

Minutes from Fair West Neighborhood Association Monthly Meeting Wednesday, July 15th, 2026, at 6:30pm at RSPP, 1307 San Pedro NE

In attendance: Nick Hamill, Barbara Hroza, Hillary Malu, Frances Steinbach, Emily Stafford, Jim Farmin, Matt Vining, Robert Donovan, Rick Huff, Raji Vallury, Kevin Keen, Ally & Christoph Rinderer, Natalie Vargas, Sandra Perea.

- 1. Barbara called the meeting to order at 6:35.**
- 2. Introductions were made.**
- 3. The minutes from the June 15th, 2026, meeting were approved.**
- 4. Treasurer's Report**

FWNA treasurer Frances Steinbach reported a balance of \$871.24 in the FWNA account. VP Barbara is now a signatory, as well as President Nick Hamill.

5. Guest Speaker

Natalie Vargas, South San Pedro NA president, reported her impressions and information gathered from the recent 3-day expedition to Nashville, Louisville, and Cincinnati. BernCo hosted this trip, which included a handful of stakeholders from the International District, Adrian Barboa, and Nichole Rogers. These 3 cities currently have soccer stadiums, and our stakeholders spoke with neighbors and officials in each area, assessing the pros and cons of the stadiums' effects on the surrounding neighborhoods. 2 cities' neighborhoods were similar to ours: some economic development, low income, fairly high crime. Nashville stadium was unique; it's in an industrial area.

Nashville stadium is right next to NASCAR. There is a 320-unit rental condo, a tiny state fair, and then some \$1,000,000 homes. They met with folks involved with Community Benefit Agreements (CBA's,) and local officials. "Standup Nashville" monitors the CBA, it's an ongoing 30-year agreement. Many neighbors can't afford to live there. Average income \$109, 000, average house costs \$896,000. Neighbors can't afford to go to games. Used also for concerts.

Louisville, KY State Fairgrounds next to Kentucky Derby Churchill Downs. The Fairgrounds MLS Young Soccer Stadium is 22,000 seats, booked 300+ days/year, very busy, lots of activities, great food/drinks to attract customers. It's massive, has a theme park. In industrial area. Earlier had trouble booking activities, initially neighbors didn't care about soccer.

Cincinnati stadium is in a historically prominent Black community, generational renters. Then a flood occurred, and they didn't really recover, because the rebuild was all

supported voucher housing. Then a state of art stadium was built. Outstanding CBA, requiring they train and hire locals. Now redevelopment on the other side of the stadium is all market value homes, and they realize they do need homeowners with that kind of income for there to be economic development and to flourish as a neighborhood.

She noted these stadiums are all MLS; the NM United team wants to be MLS. That standard requires that a team organization must have a CBA with community to be MLS. MLS status also requires a stadium with 15,000 seats. Government officials are not allowed to be signatories on this Community Benefits Agreement. Rather neighborhood spokespersons, and attorneys from both sides.

Natalie will reach out to community members of these 3 cities to hold a zoom meeting soon with leaders in our community, so leaders can ask them further questions.

Dr. Hill of Bernco will consolidate the info gathered, and present these findings to public.

Natalie reports New Mexico has been moving the stadium project forward. RFP for a master planner is out. The state sent offers to businesses to purchase properties in Cal-Linn area. But no recent updates from any of the levels of government involved.

Of note: Per Sandra Perea, Elder Homestead NA president, and D6 Coalition president, she was contacted today by KOB reporter Monica for an interview tomorrow, for updates on the Fairgrounds Redevelopment. But again, there have been no updates since the March 2026 presentation to the public.

Sandra thought it may be related to today's news that Neighborhood Associations near the Balloon Fiesta Grounds lost a suit filed against the building of a stadium. It remains to be seen whether that decision furthers the movement towards the stadium being built on the Fairgrounds. There is incentive to develop at Fairgrounds because of \$70 million earmarked under the Fairgrounds Redevelopment TIDD and legislation.

Where do we go from here? We need to present a united front, us residents. One voice. We need to be informed, with consistent communication between leaders of this project (especially the state,) and our neighborhoods. And we need a binding, ongoing CBA.

Of note: Alex Greenberg, economic advisor the governor, who was going to be the communications person for this redevelopment these last few months, has resigned his position. So, no point person currently for updates.

It was suggested we reach out to Deb Haaland, for her thoughts about all this. She has lived in the South San Pedro neighborhood.

South San Pedro NA has developed a required consent document for any organization or leader, large or small, that engages with their neighborhood. They call it REFRIED. Reciprocal, Equitable, Freely Given, Reversible, Informed, Equitable, Direct.

Their neighborhood is burdened with 60-70% of community services for the underserved in their area. Meanwhile long-term residents receive insufficient direct investment. Parks are gated, schools face unacceptable environmental and safety risks. They have presented this to Nichole Rogers, UNM, among others.

SSP NA received The National Parks Rails Trails & Conservation grant, for technical assistance with improving parks, alleys, etc. SSP NA then created the Albuquerque Alleyway Alliance. The grant will help them develop more structure and capacity.

SSP NA is inviting us to join them for National Night Out, Aug. 4th at Jack and Jill Park. There will be many neighborhood associations, organizations, food, activities. APD will be there with their Project 365. Also Endorphin Power, Pipefitters Union 412, Parks and Recreation, BernCo, among others. Per the original National Night Out purpose, their neighborhoods are taking back a sense of ownership and presence. Of note: Kelly Davis of BernCo is assisting with this event; she has been a great official to work with.

6. Per Emily, some neighbors have met with Lizzy Gore. She's a community developer with Industrial Areas Foundation, and is currently working with Street Vision. One of her goals is to help neighborhood associations, faith-based orgs, activist groups, and other groups to come together and find their strength in numbers. She will help us determine the areas of agreement needed in order to stand and speak with a united voice on projects such as the Fairground Redevelopment. Sandra met with Lizzy, and discussed another issue, Code Enforcement's slow process managing nuisance properties, or shutting down nuisance smoke shops that are out of compliance. Lizzy suggests NA's meet with Code Enforcement, City Counselor policy makers to speed up the process. She has spoken with Nick, will meet with FWNA soon.

7. Our monthly 4th Saturday Produce Swap/Giveaway is July 25th, 9-11 at Fox Park.

8. Meeting Dates Calendar:

August 17th Monday – General Meeting

September 16th Wednesday – **Board Meeting**

October 19th Monday – General Meeting

November 18th Wednesday – General Meeting

December 21st Monday – **Board Meeting**

9. Meeting adjourned 7:45 pm.