

ECNA Minutes Nov. 19, 2024 Meeting at Counterpath

6:30pm start

Minutes transcribed by ECNA Secretary Matt Ross. No claims are made for absolute accuracy, as these minutes were transcribed with the possibility of human error. Unless direct quotations are used, the reader should assume that the statements herein are paraphrased.

Complimentary dinner was provided by

Intro that was read aloud by ECNA President Tim Roberts:

Big round of applause for the 2024 ECNA Board for holding things together in so many ways: Brendan Greene, Meghan Osborne, Corky Sholl, Isaac Schloss, Matt Ross, Brenda Wright, Elizabeth Parker, Ken Stransberry, Ahn Yo, Mary Koffman, Levon Lyles, Abraham Tesfamichael, Ludi Bonilla, Matt Hybert.

We are so lucky and happy to be able to thank all of these people.

MEghan Osborne directed a special round of applause of TIm Roberts, thanking him for the presence of food and an innovative approach for the election process. Tim took the responsibility of the presidency extremely seriously this year. Tim did a ton for our community via the food bank, the free bookstore, and donating space here at Counterpath.

Land Acknowledgments were absent from the proceedings tonight.

Statements from Candidates for the ECNA Board 2025.

Below are the submitted Bios and Statements from each of the candidates. Additional salient points from candidates' verbal comments are added in Italics.

President: John McKinney

Bio: I have lived in the East Colfax neighborhood for 26 years. My wife Rebecca and I raised two wonderful children in the neighborhood. I strongly believe that East Colfax is one of the greatest neighborhoods in the Denver area. I have an Associate of Arts degree from Arapahoe Community College and a Bachelor of Science degree from Colorado State University. My profession has been in the communications industry where I have focused on fiber optic network design and construction. My wife Rebecca and I also own the East Colfax Statuary, where we make concrete garden statues with a goal of

adding beauty to East Colfax and the surrounding neighborhoods. Previously I have served the community as Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 62. I have also served as a coach and mentor in the First robotics program.

Statement: I am looking for an opportunity to serve the East Colfax community. As board president, my focus would be on the business of the association. I would focus on holding effective and efficient meetings. I would work to set agendas that reflect the needs and interests of the East Colfax Neighborhood. I will work with the at large board members to ensure that we focus on actions directly related to the East Colfax Neighborhood. While in the role of president, I will rely on the at large board to bring forward all actionable items. My goal as president will be to ensure the board acts in a civil, respectful, and welcoming manner. Since bias can affect the agenda, here are my beliefs relating to several East Colfax Neighborhood issues:

- I support Colfax Bus Rapid Transit.
- I support the East Area Plan that was approved by city council in 2020.
- I do not support land acknowledgements. Apologizing for the actions of the dead doesn't improve anything for the living. We need to focus on actions going forward.
- We must focus on the quality of life in the East Colfax Neighborhood.
- We must work with the Denver Police department to reduce crime in our neighborhood.
- Vagrants and homeless have rapidly deteriorated our ability to walk, bike and use public transportation in the East Colfax Neighborhood. We need to demand decisive and immediate action from our city government and the Regional Transportation District.

"A fresh face here asking for a big position," but has been in the neighborhood for a minute. Wife's family has been here forever. His kids are the sixth generation to live in East Colfax. "Taking on displacement from a different angle." Thinking about resiliency. We don't want to let folks displace our people or our culture.

Vice President: Valerie Carter

Bio: Born at St Anthony's Hospital, when it was off Colfax, grew up in Golden and Greenwood Village. Raised children in East Aurora/Cherry Creek. Moved to Xanthia and Montview in 1999. Lost my home when the market collapsed and left the neighborhood in 2008. Came back to

Denver where I am blessed to live near Rosemary and Montview. I have lived in the East Colfax neighborhood a total of 19 years, since 1999.

As a registered nurse for 33 years, I have worked in clinical, educational and community settings. I am currently functioning as a nurse case manager with the City and County of Denver.

My family is vested in Denver as small business owners, supporters of non-profits, fierce supporters of local businesses and local needs.

Statement: I have intermittently attended ECNA meetings over the years and it's time for a more active role. My first goal is to bring MORE East Colfax residents to the conversation. Many of my neighbors do not know that ECNA regularly invites City representatives to speak. Some are aware and do not attend and I believe every East Colfax resident should know every day that the association exists. I believe every community member wants to be welcomed and heard at meetings, online, and in the streets.

It is a fact that crime and unsavory behaviors have plagued East Colfax long before me. In fact, my older brother, a retired Denver Police officer, made several comments in 1999 about my Xanthia Street address in 1999. Crime is not new. What is new, I believe, is the general explosion of crime and apathy, whether it be Sheps on Colfax or the gathering of unhoused in our streets, we are experiencing this negatively and sometimes the negativity is a result of biases, to people and institutions. The Association helps to dispel the biases and brings community leaders and community residents together to discuss the problems – unfortunately, discussion amongst the smaller group is not enough. And messages on the NextDoor app become more important than conversations at ECNA, or so it seems to me.

I may be considered a little naïve when we do our Colfax crawls or walk to one of the local restaurants, coffee shops, or bars. I am also considered a pest when I report neighbors who do not follow ordinances and collect cars and trash in their driveways, or blow leaves into the street for someone else to collect. I have learned the many ways to report my concerns and I am no stranger to taking simple matters into my own hands.

I do believe every neighbor wants to live in a safe and positive place. That can only be done when we come together and look for solutions, be accountable for our properties and for our community. Let's find and lift those who need a little extra support shoveling snow or taking out trash or living in an unhealthy situation. The problems of speeding, red light running, trash, prostitution, theft, graffiti, unhoused, drug use, and gun control can only be addressed in conjunction with City officials AND by knowing our neighbors and the resources of the community.

I believe we need to have more of a presence in the community through signage on every block, increased social media presence, and focused ECNA meeting invitations. The flyers are great, and they are often mixed with so much other paper it's lost until I dig through the stack of papers. I wonder how many people in this room can text message more than one neighbor on any given day, I am lucky have that on Rosemary/Roslyn. I am also frustrated with the neighbors who lock themselves inside and claim, incorrectly, that the neighborhood is unsafe or a result of corruption – we can be a neighborhood that jointly insists on improved traffic signage, brings back red-light cameras, lights up yards, alleys, and cleans up walkways and parks. To do this our strength can be represented in these meetings, and online. Individually, we cannot attend every meeting or advocate within the city. Jointly, I hope to see more involvement and more collaboration on 3-5 annual goals.

In addition to expanding the community knowledge base, I hope to improve knowledge by spelling out acronyms, providing resources on the history to the topics discussed in the meetings. I have found myself overwhelmed when a topic is referenced and acknowledged by a few without any greater group awareness. I have found myself frustrated by efforts that are nice, but seem unnecessary, considering how many challenges we have.

In closing I hope to join the ECNA team and support the teams' efforts to improve the Association's presence in the community which I believe will improve the community overall.

Special thanks to Tim for maintaining all of this and in speaking with those who have been here for so long. Honored to be part of this beautiful and thriving group of people. It is time to give back. What we need to see is more representation of all of the folks in the neighborhood on every block. Let's get the word out and be a supporter. Let's think about the positive and the pragmatic things. We can't always get what we want, but we can take action.

Treasurer: Muhammad Kahn

Bio: Muhammad Khan brings a wealth of skills, expertise, and community involvement to any organization fortunate enough to have him. Here's a breakdown of his attributes and contributions:

Environmental Stewardship and Advocacy:

Muhammad is deeply committed to environmental causes, actively advocating for zero-waste policies and sustainable business practices. His involvement with Eco-Cycle and leadership in the passage of waste management legislation underscores his dedication to this cause.

Digital Marketing and Tech Expertise:

As the Manager of Paid Search at AdCellerant, Muhammad possesses expertise in digital marketing, particularly in Google Ads policies. He has also taught courses on Communication Platforms and Search Advertising at the University of Colorado Boulder, demonstrating his depth of knowledge in this field.

Community Engagement and Inclusivity:

Muhammad's involvement with various community organizations such as the Denver Zoo, Denver Snow Angels, and his organization of speed-dating events for the local LGBTQ+ community highlights his commitment to fostering inclusivity and community engagement.

Leadership and Advocacy:

Muhammad has demonstrated strong leadership qualities, both within his professional role at AdCellerant and in his advocacy efforts for environmental sustainability. His ability to step up as a leader during important council meetings and his recognition as the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year at the Summit for Recycle Colorado speak to his leadership skills and impact.

I was a treasurer for Forever Buffs Young Alumni Association for a few years.

Statement: I am a new member to the East Colfax community and would like to get more involved.

Brings a wealth of knowledge about finance and is excited to work towards using that knowledge on the behest of the RNO.

Secretary: Matt Ross

Bio: Matt Ross (they/he) is a Foundation Year MSW Candidate at University of Denver, exploring the interrelated fields of Mental Health and Health & Wellness as they relate to queer & gender diverse youth. They strive to embody a sense of curiosity, joy, and humility in their work to foster LGBTQ+ empowerment and to bring about collective liberation.

Statement: Matt has lived in East Colfax with his husband Adam since January 2022, and he is passionate about serving as a liaison between the community and the City of Denver to bring about more equitable outcomes and affirming experiences for the East Colfax neighborhood. Matt also founded the East Colfax Disarmament and Economic Justice Initiative in early 2024 to begin dialogues around the interrelated issues of poverty and gun violence as they affect our historically under-resourced neighborhood. As Secretary for ECNA since mid-2024, Matt has worked to consolidate the central email list and membership roster, as well as to take diligent minutes at all general meetings. Matt hopes you will support them in their bid for ECNA secretary for 2025 so that he can continue his work for the community.

Candidates for At Large

Carlos Anderson

Bio: Carlos Anderson is a lifelong Coloradan and public servant, beginning with his Peace Corps service in Paraguay in the early aughts and ultimately becoming an advisor to Governor Polis on the issues of Housing and Homelessness. He currently advises Health First Colorado, Colorado's Medicaid Agency, on benefits for Health Related Social needs like recovery services, Supportive Housing and nutrition services. In his spare time, Carlos advocates for disability rights, housing rights, transportation and health care, enjoys cycling and linguistics, and is an

aspiring stand up comic and performance artist. Carlos has lived on Trenton Street in East Colfax for the past four years with his dog and two children, and believes in the potential of East Colfax to model fair housing, small business and transportation innovations that will transform the neighborhood and the city for the good of all citizens. He is a member of St. James Catholic Parish in Montclair and can often be found along Colfax socializing with unhoused neighbors while walking his 140 lb Mastiff, Pinto Bean.

Statement: I'm running because I believe housing, homelessness and their intersection with crime and quality of life are problems that have solutions. I believe we can have increased density without displacement. I believe in the potential of East Colfax to model fair housing, small business and transportation innovations that will transform the neighborhood and the city for the good of all citizens.

The city is at an inflection point where housing is concerned, and if we don;t come together now as a community, there will be displacement, and there will be gentrification. We need to speak plainly and closely with the city to make sure that we come up with creative solutions.

Relationships with Sarah PArady, Mike Johnston, and Shontel Lewis. We need to make sure that we do not lose people to development and the forces that cause displacement. I believe that these problems do have solutions.

Anna Kakai

Bio: Anna, a longtime resident of East Colfax since 2018, is a small business owner and Business Project Manager at a local consulting firm. Originally from Kenya, she values the diversity and authentic living of East Colfax, which reminds her of her Kenyan roots. Her roles equip her with transferable skills that would be essential for a board position with the East Colfax Neighborhood Association.

Statement: In my current role as a small business owner and Business Project Manager with a local consulting firm, I formulate and review policies and procedures on governance matters. My skills have been instrumental in developing successful processes that reduce redundancies, costs, and delays, and streamline teamwork to achieve SMART goals.

I love East Colfax and currently cover the cost of the street light in the alley behind 1225/1217 and 1205. Additionally, I regularly pick up trash and remind neighboring property managers to collaborate in curbing illegal dumping, a significant issue in our alleys.

I am active on Nextdoor, care deeply about our community, and want to contribute more to make it a safer, richer blend of cultures. Below are some areas of concern I would like to address with the board and community to achieve our goal of being a safe and prosperous neighborhood:

Speeding: Propose adding more speed bumps on Yosemite, the alley, and Colfax to reduce accidents from speeding drivers.

Trash: Implement better management of trash in the alleys and consider fining property owners and managers. I do my part in picking up trash, but more collective effort is needed.

Illegal Dumping: This growing problem needs more attention. I have installed no-dumping signs and cameras on my property and encouraged neighbors to do the same. Further community efforts are essential.

Affordable but Safe Housing: While I am not a fan of rent controls, I believe in the need for more affordable and well-maintained housing. Neglect in some areas is noticeable and needs addressing.

Homeless Encampments: Although cameras and fencing have helped, the issue persists. This topic requires continued discussion and action.

Crime: Our mayor and governor need to do more to address rising crime. We need more patrols, street lights, neighborhood watch signs, and community education on how to report crime anonymously.

Safety: Improve walkways, reduce illegal street racing, and ensure utility safety. For example, a recent incident involving a homeless encampment and an explosion highlighted the importance of addressing encampment safety.

To enrich East Colfax further, I propose the following:

Small Business Incentive Programs

Diversity Programs: Offer grants for language classes and cultural events.

Parks and Recreation: Increase recreational spaces amid new developments.

Libraries and Book Exchange Stations

Community Centers: Similar to Starbucks or FedEx Kinkos for socializing and working.

Youth Education: Address entitlement, disrespect towards authority, and drug issues through youth chapters or seminars.

Government Accountability: Ensure local, state, and federal government representatives are accountable to the community.

East Colfax is a unique and vibrant community. Despite some negative perceptions, it is rich in culture and has everything one needs. Let's transform this into a source of pride, not shame.

I love East Colfax because there are so many parallels to Kenya. I had written a whole speech, but I had to shorten it. I absolutely love this neighborhood. I would do anything to help promote the rich culture of this community. There is no neighborhood in Denver that can parallel the richness of culture here, and we have the power to protect this culture. We cannot let gentrification steal that from us.

Nikolaus Remus

Bio: Nikolaus Remus is a longtime Denverite and has been an East Colfax neighborhood resident since 2021. He's a licensed architect with experience in a wide variety of commercial, multi-family residential, healthcare, education, and federal government projects. Nikolaus has been on staff with Colorado chapter of the American Institute of Architects for the last 7 years as its advocacy engagement director. He manages state and local advocacy initiatives and works with state legislators on issues that impact the architecture profession, as well as overseeing

numerous member committees and working on AIA National's disaster recovery efforts. Nikolaus also served as a member of his condo HOA board for 4 years (3 as president) prior to moving to the East Colfax neighborhood.

Statement: I'm looking to give back and build stronger connections to the neighborhood I intend to call home long term. With my advocacy and professional background, I know how important it is to engage with city government officials and agencies, and how much more effective stakeholders can be as a cohesive group. Now more than ever, it's important to look out for our friends and neighbors to both build a stronger community and protect what we have.

Wants to utilize skills as an architect to assist with zoning and planning, etc. Very involved in advocacy on behalf of groups of people who have specific needs and talents and want to contribute and give back to the state.

Isaac Schloss

Bio: Longtime resident and have been involved one way or another since 2011. Regular volunteer for the ECNA food bank and East Colfax Community Collective. Part of the Grassroots Leadership Committee as well. Past President and Vice President of ECNA (2013/2014 somewhere in there). A long thyme coming and I have some thyme on my hands.

Statement: What I would like to accomplish is help the neighborhood get things that we've been promised for decades but overlooked and passed on like sidewalks, traffic and other safety issues that we've been told that there isn't enough funds or that's a different department. This neighborhood deserves better. This community lacks fulfillment in promises from the city, and we need to protect the diversity that flows throughout the neighborhood. Like a waiter, I bring a lot to the table.

Has been a past President and many other roles, has lived here for about 35 years. If anyone has any questions, Isaac will be around to help and support.

Abraham Tesfamichael

Bio: Owner and operator of liquor store and hair salon at Xanthia and Colfax. Participation in ECNA since 2019.

Statement: Loves the East Colfax neighborhood.

Susan Abbott (no info yet)

Candidates for Leadership Team

Ludi Bonilla

- I am so happy to work with this community, I love this community, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve the community. I love you!

Mary Coffman

- Was not present at the meeting.

Final comment from Tim:

Typically, we would be handing out ballots, but there are no competitive positions, and so, we do not need to hand out ballots. We invited folks consistently to run, and we are lucky to have this group coming through. We are feeling this community come together. All candidates are hereby elected to the ECNA board.