

Community Relations Commission

Meeting Agenda



Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2025, 4 p.m.

Council Chambers, Goshen Police & Courts, 111 E. Jefferson St.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introduction of CRC Members and Guests

- a. **MEMBERS:** E-man Monge, Lori Copsey, Angie Wentz, Tim Swartzentruber and John Dolezal.
- b. **GUESTS/SUPPORT:** Gina Leichty (Mayor), Phil Lederach (City Council Liaison), Michael Wanbaugh (Director of Administrative Affairs), Theresa Cummings (CDGB administrator) and Daniela Panetta (Lacasa)

2. Approve the Agenda

3. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Oct. 7, 2025

4. Goshen Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) Update

Presenter: Theresa Cummings

- a. Summary of CDBG program year 2024 activities and accomplishments (Newsletter)
- b. CDBG program year 2025 approved activities and budget

5. Lacasa report

Presenter: Daniela Panetta, Director of Community Building & Engagement

- a. Report on local participation at the annual NeighborWorks Community Leadership Institute in Minneapolis the previous week.
 - Attended with members of the Chamberlain Neighborhood Association.

6. 2026 Community Partnerships/Sponsorships

- a. Timeline for 2026 Community Partnership/Sponsorship
 - Partnership and sponsorship applications submitted by **Friday, Nov. 7**
 - Presentations of up to 10 minutes delivered to the CRC on **Tuesday, Dec. 2**, and **Wednesday, Dec. 3**, beginning at 4 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Police & Courts Building.
 - Executive session deliberation meeting **Tuesday, Dec. 9** at City Hall (time to be determined).

7. CRC Financial Report

8. Looking ahead

- a. First Friday's CRC participation for November Light Parade (Nov. 7)

9. Privilege of the floor

10. Adjournment



**Community Relations Commission
CITY OF GOSHEN**

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www.goshenindiana.org/crc

GOSHEN COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSIONS MEETING MINUTES – Oct. 7, 2025

Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2025 | 4 p.m.

Location: Council Chambers, Goshen Police & Courts, 111 E. Jefferson St.

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair **Michael Wanbaugh**, Director of Administrative Affairs, called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. He welcomed commissioners and guests and thanked them for their continued work to strengthen neighborhood connections and advance equity initiatives throughout Goshen.

Roll Call

- Members present: Lori Copsey, Angie Wentz, Tim Swartzentruber, John Dolezal
- Absent: E-Man Monge
- Guests: Mayor Gina Leichty, City Council Liaison Phil Lederach, Daniela Panetta (LaCasa, Director of Community Building & Engagement), Mike Keen (Hometowne Development LLC / The Bakery Group)
- Staff present: Michael Wanbaugh (Chair; Director of Administrative Affairs)
- Absent: Theresa Cummings (CDBG Administrator)

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion: To approve the Oct. 7, 2025, agenda as presented.

Outcome: Motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. Aug. 5, 2025
- b. Sept. 2, 2025

Commissioners reviewed the August and September meeting minutes included in the agenda packet.

Motion: To approve both sets of minutes as submitted.

Outcome: Motion carried unanimously.

4. LaCasa Report

Presenter: Daniela Panetta, Director of Community Building & Engagement

Panetta provided a detailed update on LaCasa's community-building work in the Chamberlain Neighborhood, focusing on the Chamberlain Gardens project. She said progress has been slow as LaCasa continues coordinating with residents and the City to determine the exact placement of raised beds on the site where the park is located. Panetta is working closely with Tanya Warren to finalize that location so planting can resume once grant funding is secured.

She reported continued collaboration with Purdue Extension, a longtime partner in the garden, noting that Purdue's financial changes have required new approaches to funding and support. Panetta said



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discussions are underway with 4-H participants to strengthen youth involvement and that she is also exploring sponsorship opportunities for long-term sustainability.

Panetta described progress in identifying potential funding sources, including LittleBig Idea Grants, for which the Chamberlain project appears to be a strong match. She said a \$500 grant and a \$2,000 grant with an \$800 match are under review and could allow for early-stage improvements once the final site layout is confirmed.

She also announced that LaCasa will lead a community delegation to the NeighborWorks America Community Leadership Institute in Minneapolis, bringing seven participants from the Chamberlain neighborhood, including Chair Wanbaugh. The three-day national conference allows local leaders to select specialized training in volunteerism, neighborhood development, and engagement strategies that can be applied locally after their return.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for LaCasa's persistence in rebuilding local partnerships and expanding leadership opportunities for neighborhood residents.

5. Presentation – Community-Led Development and Engagement

Presenter: Mike Keen, Managing Partner, Hometowne Development LLC / President, The Bakery Group

Keen, a South Bend resident and long-time neighborhood organizer, shared lessons from his "12 Steps to Town Making" model, which he has applied in redeveloping South Bend's Near Northwest Neighborhood. He described his current work transforming the Old Ward Bakery Building, now called Portage Place, into a multi-use community hub for local entrepreneurs, artists, and residents.

The 56,000-square-foot property at 906 Portage Avenue is being renovated in phases with an investment of about \$3 million to \$5 million. Keen said the goal is to create affordable, flexible spaces for small businesses and community organizations that strengthen neighborhood identity. He explained that the project builds momentum through visible, achievable progress rather than large one-time investments.

"I tell people not to wait for the big one," Keen said. "Start with something you can finish. A duplex. A storefront. Even a small corner of a park. You learn by doing, and the doing changes everything."

He emphasized local ownership and accessibility, noting that Portage Place is designed to keep opportunity within the community. "We want to make sure this stays a neighborhood project," he said.

"That means affordable rent, shared tools, and neighbors helping neighbors."

Keen's slides showed before-and-after photos of the bakery, where small studios and retail spaces are already active. He called it "a nest for up to sixty new ventures" and said the project's success depends on shared responsibility. "You can't build community from the outside," he said. "You have to do it with the people who already live there."



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He outlined several principles from his “12 Steps” framework:

- **Start where you are.** “Pick your farm,” he said. “Walk the same streets until you know every sound and smell. That’s how you learn what a place needs.”
- **Build trust through consistency.** He encouraged residents to be present and dependable. “Relationships are the real infrastructure.”
- **Keep investment local.** Work with neighborhood lenders and small developers so money stays in the community.
- **Lead with care.** “Clean, clean, clean,” he said. “If you want people to believe in a block, start by caring for it.”
- **Activate improvements quickly.** “A well-chosen tenant can do more for a block than a mural or new streetlights,” he said.

Commissioners connected Keen’s examples to Goshen’s own work. Angie Wentz said CRC’s neighborhood micro-grants play a similar role by giving residents their first chance to test an idea. Keen nodded in agreement. “Exactly,” he said. “You’re priming the pump. Once people see something working, others want to join in.”

Mayor Leichty thanked Keen for showing how incremental, resident-driven progress can build economic strength and community pride. “It’s inspiring to see what South Bend is accomplishing,” she said, “and even more meaningful to see how those lessons can help Goshen grow from within.”

6. CRC Financial Report

Chair Wanbaugh reviewed the most recent departmental budget summary through Oct. 1, 2025.

- Total 2025 CRC budget: \$206,050
- Expenditures to date: \$77,258.79 (37.5%)
- Remaining balance: \$128,791.21 (62.5%)

He noted that personnel and insurance costs remain the largest expenditures, while funds for education, promotion, and event support are largely unspent. Commissioners agreed this provides flexibility for end-of-year programming and community events. No action was required.

7. Indigenous Peoples Day Recap

Commissioners discussed the City’s 2025 Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration, held Oct. 3 in downtown Goshen as part of the First Fridays “Harvest” event. The celebration moved outdoors this year, with performances and presentations held along Main Street and inside Ignition Garage.

Lori Copsey began by noting that the event felt “very successful” and “had a different tone” than previous years, drawing in passersby who might not have entered the theater in the past. Others agreed the new location created a welcoming, open atmosphere.

Chair Wanbaugh said that while setup brought a few stressful moments, “once everyone arrived, everything fell into place.” He described the performances, traditional dress, and storytelling by **Madeline Big Bear** as “casual, engaging, and fun for everyone.” Commissioners estimated attendance at about 200 people outdoors and roughly 50 inside Ignition Garage.



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Members praised the program's interactive nature and Big Bear's ability to connect with the audience. "People stayed," Wanbaugh said. "They didn't just drift in and out. They listened, asked questions, and learned." Commissioners highlighted her discussion of local landmarks, her outreach to fourth-grade students statewide, and her reflections on how current events continue to affect Indigenous communities.

Chair Wanbaugh thanked the commission for its support and recognized **Angie Wentz** for coordinating partner tables with the Goshen Public Library, the Elkhart County Historical Museum, and Goshen College. He also thanked **Lori Copsey** for assisting with booth operations and logistics.

Commissioners agreed the event succeeded in creating a stronger connection between the City, local institutions, and residents. They credited the accessible downtown location, collaboration among partners, and the authenticity of the presentation for making it "one of the most engaging Indigenous Peoples Day events to date."

8. Looking Ahead

a. First Fridays – CRC Participation in November Light Parade (Nov. 7)

Commissioners discussed plans for CRC participation in the upcoming Goshen Light Parade, held during the November First Fridays event. Members agreed to enter a parade unit emphasizing neighborhood inclusion and community pride. Angie Wentz and Tim Swartzentruber volunteered to coordinate decorations and logistics. Commissioners discussed theme ideas and the use of a CRC banner and glow lights.

Chair Wanbaugh encouraged members to invite local youth and neighborhood representatives to walk with the group to highlight community unity.

9. Privilege of the Floor

No additional comments or public input were offered.

10. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

2025 CDBG approved activities and budget

Activity	Program	Budget	Beneficiaries
Administration & Planning	Admin & Neighborhood Outreach	\$62,000	N/A
Boys & Girls Club	Daily nutrition program	\$5,125	700
Council on Aging	Senior transportation	\$5,125	12
Elkhart County Clubhouse	Lunch program	\$4,100	125
Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network	Healthy eating program	\$19,500	100
Maple City Health Care Center	Affordable health care	\$5,125	100
Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center	Supplement fees - scholarships	\$10,250	15
Single Unit Housing Rehab	Owner occupied rehab	\$68,000	4
Energy Conservation Multi-Unit Housing	Solar improvements	\$112,172	12
Homeownership Assistance	Downpayment Assistance	\$50,750	3
Housing Counseling	HUD housing counseling	\$1,000	3
TOTAL BUDGET		\$343,147	1,074



A home sold
using CDBG
Home
Ownership
Assistance
funds

CDBG Program Year 2024 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)

2024 CDBG

Helping the Homeless >>>

First Light Mission

First Light Mission's healthy eating program was able to support 110 individuals with nutritious meals during their stay at the homeless shelter. **New in 2025! The homeless shelter currently has 29 beds and through rehabilitation to their existing building will bring their bed service up to 43.**

On the third Thursday morning of every month First Light Mission hosts Coffee & Compassion to raise awareness, give shelter tours, and a chance to meet and talk with those facing homelessness, RSVP to director@firstlightmission.org.



30 YEARS SERVING
THE HOMELESS

11 activities were funded by CDBG

Helping Goshen's low-and moderate income residents

In program year 2024, the City of Goshen received Community Development Block Grant funding in the amount of \$341,988. Through an application process, the funds were dedicated to 11 activities. Each activity met a National Objective, was deemed eligible, and helped low and moderate income clientele.

Public services, which are subject to a 15% cap, made up \$49,625 of the overall budget. Activities included access to primary healthcare, mental health supportive services, early childhood education, transportation and daily nutrition programs.

Administration and planning activities, which are subject to a 20% cap, represented \$64,000 of the budget and were responsible for the implementation of all activities.

The remaining CDBG funding was dedicated to housing activities which were: single and multi unit rehab, and homeownership assistance. The budget for these 3 housing activities was \$228,363, which anticipated assisting 23 affordable housing units and / or homeowners and benefitting low/mod clientele.

**Nearly half of
Goshen's residents
earn <80% average
median income and
are classified as
low/mod.**

Further detailed in this report is the community impact these 11 activities have had on the residents of Goshen. The objective was to assist over 1,000 beneficiaries, which was met before the end of third quarter.

Goshen has been a CDBG entitlement community since 1981. 2024 marked our 43rd anniversary of receiving funds. CDBG has been instrumental in improving lives, affordable housing, and public infrastructure in neighborhoods.

Featured – Affordable Health Care >>>

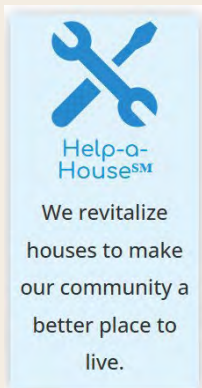
Pictured right is one of four medical clinics of Maple City Health Care

Northside Community Health Center, featured on the right, was first established in 1988 with \$25,000 of assistance from CDBG grant funds which were used to rehab the old Northside Fire Station to establish a health care center principally for the benefit of low- and moderate-income residents of the City of Goshen. Maple City Health Care has since expanded into four locations throughout the City and has helped countless residents get access to health care. Patients can receive health care at low to no cost under their reduced fee health care subsidy program, which bases the cost of services on what they can afford. CDBG funds help offset the cost for a portion of these designated beneficiaries. Maple City Health Care Center helps approximately **10,000** patients each year obtain quality health care. In fact, it is estimated that 1 in 4 Goshen residents benefit from this amazing program! We are grateful for our partnership between CDBG and Maple City Health Care and assisting in their longstanding mission to help the citizens of Goshen.



Help-a-House >>>

In the past 20 years over 250 households have received assistance!



Lacasa of Goshen has been a long-term partner with CDBG providing access to homeowner rehabilitation at lower, more affordable costs, in the form of interest free loans. This program enables income qualified homeowners a chance to make necessary repairs and sustain a stable living environment for years to come! Owner-occupied rehabilitation preserves existing housing at a much lower cost than new construction, and rehabilitation encourages private investment in maintenance and rehabilitation by neighbors. This program assists elderly residents and people with special needs to continue living in their homes and neighborhoods. The objective is to support the retention of decent housing, with the outcome of affordable rehabilitation services.



More than Meals >>>

Goshen Clubhouse serves nearly 55,000 snack & meals!!

The Boys & Girls Club of Goshen has been a longstanding partner of Goshen's CDBG program and provides after school programming for students. This programming includes snacks and meals, educational classes, physical activities, engaging science and math programs, as well as music and art too! There is never a lack of something to do at the Clubhouse. This past program year the Goshen Clubhouse served 54,846 snacks and meals to participants free of charge! That is a lot of food and nurturing for the children of our community. Over 75% of Clubhouse members are classified as low- and moderate-income families. This program not only provides food security, but also gives them access to good nutrition alongside activities that will foster growth both physically and mentally.

access to health care.



Beneficiary Story



Homeownership – an obtainable and sustainable goal!



Homebuying can be daunting, even for someone who is about to turn 49, like our featured beneficiary on the left. She realized her current living situation of renting from a family member would not be workable in the long-term and needed to look for something she could afford within her budget. She enrolled in Lacasa's Homeownership Assistance Program for CDBG downpayment assistance and her realtor went to work finding housing options within her price range. The third option her realtor presented was "**the one**" and she loved it immediately. Now she is a proud first-time homeowner and joyfully settling into her new place thanks to assistance from Lacasa and CDBG!



"Home is the nicest word there is."

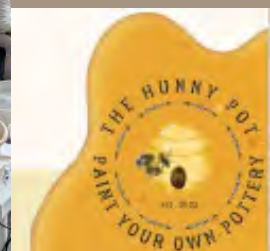
Laura Ingalls Wilder

Activities for Seniors >>>

Council on Aging does not just offer transportation for seniors. They also sponsor many fun events for area seniors to get out and enjoy!

Council on Aging offers transportation services to elderly for access to doctor appointments, pharmacy trips, banking, and grocery shopping. CDBG funds help cover these trips for local seniors. Last year they made approximately 16,815 trips assisting seniors in the area. In addition, Council on Aging also offers other services such as in home care, tax preparation, medicare counseling, medicare savings programs, and activities for life enrichment.

Some activities featured on the right are the Flower Bouquet Workshop with Joy Blooms, Chefs for Seniors where you can learn to make healthy meals, and a Pottery Wheel Program which offers wheel throwing for beginners and all skill levels hosted by The Hunny Pot.



Cora Dale House

CDBG funding helps support the lunch program at the Elkhart County Clubhouse, also known as the Cora Dale House. This organization is a working support community serving adults with serious mental illness. Support services include job placement, assistance with finding safe and affordable housing, help with accessing primary health care and mental health care. And one of the most important daily activities in the life of the Clubhouse is preparing and sharing a lunch together with members and staff working side-by-side in the kitchen and dining together.

This year they served over 5,000 meals with 130 club members participating. Average daily attendance was 30 people. CDBG funding, along with donations and a food program grant of \$9,000, helped cover the costs to supply these vital meals.



Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center

CDBG funding is used to offer a “scholarship” program to offset the cost of tuition for income eligible students attending Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center. This year 14 students benefitted from the grant program that was also partly funded by the United Way and private donations too. The program provides assessibility and affordability to quality pre-school education for low-income families who would not normally be able to enroll their children due to cost. These programs prepare students for kindergarten educationally, socially, and mentally while helping relieve financial stress for parents. Lee Wheeler, Director, explained that every dollar invested now will save a community \$6-\$8 (per dollar invested) in the future because studies have shown that when the children are older, they are less likely to need services as a result of their early education. CDBG funding alone will save Goshen approximately \$79,950-\$106,600 in the future. CDBG is proud to come alongside their efforts!



Theresa Cummings
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Budget Report Account Summary

For Fiscal: 2025 Period Ending: 10/31/2025

		Original Total Budget	Current Total Budget	Period Activity	Fiscal Activity	Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)	Percent Remaining
Fund: 1101 - GENERAL FUND							
Expense							
Department: 01 - COMMUNITY RELATIONS							
1101-5-01-4110130	CRC/FULLTIME PERSONNEL	110,000.00	110,000.00	0.00	45,736.12	64,263.88	58.42 %
1101-5-01-4110151	CRC/INCREMENT	500.00	500.00	0.00	200.00	300.00	60.00 %
1101-5-01-4130100	CRC/SOCIAL SECURITY	6,850.00	6,850.00	0.00	2,618.41	4,231.59	61.78 %
1101-5-01-4130200	CRC/MEDICARE	1,600.00	1,600.00	0.00	612.40	987.60	61.73 %
1101-5-01-4130300	CRC/RETIREMENT	15,650.00	15,650.00	0.00	444.16	15,205.84	97.16 %
1101-5-01-4130501	CRC/INSURANCE	44,350.00	44,350.00	425.92	16,550.10	27,799.90	62.68 %
1101-5-01-4130700	CRC/CELL PHONE	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	400.00	800.00	66.67 %
1101-5-01-4130701	CRC/CLOTHING/BOOT/FITNESS	200.00	200.00	0.00	34.32	165.68	82.84 %
1101-5-01-4210500	CRC/OTHER OFFICE EXPENSES	200.00	200.00	0.00	54.23	145.77	72.89 %
1101-5-01-4310501	CRC/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	200.00	1,300.00	86.67 %
1101-5-01-4310502	CRC/CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	3,000.00	3,000.00	1,200.00	2,800.00	200.00	6.67 %
1101-5-01-4320301	CRC/TRAVEL EXPENSES	3,000.00	3,000.00	430.00	579.00	2,421.00	80.70 %
1101-5-01-4330501	CRC/OTHER PRINTING & ADVERTISI	1,000.00	1,000.00	485.25	1,508.27	-508.27	-50.83 %
1101-5-01-4390501	CRC/EVENTS EXPENSES	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	8,062.95	1,937.05	19.37 %
1101-5-01-4390910	CRC/EDUCATION & PROMOTION	7,000.00	7,000.00	922.67	922.67	6,077.33	86.82 %
Department: 01 - COMMUNITY RELATIONS Total:		206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%
Expense Total:		206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%
Fund: 1101 - GENERAL FUND Total:		206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%
Report Total:		206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%

Group Summary

Departmen...	Original Total Budget	Current Total Budget	Period Activity	Fiscal Activity	Variance		
					Favorable (Unfavorable)	Percent Remaining	
Fund: 1101 - GENERAL FUND							
Expense							
01 - COMMUNITY RELATIONS	206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%	
Expense Total:	206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%	
Fund: 1101 - GENERAL FUND Total:	206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%	
Report Total:	206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%	

Fund Summary

Fund	Original Total Budget	Current Total Budget	Period Activity	Fiscal Activity	Variance	Percent Remaining
					Favorable (Unfavorable)	
1101 - GENERAL FUND	206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%
Report Total:	206,050.00	206,050.00	3,463.84	80,722.63	125,327.37	60.82%