

BOLDLY WABASH

For Immediate Release

1/27/2020

For More information Contact

Mark Holtsclaw, Representative
Wabash Avenue Neighborhood Assn.: 765/426-2217

Tony Roswarski, Mayor
City of Lafayette: 765/807-1002

Margy Deverall, Project Planner Manager
Economic Development, City of Lafayette: 765/807-1097

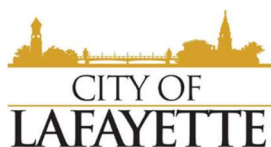
Stepheney Bible, Community Connector
Habitat for Humanity
Wabash Community Action Network: 765/423-4590

Tetia Lee, Chief Executive Officer
Tippecane Arts Federation: 765/423-2787

Aaron Kowalski, Urban Planner
MKSK: 219/477-7997

Eric Lucas, Principal, PLA, ASLA
MKSK: 765/250-9209

Dennis Carson, Director
Economic Development, City of Lafayette: 765/807-1093



MKSK



Wabash Avenue Neighborhood to Present Plan and Vision: Boldly Wabash

Boldly Wabash is an open house introducing the arc of progress of the Wabash Avenue Neighborhood over the past several years. The Boldly Wabash community event, will be held February 18th at 6:30 p.m. at the Wells Community Cultural Center and will focus on showcasing the vision completed as part of the study and community work. The Wabash Avenue Neighborhood Enhancement Plan is the culmination of a one-year project engaging its residents, businesses and stakeholders. This open house celebrates the work that has been done and is the formal kickoff of the implementation phase for the neighborhood's **Bold Future!** This future vision for the Wabash Avenue neighborhood was funded and facilitated by the City of Lafayette Economic Development Department with consultant group MKSK. Aaron Kowalski lead consultant from MKSK for the plan found working with the Wabash Avenue Neighborhood a unique and satisfying experience. Aaron states, "The 'Can Do' attitude of the Wabash Avenue Neighborhood is a special part of its story and arc of progress over the past several years. The Wabash Avenue Neighborhood Enhancement plan is a BOLD vision for the future. The rich heritage, close-knit village feel, and the authenticity of people who call Wabash Avenue home are part of the reason why this is such a fantastic place!

(more)

Boldly Wabash

Page 2

Having spent the past year collaborating with this neighborhood, I can honestly say this is one of those special, rare places that feel like home even though I am just a visitor.”

The City of Lafayette encourages resident led planning and strong neighborhoods. Mayor Roswarski states, “Government and residents working together create the vision and synergy for real and lasting change that benefits all. The Wabash Avenue Neighborhood has a long history and many civic minded engaged residents. With them, I’m looking forward to their future.”

The Wabash Walls (Tippecanoe Arts Federation) mural art festival and the Boldly Wabash planning process was a vehicle for resident engagement to honor their past heritage, take stock of the present and advocate for their future. This engagement included not only the residents but busiensses, faith based organizations, churches, government entities, civic, and cultural organizations as well. The neighborhood residents steered the direction for the work and active in all aspects.

Margy Deverall, Project Planner Manager for the City of Lafayette who led the project for the City says, “After almost thirty years working as an urban planner; I would be hard pressed to give a better example of how well neighborhood planning works when a group of people, with a common goal, come together.” Tetia Lee, CEO of the Tippecanoe Arts Federation whose organization led the nationally recognized Wabash Walls project agrees, “Working alongside the Wabash Avenue Neighborhood Association residents in developing this plan for the Neighborhood’s future has been an energizing experience. The residents, many of whom have roots in the Neighborhood going back several generations, have steered this process to highlight the robust history of Wabash Avenue and the vibrancy of its future.”

Eric Lucas of MKSK further elaborates, “The extremely active Wabash CAN committee and neighborhood were instrumental in setting the tone and direction for this process. The resulting plan collects and organizes those opportunities into concepts for what the future could be. The neighborhood has rallied around being proactive about its future and making sure this place retains its village feel. This process has brought awareness to the opportunities before the Wabash neighborhood and identified champions!”

Other organizations such as Habitat for Humanity have a long history in the neighborhood and have been a valued partner with the residents and Boldly Wabash Plan. Stepheney Bible, Family Serivces Manager, values the relationships and engagement that has been developed with the residents and others. "We at Habitat for Humanity of Lafayette are grateful for the partnerships and now friendships that we have gained through our work on Wabash Avenue. Projects that began as an effort to beautify and bring the neighborhood together, like Wabash Walls, have yielded long term relationships. Those relationships are what allowed us to all come together as stakeholders in Wabash Avenue and brainstorm ideas for its future. This is a great picture of what it looks like when people come together for a common purpose," says Stepheney.

Neighborhood Background:

The Wabash Neighborhood, located just a short walk from Downtown Lafayette, is a place with a strong history and sense of community where residential and industrial uses have co-existed for decades. The Wabash Avenue corridor threads the needle between the Wabash River and CSX rail, both of which have

(more)

Boldly Wabash

Page 3

shaped the neighborhood as it exists today. The neighborhood is small, with approximately 200 homes, mostly single-family, and several important neighborhood anchors and industrial employers. Due to its proximity to downtown and the Wabash River, this area is poised for positive growth and development. This plan was undertaken as a proactive, not reactive response to that potential.

The neighborhood is home to multiple generations of families, new families, and couples, with a split of ownership and rental properties. It is a collection of people – artists, craftspeople, entrepreneurs, business owners, and more – creating a unique and robust micro-economy. While this neighborhood is small, the Wabash Avenue Neighborhood Association, Habitat for Humanity, and Wabash CAN committee together create an energetic group of advocates sharing a passion for improving the Wabash Neighborhood and supporting its residents.

Event Details:

Please join us from 6:30 to - 8:00 pm at the North/Main Gallery at Wells Community Cultural Center, [638 North St, Lafayette, IN 47901](https://www.google.com/maps/place/638+North+St,+Lafayette,+IN+47901), on Tuesday, February 18th, 2020.

This open house will include a short presentation followed by a reception and gallery style stations where attendees can learn more about tremendous resources and opportunities in the Wabash Neighborhood. Refreshments will be served, and families are welcome. **Doors open at 6:15, and the presentation will start at 6:30.**

About Wabash CAN

The Wabash CAN group is an implementation focused committee made up of neighborhood residents, business owners, and community activists focused on the future of the Wabash neighborhood.

About Habitat for Humanity Lafayette

Habitat for Humanity builds affordable housing for working families earning between 30 and 60 percent of the area median income. Occupying the "missing middle," partner families face significant pressure due to rising housing costs. By utilizing volunteer labor, generous in-kind donations, and community support, Habitat sells mortgages to partner families at a rate that allows them to save money, build capital, and provide a stable home for their family for years to come.

About Tippecanoe Art Federation

The Tippecanoe Arts Federation is the umbrella organization and arts council for fourteen Indiana Counties (Tippecanoe, Benton, Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Fountain, Howard, Jasper, Newton, Montgomery, Pulaski, Tipton, Warren, and White). TAF provides educational opportunities in the visual, performing, and literary arts, outreach programs for both underserved communities and at-risk youth, and funding for capital and operational expenses to fellow arts organizations region-wide. Established in 1976, the Tippecanoe Arts Federation serves as a model for arts advocacy by promoting the role of arts.

About MKSK

MKSK is a landscape architecture, urban design and planning firm with studios in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky Michigan, and South Carolina. MKSK transforms cities through creating great public spaces and innovative community planning. Working with municipalities large and small to help our communities become vibrant places of destination, MKSK brings landscape architects, urban designers, graphic designers and certified planners together to offer creative and sustainable solutions. MKSK considers

(more)

Boldly Wabash
Page 4

the environmental, financial, and human impacts of design and development decisions to design beautiful and sustainable cultural spaces that capture the spirit and story of place. MKSK strengthens cultural connections by articulating the landscape as a medium for celebrating both our history and our contemporary life.

About City of Lafayette

The City of Lafayette, Indiana is known as the place of choice for singles, families and retirees. Our community values long-time residents, welcomes newcomers and enjoys visitors. Lafayette is a thriving business and industry hub focused on progress, investment and job creation, offering great sports and recreation, fine cultural activities, year round festivals and affordable housing. Lafayette is known for blue-ribbon schools, regional healthcare services and an historic downtown loaded with shopping, dining and night life. Lafayette embraces and supports a growing, involved and diverse population; dynamic public and private sectors with many opportunities; and a quality of life second to none.

###