



**Community Relations Commission
CITY OF GOSHEN**

202 South Fifth Street, Suite 1 • Goshen, IN 46528-3714
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Minutes for Aug. 4, 2026 Community Relations Commission Meeting

Tuesday, Aug. 4, 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. Commission members present included John Dolezal, Lori Copsey and Lauren Lehman. City Council Liaison Phil Lederach was also present.

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Aug. 4, 2026, agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commission members reviewed the June 2, 2026, meeting minutes.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the June 2, 2026, meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Community Partnership Event Reports

Float Fest 2026

Scott Lehman provided a report on Float Fest 2026, highlighting continued growth of the annual music and arts festival along the Millrace.

Lehman reported the event expanded to two stages and featured more than 79 artists and musicians. Organizers estimated attendance at approximately 1,700 to 2,000 people. Programming included local and visiting musicians, visual and performance art, children's activities and an expanded food court.

Lehman said organizers continue to hear from musicians across the country interested in participating. Plans for 2027 include additional food vendors, potential participation from canoe and kayak manufacturers and continued expansion of regional and national performers.

Lehman also reported Float Fest has incorporated as a nonprofit and plans a fundraising dinner in November as it works toward obtaining 501(c)(3) status. Organizers hope the nonprofit eventually can support music education opportunities in Elkhart County.

Lehman thanked the CRC and City of Goshen for their continued support of the event.



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Air Supremacy Over Goshen

Chuck Hamilton provided a report on Air Supremacy Over Goshen, which marked its 10th year in Goshen. Hamilton reported more than 100 pilots participated, traveling from across the United States.

Approximately 350 giant-scale model aircraft were on site, with more than 1,000 flights conducted during the three-day event. Hamilton estimated total attendance approached 2,000 when children, veterans, active-duty military members and paid spectators were included.

Hamilton discussed the event's national reach and growing social media following, including interest from international model aviation enthusiasts. Organizers are exploring a live-streaming component for future events to expand access for those unable to attend in person.

Hamilton thanked the CRC and City for their support and said organizers expect the event to continue growing.

5. Neighborhood Outreach Storytelling Presentation

Local historian and author Aaron Helman joined the commission to discuss the development of a neighborhood storytelling campaign designed to strengthen connections between residents, their neighborhoods and Goshen's history. The presentation was included on the agenda as part of the CRC's neighborhood outreach work.

Helman described his work producing short social media videos about South Bend-area history, including the origins of street names and stories connected to specific places. He said the format has generated significant public interest and demonstrated an appetite for accessible local history.

Helman said connecting people with the history of where they live can build a stronger sense of neighborhood identity, civic pride and engagement. He recommended a consistent format for the videos so viewers immediately recognize the series, with each installment beginning directly with the story rather than a lengthy introduction.

Commission members discussed potential Goshen stories involving street names, neighborhoods, parks, schools, businesses and significant events. They also discussed incorporating archival photographs and oral histories while using short-form videos to introduce larger stories that could be preserved in longer formats.

Wanbaugh reported the Goshen Historical Society has expressed interest in assisting with research, archival photographs and historical context. He said the goal would be to connect individual stories to specific neighborhoods and use them as a starting point for broader community engagement.

Commissioners also discussed a potential subcommittee structure focusing on three areas: storytelling and communications; community engagement and events; and neighborhood resources and toolkits. Members agreed additional planning should occur before broader outreach begins.



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Wanbaugh said he would continue working with Helman to develop a proposed format, research and production process and potential consulting arrangement, then bring a more detailed plan back to the commission.

6. Financial Report

Wanbaugh reviewed the financial report and noted there had been little change since the previous meeting. He said upcoming expenditures would primarily relate to the Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration. A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial report. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Lacasa Neighborhood Outreach Update

Daniela Panetta of Lacasa was unable to attend. The Community Leadership Institute Neighborhood Picnic recap and high school neighborhood outreach update were deferred. Those items had been scheduled as part of the Lacasa report.

8. Upcoming Events

August First Fridays

Commissioners discussed staffing the CRC table during August First Fridays. Members volunteered for shifts throughout the event, with plans to have the table set up by 4 p.m. and maintain a CRC presence into the evening.

Neighborhood Events

Wanbaugh reviewed several upcoming neighborhood and community events and encouraged commissioners to attend when available. Upcoming events included the Clover Creek Neighborhood Ice Cream Social on Aug. 8; Historic Southside Neighborhood Block Party on Aug. 15; Touch-a-Truck on Aug. 22; and Historic Racemier Peninsula's neighborhood picnic on Aug. 29.

Future Neighborhood Walkabouts

Wanbaugh reported he planned to meet with the East Goshen Neighborhood Association on Aug. 18 to discuss organizing a neighborhood walkabout in September. Following that meeting, the commission will determine whether the September CRC meeting will be conducted as a neighborhood walkabout or as a regular commission meeting.

Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration

Wanbaugh updated commissioners on planning for the 2026 Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration. He reported discussions were underway with First Fridays organizers to make the celebration a more prominent component of October First Fridays, potentially centered in front of the Historic Downtown Courthouse. Plans could include a larger stage and a backup indoor location in case of inclement weather. Wanbaugh said outreach to the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi was continuing as programming for the event takes shape.



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9. Privilege of the Floor

No additional matters were brought before the commission.

10. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.