

Neighborhood Association Policy

Definitions

Neighborhood. A geographic area defined by the City that exists as a sub-area within the City as a whole. Each property within the City resides within a single neighborhood.

Neighbors. A group of residents or legal entities who own or occupy property within a neighborhood.

Neighborhood Association (NA). A voluntary neighborhood-based organization, recognized by the City, and in compliance with this policy.

Purpose

The City encourages the voluntary formation of NAs for the purpose of facilitating communication between residents, City staff and officials, fostering interaction between individuals on issues of common geographic concern and building a better community through cooperative action.

In keeping with this philosophy, the City will seek to notify and consult with NAs on matters of neighborhood interest. NAs will be notified when:

- Significant neighborhood projects are being discussed or proposed such as street reconstruction, park development or redevelopment or land use planning.
- A mailing goes out to residents in the neighborhood related to a City matter or public hearing.
- A developer requests a neighborhood meeting for the purpose of sketch plan review.
- The City is seeking to organize a neighborhood group for resident input.

Expectations

The following expectations exist with respect to NAs:

- NAs will be included in the public input process but will not be assumed by City officials to speak on behalf of all neighbors and will not limit the ability of any person or entity, including non-recognized neighborhood groups, in participating on their own behalf. Communication with the NA will not replace the City's traditional methods of direct outreach to residents.
- -NAs are strictly voluntary and no neighbor will be required to join. Each NA will determine its own priorities and desired level of activity.
- NAs will not assume the role of an administrative or legislative body. NAs have no legal authority to enact or enforce property design or maintenance requirements.
- Only one NA may exist in each neighborhood.

Bylaws

In order to be recognized as a NA by the City, neighborhood associations are required to adopt bylaws that include the following elements:

- An outline of the neighborhood boundaries as defined by the City,
- Membership criteria allowing any neighbor over the age of 18 the right to belong and to vote.
- A statement that the association will not discriminate based on race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, familial status or national origin in connection with employment, housing and real property, public accommodations, public services, credit and education,

- A minimum of one annual meeting each calendar year and a requirement that the time, place and purpose of the annual meeting be well publicized, including notifying the City 21 days in advance of the meeting,
- Procedures for the election and removal of officers,
- Number of members required for quorum and how votes are taken and recorded,
- A defined method for maintaining contact with association members and the City, and
- A statement of compliance with this policy.

Changes or amendments to the bylaws should be forwarded to the City staff liaison.

Recognition

A group of neighbors intending to form a recognized neighborhood association must notify the City staff liaison. The recognition steps are as follows:

- An educational meeting may be conducted, upon request, by the City staff liaison.
- The City notifies, in writing, all neighbors of the opportunity to vote on becoming a recognized neighborhood association and the proposed neighborhood association bylaws.
- After an affirmative vote, the association formally applies for recognition and submits a completed recognition application and minutes from the meeting during which the neighbors voted to seek recognition and a copy of the current or proposed association bylaws.
- The City staff liaison will forward the application materials to the City Manager for review and approval. The City Manager will notify the association and City Council of his or her decision with regard to recognition in writing. Associations can appeal the decision of the City Manager to the City Council.

Removal of Recognition

The City Manager has the authority to remove recognition from a NA if the association fails to comply with any requirement of this section. Prior to the removal of recognition, the neighborhood association will be given written notice of non-compliance and a period of 60 days to correct the issue. If the City Manager removes recognition, the neighborhood association and City Council will be informed of his or her decision in writing. To regain status, the neighborhood association must reapply for recognition.

Funding

Membership fees, when established by the bylaws of a NA, shall be voluntary and not preclude any neighbor from participating in the NA. Neighborhood associations may charge fees for events or activities that do not include voting on association business. The City shall not serve as the fiduciary agent for a neighborhood association. Any association which raises money outside of a city-sponsored grant or program is responsible for complying with applicable state and federal laws. If funds are disbursed by the City for use by an association, the association may be required to provide documentation of appropriate use. Failure to do so will result in removal of recognition.

City Staff Liaison

The City will provide a staff liaison to recognized neighborhood associations. The role of the staff liaison will be to:

- Provide information about the role and organization of NAs, both generally and in direct consultation with residents,
- Receive and process applications for recognition,

- Ensure that the recognition requirements are met and notify the associations and City Manager of any shortcomings,
- Maintain records related to NAs,
- Work with the Communications and Information Technology Services Department to facilitate the communication activities outlined in this policy,
- Develop and maintain a City speaker list and contact speakers upon request from a NA,
- Educate City staff on the role of NAs and how to fully engage NAs as a valued resource,
- Refer issues brought forward by NAs to appropriate staff, and
- Advise the City Council on issues related to neighborhoods or NAs and draft or revise related policies.

It is not the role of the City staff liaison to organize a neighborhood on behalf of a proposed NA or to advocate positions on behalf of NAs.

Communication Support

The City's Communications and Information Technology Services Department will provide basic communication support to NAs to ensure that residents are aware of their existence within the community. The City shall not serve as the primary communication vehicle for civic neighborhood associations. The City encourages the use of social media as a relatively inexpensive and easy way for associations to promote communication between neighbors.

Basic communication support from the City includes:

- Landing page on the City's website: The landing page will include the neighborhood boundaries and notable features, bylaws, regular meeting place and time and neighborhood contact information. The page can also link users to a NA website or other online resource. Due to the volume of potential requests, City staff will not be able to customize the landing page to include updates about upcoming events or to post other documents.
- Neighborhood-wide postcard mailings: The City will facilitate a neighborhood-wide postcard mailing notifying residents of a meeting to vote on the potential formation of a recognized neighborhood association. Content must be delivered to the Communications and Information Technology Services Department at least 21 days in advance of the meeting date to ensure timely delivery. Postcard mailings will be addressed to "Resident".
- Copying Services: The City will provide copying annually for each association in an amount equivalent to the neighborhood's estimated population (double-sided, on 8.5" by 11" paper). Associations should anticipate a 2-3 day turnaround for each copying project. Associations can maximize the copy services provided by the City by using half sheet flyers.
- Neighborhood listings: Active neighborhood associations and their contact information will be highlighted annually in *About Town*.

Communication with the NA will not replace the City's traditional methods of direct outreach to residents. Any communication facilitated by the City is subject to the City's communication policies. As a result, the City will not facilitate any communication that is inconsistent with its policies or general operating principles. Examples of communication that would be inconsistent with City policies include items that are discriminatory or politically partisan in nature.

Neighborhood Name Changes

The City has defined names for each neighborhood. NA's may apply to change the name of the neighborhood within one year of recognition. After one year, the name of the neighborhood and corresponding NA cannot be changed. To apply for a name change, the NA must submit a request to the City staff liaison to change the neighborhood name along with the minutes from the meeting at which the organization's members voted to change the name and a summary of how the association collected data regarding the name preference of their neighbors. The City staff liaison will forward the request to the City Council for review. The City Council has the authority to approve or deny the change.

Neighborhood Boundary Changes

The City has defined boundaries for each neighborhood. NAs may propose both technical corrections and neighborhood boundary changes.

Technical Corrections. Technical corrections are minor changes regarding the placement of the boundary line on the map. For example, a technical correction could entail shifting a boundary line to include the properties on both sides of a street. Technical corrections impact a small number of properties. To apply for a technical correction to a neighborhood's boundary, the NA must submit the request to the City staff liaison along with the minutes and sign-in list from the meeting at which the organization's members voted to make the change. The City staff liaison will forward the request to the NA(s) of any adjoining impacted neighborhoods for review and comment. The City staff liaison will forward the request and any comments from the adjoining impacted NA(s) to the City Council for review. The City Council has the authority to approve or deny the change.

Boundary Changes. Boundary changes represent a larger change with respect to the geographic definition of the neighborhood. Boundary changes have the potential to impact a large number of properties. For example, a boundary change could entail moving the boundary from one street to another street located a few blocks away. In light of the significant public input process conducted by the City to arrive at the current neighborhood boundary map, the City will not consider boundary changes for a period of three years following the approval of this policy. For a change to be considered after that period, all of the neighborhoods impacted by the proposed change must have an active NA. To apply for a neighborhood boundary change, all of the impacted NAs must submit the request to the City staff liaison along with the minutes and sign-in list from the meeting at which the organization's members voted to make the change. The City staff liaison will forward the requests to the City Council for review. The City Council has the authority to approve or deny the change.

Guest Speakers

The City will develop and maintain a list of City staff that can be scheduled as guest speakers by NAs. City staff may be available to speak on special topics by request. The guest speaker program is designed for education and information sharing purposes.

Meeting Space

Meeting space owned by the City and available for public use will be made available to NAs for meetings or events free to the public at no charge. If City staff are required to open or monitor the building, a recovery fee may be charged. City-sponsored meetings and programming will take precedent over NA meetings, and NA meetings may be "bumped" from a City facility with a minimum notice of one month.