

SUMMARY: City of Valparaiso Neighborhood Workshop June 22, 2022



Purpose: To further promote neighborhood engagement, the City of Valparaiso's Community Engagement Department hosted a Neighborhood Workshop on Wednesday, June 22 at the Indiana Beverage Activity Center. Neighborhood Workshops provide an opportunity for neighborhood representatives to connect, learn from each other and become more familiar with available neighborhood services. The goal is to increase communication and relationships with neighborhood groups, as well as provide a forum for peer learning and information sharing to enhance the capacity of our local neighborhood groups.



Background: The City has hosted Workshops, both in person and virtually, since 2019. Participant feedback continues to inform us that neighborhood representatives see value in coming together. Previous Workshop summaries are available on our [website](#).

Participation: The Workshop convened 32 residents from 14 neighborhoods including:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Banta | 8. Essex Park |
| 2. Berkley | 9. Forest Park |
| 3. Bicentennial Square | 10. Jefferson Park |
| 4. Chandana Pointe | 11. Keystone Commons |
| 5. College Hill | 12. Manchester Meadows |
| 6. Country Club Estates | 13. Oak Grove |
| 7. Courtyards of Pepper Creek | 14. Pepper Ridge |

Content (agenda and handout materials available pages 3-7): Maggie Clifton, Community Engagement Director, welcomed participants and provided an overview of the agenda. Participants were asked to introduce themselves and share a neighborhood update or story of success. A lot of great news was shared including the completion of [neighborhood grant projects](#), examples of engaging neighbors at block parties, a creative neighborhood partnership with a local Boy Scout troop and more.

Mayor Murphy welcomed the group and shared updates on current city projects. There is a lot of development happening in the city including the LINC downtown development and parking structure. Murphy also highlighted the new Valpo For All Generations initiative and the importance of serving all ages for generations to come. Murphy answered questions related to affordable housing and development on the north side of town.



Valparaiso Police Chief Jeff Balon shared more information about VPD's new social work program created to serve both community and police officer mental health and wellness. VPD is the only agency in the county to have a social work program and they have been busy assisting community members access resources like shelter, addiction and mental health services. Balon also highlighted the importance of school safety and VPD's school resource officers. VPD is committed to keeping our schools safe and prepared.



Valpo Parks Director John Seibert provided an overview of [Valpo For All Generations](#). This initiative has four pillars and is being created to serve residents and visitors of all ages – for this generation and those who come after us. The pillars include the Valparaiso Skatepark, Adult Center for Enrichment, Legacy Parks and a Community Sports and Recreation Complex. Each pillar is on its own timeline and being brought to life through a variety of funding sources and partnerships. Seibert explained the value of community partnerships – with neighborhood groups, businesses, donors or nonprofits – partnerships are what make these projects successful. Renderings and site maps were available to participants.

City Administrator Mike Jessen thanked participants for their time at the Workshop. Valparaiso is full of great people and the work that is being done in Valparaiso’s neighborhoods is a result of the commitment of the volunteers making the time and stepping up to make an impact. Participants were encouraged to stay connected with us and keep us informed of any ideas or suggestions where the City can assist.

Clifton wrapped up the session by asking participants to complete a brief survey to get input on future Workshops. There was also an opportunity to weigh in on the future guidelines of the Neighborhood Improvement Grant Program. Some highlights from the survey are outlined below.

Feedback Survey:

<p>Frequency & Length of Workshops</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2 Workshops Per Year (Spring/Fall)</i> 75% of respondents said that was the right amount 15% recommend more often • <i>60-90 Minutes Long</i> 100% recommend at least 90 minutes for each Workshop
<p>Meeting Topics</p>	<p><i>Most popular topic suggestions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ City development ○ Advocacy/connecting with elected officials ○ Neighborhood Fundraising ○ HOA best practices ○ Volunteer recruitment ○ Grant success stories ○ Communication tips and tools
<p>Grant Feedback</p>	<p>Common themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program works well • Challenges include getting neighbors involved in the process, getting contractors or vendors to come out and give estimates • Concerns with rising costs associated with projects and current grant cap

Agenda – Neighborhood Workshop

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

6:00pm-7:00pm at Indiana Beverage Activity Center



	Topic	Speaker
6:00-6:10pm	Welcome & Introductions An outline of the Workshop purpose and agenda. Participants introduce themselves and share a neighborhood update or recent success.	Maggie Clifton Community Engagement Director
6:10 – 6:20pm	City Updates Mayor Murphy will provide a brief overview of current city projects and initiatives.	Mayor Matt Murphy
6:20-6:35pm	Public Safety Learn more about VPD’s social work program and school safety efforts.	Chief Jeff Balon Valparaíso Police Department
6:35-6:50pm	Valpo For All Generations Hear from Valpo Parks about the new Valpo For All Generations initiative and how to get involved.	John Seibert Valpo Parks Director
6:50-7:00pm	SEEKING FEEDBACK – Discussion on Neighborhood Services Tell us what you think about existing programs and opportunities to enhance them for your neighborhood. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighborhood Grant Program• Neighborhood Workshops• Other	Maggie Clifton

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Community Engagement Updates

Neighborhood Workshop 6/22/2022

Neighborhood Improvement Grants 2022

The Neighborhood Improvement Grant program is intended to give residents an opportunity to have direct input and influence into the improvement of Valparaiso’s neighborhoods. The funds provide for small neighborhood-based projects with community-wide benefit. The goal is to bring neighborhoods together and to increase partnerships between neighborhoods and the city through positive improvement projects.

The City of Valparaiso has awarded 20 new grants in the 2022 Neighborhood Improvement Grant program, providing \$205,000 in funds to support neighborhood unity and community improvements. Coupled with the matching investments by the neighborhoods themselves, this grant cycle will result in more than \$275,000 in positive impact for the community.

The projects funded this year include tree plantings, common area upgrades that give neighbors a fresh space to gather and enhancements to neighborhood parks, among other beneficial plans. The neighborhoods receiving grants in 2022 include Audubon Estates, Banta, Bicentennial Square, Bridgewater Estates, Brigata Hills, Central, College Hill, Courtyards of Pepper Creek, Greenfield Creek, Hatch Lake, Hawthorne, Jessee-Pifer, Keystone Commons, Kingsridge, Lakepointe Gardens, Mistwood, Oak Grove, Shamrock, Sunnybank and Villas at Vale Park.

Program Development

The chart below outlines the impact and growth of the program from 2018-2022.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Applications Submitted	9	14	18	21	21
Applications Awarded	8	14	16	21	20
\$ Budget	\$60,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$200,000
\$ Requested	\$99,517	\$153,255	\$183,209	\$257,145	\$252,843
\$ Awarded	\$55,500	\$132,570	\$132,000	\$260,730	\$205,000
\$ Matching Investments	\$13,500	\$49,810	\$25,805	\$105,855	\$70,323
\$ Total Impact	\$68,500	\$182,380	\$157,805	\$366,585	\$275,323

Neighborhood Improvement Grants 2023

The City is collecting feedback before releasing guidelines for next year’s grant cycle. Anticipate a **March 2023** application deadline. Have thoughts on the program? Contact us! *photo details on last page*

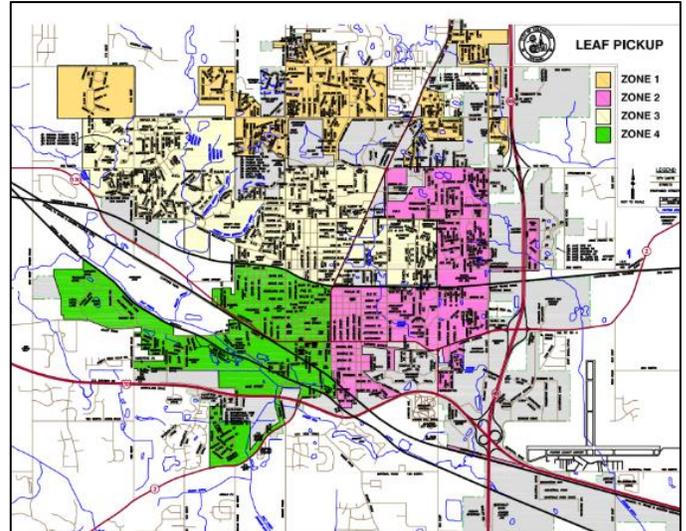


Seasonal Updates – Brush Pickup

The City's brush pickup services are in full swing. The City has four collection zones and crews rotate continuously. Some areas of the city take longer due to more trees and the weather also affects the collection efforts. To sign up for progress update alerts and learn your zone, visit <https://www.ci.valparaiso.in.us/1652/Yard-Waste-and-Leaf-Pickup>.

In your neighborhood, please remember the following:

- Residential (no contractor/landscaper-generated) brush and yard waste, including limbs, brush, bushes, roots, leaves, etc. are accepted.
- Place at curb or alley in biodegradable paper bags or piles.
- During heavy seasons (spring, after storms, leaf season, etc.) it can take extra time for us to provide the curbside collections throughout the entire City. We appreciate your patience during these times.
- Residents also have the option to drop off brush and yard waste at the Compost Site.
- If you have specific questions regarding your service, please contact Valparaiso City Services Customer Service at (219) 462-6174.



Sign Up for Notifications from Valparaiso City Services – Utilities

To ensure you receive City of Valparaiso communication alerts (boil advisories, construction updates, etc.), please provide your current information here:

<https://portal.sbsportals.com/modules/forms.php?guid=d4d734b5c30909723b0febeac70d4f67&fbclid=IwAR0tL8yz3pdDN9oLh3rz37vKytbgRfLVVwMTxrs4X78xQCxDXiJ-EKVwsY>

Voice A Concern @ www.valpo.us

Valpo Voice continues to enhance efficiency and service for our residents. As a reminder, the City offers Valpo Voice as a simple, helpful way to report a concern and initiate service. Simply visit our website and select the "Voice a Concern" button to report concerns or code enforcement issues.

Valpo Voice

To better serve Valparaiso residents, the City of Valparaiso offers Valpo Voice, a helpful way to report a concern and initiate service. Valpo Voice complements the city's new consolidation of Utilities and Public Works into a single unified City Services department, enhancing efficiency and service.

To initiate service, simply click on the link below that most accurately fits your concern.

 Code Enforcement	 City Hall	 City Services
Questions/Comments Concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neglected Property/Structure• Vehicle Abandonment• Erosion Control• Overgrown Vegetation/High Grass	Questions/Comments Concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic and Safety• Permits• Board of Works Requests• New Construction• Sign Approval• Engineering Services	Questions/Comments Concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water/Sewer Mains• Manholes• Storm Inlets• City Tree Inspection• Sidewalk Inspections• Potholes• Sign Repair• Trash

Community Happenings/Events

- Valparaiso Market – Tuesdays and Saturdays 9:00 am – 1:00 pm through 10/15
- Valparaiso Art Festival hosted by Valparaiso Events 10:00 am – 5:00 pm 6/25/22-6/26/22
- 4th of July 5k & 2k hosted by Valpo Parks 7/4/22
- City of Valparaiso 4th of July Celebration 7/4/22
- Summer Concert Series at Central Park – Thursdays 7/14/22-9/1/22

Engagement Opportunities on the Horizon

- Fall Neighborhood Workshop (TBD)
- City Government Academy (Spring 2023)

Workshop Speaker Contact Information:

John Seibert
Valpo Parks Director
jseibert@valpo.us

Jeff Balon
Valparaiso Police Chief
jbalon@valpopd.com

Questions – Comments – Ideas

Contact Maggie Clifton at mclifton@valpo.us or 462-1161.



- Greenfield Creek is making progress on enhancing the common area with landscaping and signage with a 2022 Grant. You can also spot the Little Libraries from a 2019 Grant!
- Sierra installed new signage last year as part of a 2020 Grant, they turned the old signage into benches!
- College Hill's sign toppers were installed earlier this year with a 2021 Grant.

*photo details from grant section

- Oak Grove is making progress on improving the entryway as part of a 2022 Grant.
- Banta Neighborhood's playground was enhanced with accessibility in mind with a 2021 Grant.
- Mistwood Neighborhood teamed up with the VHS football team to have a volunteer tree planting with funds from a 2022 Grant.

Seeking Feedback – Neighborhood Services

Neighborhood Workshops

Frequency and Length of Workshops:

	Less	Just Right	More
2 Workshops Per Year (spring/fall)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
60 – 90 Minutes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Meeting Topics (check items that you would like):

- Neighborhood Fundraising
- HOA Best Practices
- Advocacy/Connecting with Elected Officials
- How to Set Goals and Action Plans
- Volunteer Recruitment
- Neighborhood Organizing (bylaws, directories, getting started)
- Communication Tips and Tools
- City Development
- Grant Success Stories

Other Suggestions: _____

Neighborhood Improvement Grant Program

What is the biggest challenge when participating in the Grant Program?

How can we help address that challenge?

How do you typically get your neighbors involved in the process?

What are your thoughts on the accelerated timeline of awarding in March and completing by December?

What are your thoughts on the \$15,000 grant amount?