

## WSCO Board Meeting Minutes

**Monday, June 23, 2025**

**6:00 PM to 8:00 PM**

**MISSION STATEMENT:** WSCO sustains the people of the West Side to **build community power** and to advance a more **just and equitable community**.

**Board Members:** Santino Franco, Sebastian Ellefson, Sheila Evans, Nate Giles, Sebastian Gonzalez Navarro, Jessica Klimisch, Lawrence A. Lucio, Yasmin Muridi, Nancy Negrette, Joy Sorensen Navarre, Mandy Otis, Jeannine Pohl

**ATTENDANCE 6:03:** Raniya(new guest), Lucio, Monica, Coco, Sebastian Gonzalez, Joy, Mandy, Sebastian Ellefson, Nate,

Yasmin 6:41

Red: follow up = ^

6:00 Introductions and Welcome (Jess, 5 min)

6:05 Guest Recognition (Jess, 5 min)

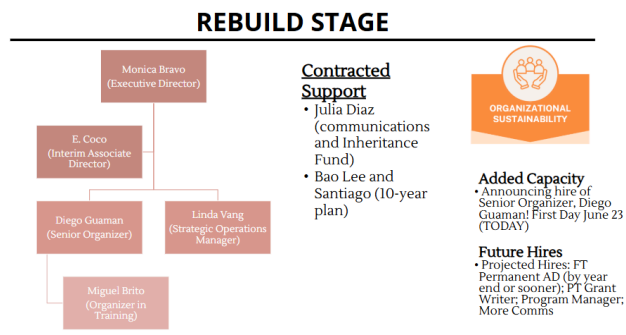
Ranyia student from saint thomas joined wsko, required by st. thomas t volunteer, at torre de san miguel homes and met miguel. Started west side future a youth group here at WSCO,

^ Raniya added as a board member and will need email and follow up

6:10 Consent Agenda Description and Vote (Jess, 5 mins) - **Vote**

- Last month's minutes
- This month's agenda
- Financials

6:15 State of WSCO (Monica, 30 mins)



### FUND DEVELOPMENT- \$701,008 (2025 BUDGET)

#### Awarded: \$492,000

- Saint Paul & MN Foundation (TRANSITION) \$30,000, general operating
- People in Action- \$17,000, capacity building
- Management Improvement Fund- \$15,000, capacity building
- Great Lakes Environmental Justice- \$150,000 (frozen by federal government)
- Northwest Area Foundation (NEW)- \$250,000 over two years, general operating
- Bigelow (RENEWAL)- \$30,000 one year, general operating

#### Pending: \$600,000

- McKnight Foundation (RENEWAL)- \$450,000 over two years, general oper
- Target Foundation (gen op-housing)
- AmeriPrise Financial, \$10,000 (small biz)
- Old National Bank, \$20,000 (small biz)
- NeedMore Foundation, \$20,000 (organizing)



(starting slides 6-12)

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1iUbhgiFKcgAi14aAd3Y3Bs6JbToWMyC1/edit?slide=id.p9#slide=id.p9>

^Feedback (delegation of responsibility would be nice to see, monica ok with this.)

Monica Usually funds are a month behind (keep in mind.

All added 2025

Lucio is there opportunity to collaborate with friends of the mississippi? Monica yes, we are collaborating on mayoral forum, but funding would be great.

Jessica, what percentage of our funds are federal? Just what's on the spreadsheet.

Survey for peace builders going into the community, about how the events of 2024 affected them and participation in WSCO or not, once they have the results, they will start to build and complete report

Discuss about the the survey.

Southport	10-Year Plan	West Side Businesses Unite
For over a decade, Southport residents and concerned neighbors have raised concerns about pollution and emergency evacuation plans, with little to no action. WSCO is ready to lead a campaign to re-energize a base of residents and demand change!	To lift up the voices of West Side residents, businesses and other stakeholders to shape the next decade of development on the West Side. Formally adopted by the City of Saint Paul, this plan creates a blueprint for implementation and investment.	Businesses are critical to the cultural and economic vitality of the West Side. They have not been adequately supported without a place-based business serving organization. Now, there is renewed energy to build solidarity and a collective agenda to increase a strengthened small business climate on the West Side.
Saint Paul Port Authority, GAP School, OLG Church, EPA, MPICA, Public Safety, Emergency Management, Public Works, City Council, Ramsey County, Rail Road.	18,000 of the West Side; renters, families, children, businesses	West Side Businesses
Friends of the Mississippi River; Southport residents; GAP School, OLG Church; Direct West Side Displaced Families and Descendants; broader west side community.	18,000 of the West Side; renters, families, children, businesses	West Side Businesses
Port Authority claims not to have funds; priority for fundraising does not list Southport- if it does, it's for a study. We need immediate investment to mitigate issues. Community is apathetic and disillusioned. Push is to re-engage and energize. Legal Strategy with class-action lawsuit; many contaminants- so going after 1 will create a blame game and no action.	Behind timeline; outreach/engagement for missing stakeholders; who will synthesize the plan; moving into implementation; funding sources to drive plan unknown; consolidating plans- including the Flats (resistance from City)	Requires increased capacity to lead ongoing and expanded work; requires further refining of joint goals and agenda, aligned vision and strategy for the West Side.
July 30- community meeting focused on emergency evacuation management	August 2025 (wrap engagement); September-Nov (analysis and validation) Dec-January (synthesize and submit to city); Jan-March (negotiation with City)	June 30 C-COAP is due; funds to be expended in 12 months; quarterly meetings
Change/improve Emergency Evacuation Plan; New emergency plan for community; review set of demands from WSCO board (new access road); class action lawsuit	Buy in from multiple implementation partners; adequate funding to advance plan; identifying the implementation partners; prioritization of plan over 10-year time span.	Clear Purpose, Strategies and Goals for West Side Businesses Unite; stronger formalized support from MCCO and other business support orgs; more resource flow to businesses; thriving commercial corridors
Port Authority; City of Saint Paul; Northern Metals + other polluters	City of Saint Paul; PED; potential implementation partners	PED, Ramsey County; consumers/solients
Is Our Air Safe? Are We Safe?	We Build The West Side! Equitable Development! Nothing About Us Without Us!	Buy Local, Support Local; West Side as Destination; invest in the West Side!

## HIGH LEVEL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Project	Destination Robert Street	Flats to the Future
	We envision a Robert Street that becomes a cultural and commercial destination. Leveraging the infrastructure investments planned for this corridor, we wish to see long-term investments that activate vacant or under-utilized buildings/lots, create greater pedestrian safety and spaces where community can gather to shop, dine and enjoy community.	We strive to honor the stories of those individuals and families displaced from the West Side Flats. We acknowledge the economic, cultural and social harm caused by the displacement and are committed to advancing the recommendations born out of community to seek immediate redress.
Brief Overview	MINDt, City of Saint Paul, City Council, Public Works, Land Use, Destination Robert Street	Direct West Side Displaced Families and Descendants; broader west side community; City of Saint Paul, church/school
Stakeholders	Businesses, Residents (homeowners and renters), anchor institutions (schools)	Direct West Side Displaced Families and Descendants; broader west side community;
West Side Base		
Key Tensions	Bike lanes, business displacement, potential roundabouts, project/construction management, base building	The Inheritance Fund - renters v. homeowners; existing program is not sufficient and not reflective of community desires; city driven, not comprehensive and far-reaching for long-term legacy
Timeline	June- Municipal Consent, Anti-Displacement Business Forum; August- final approval of project; 2025 begins construction	June- Kick off Inheritance Fund
Desired Outcomes	Prevent Displacement, Small Business Anti-Displacement Funds; Create a Destination/Thriving Corridor	Financial and Cultural Repair: The Inheritance Fund qualifications - expand; Right to Return and Right to Remain programs; memorial plaza
Targets	City Council, MINDt	Port Authority, City of Saint Paul, Land Owners
Public Narrative	Are You Ready? Get Ready!	Bring stories back into public memory, reclaim what was taken; collective gains for community rather than individual reparations

Additional discussion

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-and-economic-development/housing/west-side-flats-inheritance-fund-downpayment>

Questions: has anyone benefitted yet and how do we see how much money is in the inheritance fund?

^should the secretary help move the agenda?

6:45 WSBC (Mandy, 10 mins)

- could do micro grants
  - Wouldn't have the biggest community impact
- Beautifying corridor,
- (decisions from WSBC quarterly meeting
  - Next one will be the fall
  - Working on signage
  - Example businesses this way
  - Welcome signage

6:55 WSCO Robert Street Official Stance (Sebastian, Nancy, Joy, 20 mins)

Sebastian G 3 important things

1. Estimated to be 50 million dollars from the feds, frozen by the federal government

- a. If limited to 25 million Chris from MDOT said they would move forward with things they could build, did say that viaduct would be ok
- b. We would have enough for the roundabout regardless
- 2. (Joy Nancy and Sebastian G) - City council will vote
  - a. Businesses where nancy works, we should propose an amendment
  - b. In support of not doing the bike lanes, my stance personal I don't think it's a good idea
  - c. Monica update
    - i. Survey around bike lanes and sidewalks, there were a number of items, the results
    - ii. City is not paying for the bike lanes and the state will cover it, so she doesn't want to move it, but she is in support of adding a format where there could be wider sidewalks and narrower ones where sidewalk cafes wouldn't be needed,
    - iii. ^willing to add to the municipal consent contingent upon accountability ask group comprised of community member, she said yes to that task force advancing
    - iv. Joy presenting on zoom
      - 1. **Wide sidewalks can transform robert st. into a thriving social and commercial corridor**
      - 2. We have time until august
      - 3. Many reasons to do wider pedestrian walk ways
      - 4. Hard to go back after building bike lanes

Nancy

- i. Had MDOT generated an example of this?
  - ii. How muc
- v. Nancy
  - a. Worried about motivations in general
    - i. Never seeing sidewalks again
  - 2. Chris BAuer
- vi. ^find the bike guy and maybe balanced meeting (for next monthly board meeting)
- vii. ^alternative route for bike lane? (for the next board monthly meeting)
- viii. ^can rebecca noecker come to the next board meeting?

Board Vote: to support roundabout and median on robert street

Yes 9

abstain 1

Plato to annapolis

Board vote: Move to delay vote until getting more detail about the bike lanes from city staff and rebecca bnoecker approved.

Conceptually community agreements with the would be impacted businesses. Finance

Joy and coco: ^accountability teeth of task force follow up with monica and recommends going to land use meeting to follow up

Monica sending robert street report, proposed MN dot plan, that will all come to you right now, quite a few items left.

~~^7:15 Community Agreements (Sebastian, 10 mins) — Vote~~  
~~Tabled for next meeting~~

7:25 Discussion on Land WSCO owns selling land follow up (Sebastian/Mandy, 5 min)

^Sebastian proposed to have a board meeting here.

Monica it has gotten a little bit messy, for 5 thousand dollars, we could do something different on this lot, tied to the deed of the parcel supposed to be only used for a communal learning lab, basically, the use of the parcel is tied to the deed, can they undo that? They are willing to undo it if contingent upon the sale of the land, the proposal was selling it to the land trust, but in the interest of the community that's where it sits, we need the director of the land trust and PED to come together and agree, that's why we can't sell it for market value, why we are stuck with it now, no reason why we haven't used it, kept up by people we hire to 76 E. baker street, across from humboldt,

Board has already already decided to sell to the rondo land trust, wouldn't be in our name, based on community engagement about the parcel, we have lists of information about the use of the parcel. Rebecca noecker agreed we could see what WSCO wants to see there, stuck in the planning division, not that it matters, we should host board sessions there.

^ask executive director of rondo land trust to come

7:30 Open Discussion (Jess, 20 mins)

Board Members, Annual Meeting (Mandy)

Terms about board seats for next year have been settled?

Next month we will talk about terms

^Pick a board and location

- Do this with less pressure? Responsibility of the board
- Proposal to have the annual meeting of members to elect board and share highlights
- A separate celebration of our work, that way not trying to do everything at once,

August voices forum

Tentative

^Annual meeting (typically early november)

- ^Chief of Police Cinco (Santino)

Clarification on meeting notes/meeting agenda google form/zoom (recording meeting notes) (Nate)

^Roll calls

Childcare in Schools (Sebastian)

EDL extended day in the morning, a big mess, implement solutions reaching out to monica if WSCO could facilitate (I don't need support) child care coop -parents taking turns watching kids' tentative plans on being hosted at the neighborhood house, starting with 12 students, PTA insurance. Riverview has to charge money for rooms, it's our community schools, we have our community person representing us on the school board, ask school board member to come to a meeting and have him contact the principal

Community Advocacy in other neighborhoods (Jess)

7:50 Wrap Up/Next Steps/Spreadsheet (Jess, 10 mins)

Monica:

^orientation meeting while running land use

8:00 Adjourn