1. Makes it difficult for Ascenda residents who are sober and trying to remain sober to have these things near them
- iv. Ascenda has multiple residents that work at the city and the county and doesn't want future neighbors to sabotage their success
 1. CP Wilkerson wants us to at least give them a chance until we get through the RFP process
14. If you want to support Ascenda buy a shirt
15. CM Dillon is going to be taking new neighborhood feedback regarding traffic calming starting this fall
 - a. Identify some spots in the neighborhood we want to see traffic calming measures
16. CP Shelby Lambdin: Interim District 2 council person for the next few months
 - a. Wants to bring a fresh set of ears to the conversations
17. Rob gives meeting recap
 - a. Email about subcommittee will be sent out
 - b. Anyone who hasn't been heard please write on poster boards, send us an email at official email, also email city council and cc WHNC email address
18. Becky Cook gives update on neighborhood picnic
 - a. Over 100 people
 - b. Thank you to Ascenda for the ice cream social
19. Grant to do updates to Whittier park have been approved
 - a. Doesn't cover the baseball diamond
20. CA updates
 - a. Still working on information for city council on the comprehensive plan
 - i. It's about a 500 page document
 - ii. Chapters 2, 6 and 10 have to be in by January and Kathy needs help
 1. Kathy to propose a plan for a subcommittee
21. Meeting adjourned 7: 41 by Rob