



**Community Relations Commission
CITY OF GOSHEN**

202 South Fifth Street, Suite I • Goshen, IN 46528-3714
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www.goshenindiana.org/crc

MEMO: Minutes for March 3, 2026 Community Relations Commission Meeting

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 | 4 p.m. | Council Chambers, Goshen Police & Courts, 111 E. Jefferson St.,
Goshen, Indiana

1. Welcome and Introduction of CRC Members and Guests

Chair Michael Wanbaugh called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

Commission members present included E-man Monge, Lori Copsey, Tim Swartzentruber, John Dolezal and Lauren Lehman. Angie Wentz was absent.

Guests and support staff present included City Council Liaison Phil Lederach, Director of Administrative Affairs Michael Wanbaugh, CDBG Administrator Theresa Cummings and Daniela Panetta of Lacasa.

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 3, 2026 agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commission members reviewed the Feb. 3, 2026 meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Feb. 3, 2026 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Co-Recipient Presentations

Theresa Cummings provided an overview of the Community Development Block Grant process and requirements. She explained projects funded through HUD must meet one of three national objectives: benefit low-to-moderate income residents, address slum and blight conditions or respond to urgent community needs. Each proposed activity also must meet HUD eligibility standards.

Organizations then presented information regarding their programs, service impacts and funding requests.

Boys & Girls Club of Elkhart County – Goshen Unit

Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships Launa Leftwich discussed the organization's after-school and youth development programs serving Goshen-area children and families. The presentation focused on providing safe environments, mentoring opportunities, educational support and positive youth engagement for low-to-moderate income households.

Commission members discussed the importance of youth programming, transportation access and family support services.

Council on Aging of Elkhart County Inc.

CEO Tina Fraley outlined services supporting senior residents who face physical, transportation and financial barriers. Programs include transportation to medical appointments and grocery stores, in-home assistance, laundry assistance, caregiver support and meal-related services.



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Presenters explained many seniors struggle with mobility and fixed incomes, making transportation and daily assistance essential for maintaining independence and quality of life. The organization also discussed efforts to bridge gaps preventing older residents from remaining safely in their homes.

Commission members asked questions regarding transportation logistics, home services and support for residents with pets and mobility limitations.

Elkhart County Clubhouse

Erich Miller presented on behalf of the organization, formerly known as Elkhart Connect Clubhouse. The organization serves adults experiencing serious mental illness and has operated in the community for approximately 14 years.

The presentation focused on how mental health crises often lead to loss of housing, employment, relationships and personal stability. Clubhouse programming aims to restore independence, social connection and daily structure.

Services include meals, transportation assistance, housing support, medical appointment coordination, connections to community resources and peer support opportunities. The organization also assists individuals transitioning into housing and rebuilding independent living skills.

Commission members discussed the growing mental health needs within the community and the importance of stable support systems.

Goshen Interfaith Hospitality Network DBA / First Light Mission

Executive Director Mindy Moorhead presented information regarding First Light Mission's shelter services for women and families with children.

The shelter, located in the former Riverdale Elementary School on Wilkinson Street, has operated in its current location since October 2022. The facility includes 43 beds and remains consistently full.

The CDBG request supports the organization's healthy eating program, which provides nutritional education and healthy snacks for shelter guests. Moorhead stated the shelter serves more than 15,000 snacks annually while teaching families healthier food choices and meal planning.

First Light Mission also operates a free food pantry and provides additional supportive services intended to help guests transition toward stable, self-sufficient living situations. Moorhead shared the organization reports a success rate exceeding 90 percent for guests leaving the shelter in stable situations.

Commission members discussed nutrition education, operational costs and the increasing demand for shelter services.



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Maple City Health Care Center, Inc.

Representatives from Maple City Health Care Center discussed the organization's continued growth and integrated healthcare services.

The organization provides primary care, behavioral health services, dental care and substance-use recovery programming. Presenters highlighted the Matrix program, which supports individuals and families navigating substance-use recovery.

The CDBG request focused on care for low-to-moderate income residents. Representatives stated approximately one-third of Maple City's 10,000 patients fall within that category.

The organization requested funding support for discounted healthcare services and discussed challenges related to healthcare affordability and administrative reporting requirements.

Commission members discussed healthcare access, funding sources and the importance of preventative care in reducing long-term healthcare costs.

Goshen Day Care Board Inc. DBA / Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center

Executive Director Lee Wheeler presented information regarding Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center and the need for affordable, high-quality childcare. Wheeler explained Walnut Hill is one of only a small number of Level 4 childcare centers in Goshen. Approximately 82 percent of families served receive scholarship assistance, while remaining families receive support through the CCDF voucher program.

The presentation highlighted recent reductions in childcare assistance funding and the financial strain facing working families. Wheeler explained childcare costs remain a major barrier for many parents attempting to maintain employment.

Walnut Hill's scholarship program helps reduce weekly childcare costs for families while maintaining high-quality early childhood education standards.

Commission members discussed the impact of childcare costs on workforce participation and family stability.

Lacasa, Inc. / Neighborhood Outreach

Lacasa representatives discussed neighborhood outreach initiatives focused on housing stability, neighborhood engagement and support for low-to-moderate income residents. Programs include outreach efforts connecting residents with housing resources, financial education, community support services and neighborhood revitalization opportunities.

Commission members discussed housing affordability challenges and continued neighborhood investment efforts across Goshen.



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Lacasa, Inc. / Single Family Rehab, Homeownership Assistance, Energy Conservation to Multi Unit Housing

Lacasa representatives also presented information regarding housing rehabilitation, homeownership assistance and energy conservation programs.

The programs assist residents with housing repairs, accessibility improvements, homeownership opportunities and energy efficiency upgrades intended to improve housing quality and affordability.

Discussion included the increasing cost of housing repairs, the importance of preserving existing housing stock and efforts to assist low-income residents with maintaining safe and stable housing.

Following presentations, commission members discussed the significant community impact of participating organizations and expressed appreciation for the work completed by local nonprofit partners.

5. Financial Report

Chair Wanbaugh presented the financial report and stated few changes had occurred since the previous month.

He noted upcoming International Women's Day expenses and revenue would appear on the following month's report. Wanbaugh also reported sponsorship revenue already had been received for the event. A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial report as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

6. International Women's Day Report

Chair Wanbaugh provided an update regarding the upcoming International Women's Day event scheduled for Thursday.

He reported strong community interest and stated the 2026 luncheon would become the largest International Women's Day event hosted by the CRC. Attendance surpassed 150 registrants and event capacity increased multiple times due to demand.

Wanbaugh stated the event secured 12 sponsorships, including three Platinum sponsors. The program would include lunch, remarks from Mayor Gina Leichty and presentations from four featured speakers.

Commission members discussed event logistics, sponsorship support and strong community participation.

7. Privilege of the Floor

Commission members and attendees discussed the value of the nonprofit presentations and recognized the wide range of services supporting Goshen residents.



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Members expressed appreciation for the collaboration between the City and community organizations addressing housing, healthcare, mental health, childcare, nutrition and senior services.

8. Adjournment

With no further business before the commission, the meeting adjourned.