



NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION GUIDEBOOK

A guide to creating a successful neighborhood association.



Neighborhood Association Guidebook

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This guidebook will assist you in starting a neighborhood association in the City of Edina. It will provide you with helpful hints and proven methods to effectively organize your group.

A neighborhood association is a group of homeowners, renters, apartment dwellers, and representatives from neighborhood businesses, churches, and schools who organize to improve conditions in their neighborhood. When you create a neighborhood association, the people in your neighborhood get a chance to decide what needs to be done and work together to make it happen. Organized neighbors send a message that everyone is working together to better their community. The basic ingredients – people, leadership, planning, and structure – are necessary components. A group that represents the community is an effective force for a better neighborhood.

For more information contact:

Neighborhoods Liaison
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ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS



WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

A City Neighborhood Association is a voluntary Neighborhood-based organization, recognized by the City, and in compliance with the City of Edina’s Recognized Neighborhood Association Policy. This group of residents meets to accomplish specific goals in their neighborhood.

Neighborhood Associations vs Homeowners Associations

Neighborhood Associations are generally a group of residents and other interested stakeholders that devote their time and energy to improve and enhance the well-defined, geographic area where they live. A Neighborhood Association meeting is a time to exchange ideas, decide on projects and priorities, propose solutions, and make plans affecting the neighborhood in addition to an opportunity to connect with other neighbors.

Neighborhood Associations usually meet monthly to discuss a variety of issues. Some issues could be: sponsoring neighborhood events, economic well-being of residents, improving city services, implementing projects to build neighborhood pride, and publishing neighborhood newsletters. True neighborhood associations have an elected board of directors and adopt a set of bylaws.

Homeowners Associations are groups of homeowners who live in an area developed by the same developer, usually referred to as a subdivision. Homeowner Associations usually have a formally elected body and are governed by deed restrictions - a set of rules that homeowners agree to when they purchase their house. These rules, or covenants, often govern construction regulations, membership/dues requirements, as well as a wide variety of other issues. Some Homeowners Associations also focus on items that affect their neighborhood such as beautification/clean-up, crime, street lighting, building issues/concerns, and social events. These issues are similar to those addressed by Neighborhood Associations.

Purpose

The Neighborhood Association facilitates communication between residents, City staff and officials, and fosters interaction between individuals on issues of common geographic concern and promotes community through cooperative action. Neighborhood associations help identify challenges and concerns, support change and improvement efforts, help resolve conflicts, provide volunteers for community initiatives, represent the neighborhood as a whole to elected officials and find resources to make the neighborhood a better place to live.

Goals may include:

- Helping neighbors get to know each other by hosting social events
- Addressing a particular issue of the neighborhood
- Making physical improvements such as adopting a park or organizing a neighborhood clean-up
- Assembling a neighborhood crime watch
- Collaborating to share opinions with public officials

EDINA'S RECOGNIZED NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

To find out what neighborhoods are currently recognized you can visit the Neighborhood Association's Website at: www.edinamn.gov/about_neighborhoods

Organizational information such as bylaws, contact, boundaries, and notable neighborhood features are available to the public on the City's website and upon request.

If there is already an active Neighborhood Association in your area, consider joining it. New members with an active interest in the neighborhood are valuable resources for existing Neighborhood Associations. If you live in a neighborhood that does not have an organized Neighborhood Association, consider getting your neighbors involved.



Additional Responsibilities of Edina's Recognized Neighborhood Associations

Boundaries: The Neighborhood Association must adopt the neighborhood boundaries as recognized by the City.

Leadership: The Neighborhood Association must have an elected steering committee or board made up of volunteers from the neighborhood.

Annual Meeting: The Neighborhood Association must hold one annual meeting with notice to all addresses within the geographic boundaries;

Membership: The Neighborhood Association must allow any Neighbor over the age of 18 the right to belong and to vote as part of the membership of the organization.

WHY ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Organizing a neighborhood brings people together to take collective action. Neighborhoods organize to:

- **Build community.**
Building community means improving your neighborhood's ability to organize and leverage the diverse skills of its residents. Residents want to become better neighbors by getting to know each other and helping each other out. Whether it is exchanging skills, such as cooking dinner for a neighbor one night in exchange for having him/her run some errands for you, activities such as these enhance the sense of community.
- **Address a particular concern of the neighborhood.**
Many neighborhoods become organized when a particular concern emerges in which they can rally around. Residents of the neighborhood may get together to discuss problems and come up with solutions. As an Association, members can work together to resolve the issue and use the many people resources already available within their neighborhood.
- **Improve communication.**
Neighborhood Associations can serve as a vehicle to connect neighbors to neighbors. Neighborhood Associations can help strengthen communication between residents and City Staff as to create a better community through cooperative action. In keeping with this philosophy, the City will seek to notify and consult with Neighborhood Associations on matters of neighborhood interest.



HOW TO ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

TAKE SMALL STEPS

Keep in mind some important guidelines as you begin to organize:

- Building an organization is a process. It can't be done overnight. Be patient. Identify your priorities and build them step by step.
- Set realistic goals. Start small and build upward. As your organizational capacity grows, start setting your goals higher.
- How you treat people is crucial to your success. By treating people with respect and honesty, people will be more likely to get involved in the organization.
- Adapt the ideas and strategies outlined in this guidebook to the specific needs and circumstances of your community and organization.

People join neighborhood groups for a variety of reasons. One of them is to get to know their neighbors better and to feel a sense of community. So, as you build your organization, be sure to have fun.

STEP ONE: ORGANIZING A CORE GROUP

Start with an organizing team.

Start your Neighborhood Association by finding a core group of organizers who agree to meet. Ask some neighbors you already know and ask those neighbors to speak to other neighbors. The core group may begin informally with just a few people and gradually evolve into an organized group with common interests in the neighborhood.

STEP TWO: GET THE WORD OUT

Notify the City's Neighborhood Liaison.

The Neighborhood Liaison can assist with scheduling the first neighborhood meeting and sending out a meeting notification to all the residents in a defined neighborhood. It is important to set up the meeting quickly after forming an organizing team to continue the momentum.

STEP THREE: FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Host a Neighborhood Meeting.

The neighborhood meeting and agenda is led by the core group organizing team.

There are three critical tasks to accomplish at the first meeting:

- Voting on becoming a City Recognized Neighborhood Association
- Selecting a volunteer board/steering committee
- Establishing a set of bylaws

Provided there is enough time, the agenda will also include:

- Approving the bylaws
- Voting on primary contact for the City

Depending on interest and time, the agenda could include:

- Round the table introductions
- Review of the Neighborhood Association Policy
- A map to identify where each person lives
- Round the table ideas on what topics a Neighborhood Association could address
- Comment cards



The organizing team should agree on ground rules for meetings:

- Act for the benefit of the group
- Be polite and make constructive comments
- Treat other members with respect
- Discuss issues and concerns, not personalities
- Accept group decisions after a vote has been taken

STEP FOUR: GET RECOGNIZED

Send in a Recognition Application

The City has created an on line form for Neighborhood Associations to submit a request for Neighborhood Association recognition status. This form can be found on Edina's website at www.edinamn.gov/neighborhoods. Following application approval the Neighborhood Liaison will submit a press release to announce your recognition status, request the Neighborhood Association landing page be created, and develop a communication email for City staff to use for all neighborhood matters.

BYLAWS

Neighborhood Associations need to have bylaws describing how they will do business. Bylaws simply establish the rules governing a group. They also govern the way the Association functions as well as the roles and responsibilities of its officers. They should be taken seriously because they are important to the maintenance of order and credibility in the organization. Writing bylaws can be a tedious procedure for new organizations, but they are very important to the success of the Association. They help members clearly define and understand the purpose, procedures, and role of their Neighborhood Association.

The City's Neighborhood Liaison has a set of sample bylaws available. When designing your bylaws, use only those areas you need. It is important to customize your bylaws to meet the needs of your group. Be specific, but still allow flexibility within your Association.

Typical Bylaws Include:

1. Name of Organization
2. Boundaries (be specific, use street names)
3. Purpose (can be as general or specific as you want it)
4. Membership
 - a. Who is a member?
 - b. Will each person have a vote, or each household?
 - c. Privileges and responsibilities of membership, if any?
5. Meetings
 - a. Annual meeting
 - b. Dates or frequency of general membership meetings
 - c. Notice of meetings
6. Board of Directors/Steering Committee
 - a. Number (can be flexible)
 - b. Date and manner of election
 - c. Term of office
 - d. Filling vacancies
 - e. Removal of directors

- f. Meetings and quorum
7. Officers
 - a. Number of positions
 - b. Duties
 - c. Term of office
 - d. Manner of election
8. Parliamentary Authority
 - a. Amendments to Bylaws
 - b. Amend at regular, annual or board meetings
 - c. Size of majority needed to amend
9. Non-Discrimination Clause

Once bylaws are written, they should be reviewed periodically to assure that the Association's purpose has not changed. Reviewing bylaws on a regular basis ensures they meet the needs of the group. Whenever bylaws are updated, they should be re-filed with the City Neighborhood Liaison.

Leadership Team: Board/Steering Committee

Every Neighborhood Association will need a leadership team. Most commonly Neighborhood Associations will create a board or a steering committee which is a body of elected volunteers that jointly oversee the activities of a Neighborhood Association.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

BOARD/STEERING COMMITTEE

The board/steering committee's activities and powers are outlined in the Neighborhood Association's bylaws. The bylaws also specify the number of members, terms, how they are chosen, and when they are to meet. All members of the Board/Steering Committee are volunteers that live or own real property within the neighborhoods.

The board/steering committee acts on behalf of, and is subordinate to, the organization's full membership (ie. all people or entities owning or occupying property within the approved neighborhood boundaries).

Board/Steering Committee Duties

Duties of the Board/steering committee include:

- Being accountable to the membership about activities and financial expenditures (often done once yearly at the annual meeting).
- Setting direction and policy for the Neighborhood Association.
- Building relationships with residents and stakeholders.
- Communicating relevant information with residents in the neighborhood.
- Appointing a designated contact to be in direct communication with the City on behalf of the Neighborhood Association (this may be done by a vote of the entire membership).
- Ensure that the Neighborhood Association contact has provided updated contact information; board/steering committee list, and bylaws to the City.

FINDING AND SUSTAINING LEADERSHIP

It is important for leaders to involve all group members in the decision-making process and to be sure everyone is heard before the group votes on an action or makes a decision. The qualities of good leaders include flexibility, the desire to listen and consider the opinions of others, the ability to clearly state goals and expectations and willingness to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of other individuals. Part of being a leader is helping others grow.

Develop Leaders

- Search for more than one or two leaders within the neighborhood.
- Encourage people to switch tasks and discover their strengths.
- Remind members to be open to change: bring in new members with fresh ideas.
- Encourage people to communicate in a positive and productive manner.

Avoid Leader Burnout

- Delegate responsibility; some leaders have better strengths than others.
- Break-up big jobs into small parts and assign different tasks.
- Encourage younger individuals to participate in leadership roles.
- Focus on the goals and achievements, not the conflict in personalities.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PRIMARY CONTACT

The Neighborhood Association primary contact is a volunteer that a recognized Neighborhood Association selects to serve as their primary contact with the City of Edina. The Neighborhood Association contact serves as the primary communicator between the recognized neighborhood association and the City. Contact information for this individual is available to the public on the City's website and upon request. All City Staff will be notified of the name and contact information for the Neighborhood Association. City Staff will be able to assist the contact to interpret official notices and policies.

The City will seek to notify the Neighborhood Association contact on matters of neighborhood interest. For example, the Neighborhood Association contact 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.

Primary Contact Expectations

The following expectations exist with respect to the Neighborhood Association Contact:

- The contact is the designated liaison for the Neighborhood Association.
- The contact will forward all relevant and applicable information received from the City to the Neighborhood Association steering committee or board, as well as affected residents, if applicable.
- The contact will notify the City of the Neighborhood Association's priorities and desired level of activity on projects and initiatives.
- The contact should be signed up for City Extra emails for their neighborhood.
- The contact will notify the City of bylaw changes, leadership changes, primary contact changes, website updates, etc.

“RECOGNIZED” NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

The City will seek to notify the Neighborhood Association on matters of neighborhood interest through communication with the designated Neighborhood Association Contact.



NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION EXPECTATIONS

The following expectations exist with respect to the Neighborhood Association:

- The Neighborhood Association does not speak on behalf of all neighbors at any time and will not limit the ability of any person or entity, including non-recognized Neighborhood groups, to participate on their own behalf. Communication with the Neighborhood Association will not replace the City’s traditional methods of direct outreach to residents.
- Neighborhood Associations are strictly voluntary and no Neighbor will be required to participate. Each Neighborhood Association will determine its own priorities and desired level of activity.
- Neighborhood Associations will not assume the role of an administrative or legislative body. Neighborhood Associations have no legal authority to enact or enforce property design or maintenance requirements.
- The Neighborhood Association will ensure that the designated contact will forward all relevant and applicable information received from the City to the Neighborhood Association Steering Committee or Board, as well as affected residents, if applicable.
- The Neighborhood Association will notify the City of the organization’s priorities and desired level of activity on projects and initiatives through the designated contact.
- The Neighborhood Association will submit annual recognition paperwork to the City and maintain updated bylaws, steering committee/board member lists, and designated contact information with the City at all times.
- Membership fees, when established by the bylaws of a Neighborhood Association, shall be voluntary and shall not preclude any neighbor from participating in the Neighborhood Association.

Additional Responsibilities

Boundaries: The Neighborhood Association must adopt the neighborhood boundaries as recognized by the City.

Leadership: The Neighborhood Association must have an elected steering committee or board made up of volunteers from the neighborhood.

Annual Meeting: The Neighborhood Association must hold one annual meeting with notice to all addresses within the geographic boundaries;

Membership: The Neighborhood Association must allow any Neighbor over the age of 18 the right to belong and to vote as part of the membership of the organization.

CITY RECOGNIZED BENEFITS

The City has made a commitment to notify and consult with Neighborhood Associations on matters of neighborhood interest. For example, Neighborhood Associations will be notified when:

- Significant neighborhood projects are being discussed or proposed such as a street reconstruction, park development or redevelopment or land use planning.
- There is a City matter or public hearing.
- The City is seeking resident input and organizes a neighborhood group for this purpose.

Communication Support

Even though the City is not the primary communication vehicle for Neighborhood Associations, the City will ensure residents are aware of the recognized neighborhood associations in the community.

Meeting Space

City-owned meeting space is available and free of charge for Neighborhood Association meetings or events.

Guest Speakers

City staff may be requested as a guest speaker for the Neighborhood Association.

Annual Neighborhood Association Leadership Workshop

The City will coordinate an annual leadership meeting for the recognized Neighborhood Associations to share ideas and best practices.

Annual Award

Each year the Mayor will give a Neighborhood Association Award to recognize a neighborhood for their excellent effort in community building.



NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

STEPS TO AN EFFECTIVE MEETING

The way that meetings are run will affect how members become and stay involved in the Association. If meetings rarely start on time or are dominated by a few people, members will become frustrated and will stop coming. When meetings are well run, people's opinions are respected, and the agenda is followed, members will feel more willing to participate in other activities of the Association.

Set the Agenda

Every meeting must have an agenda or purpose. Spend time before the meeting deciding not only what to discuss, but also how long and in what order you will discuss the items. It is sometimes useful to put emotional or controversial issues at the end of the agenda. This allows you to take care of small, but necessary decisions early in the meeting. When listing agenda items, it is always good to list a time limit. Do not overload the agenda. Try to stay within one to one and a half hours and allow some time for refreshments and mingling. Order of a typical agenda:

- I. Call to order**
The President/Chair as designated by the Neighborhood Association will call the meeting to order. This person acts as the meeting facilitator and offer opening remarks.
- II. Minutes**
The board/steering committee can use the previous meeting minutes as a refresher of the topics at hand. Amend minutes as needed and allow the members to approve a final copy.
- III. Reports from Committee members**
A designated person from each committee should be prepared to report on the progress of the committee's goals and objectives. The individual should allow discussion or feedback from the entire group. Make sure each reporting committee member keeps discussion time to a minimum of 5-10minutes.
- IV. Unfinished or new business**
The President/Chair asks for new ideas or topics and opens the floor for discussion. Limit discussion to 5-10 minutes.
- V. Announcements**
In most occasions this is an opportunity for non-profits, City departments or other agencies involved in the neighborhood association to speak. Next meeting date, time and location should be announced.
- VI. Adjournment**
The President/Chair adjourns the meeting.

Running the Meeting

Always start the meeting on time. Make sure someone takes minutes and records the meeting so those who were unable to attend can still keep up with the activities of the Association.

When Members Disagree

Neighborhood Associations, like any group of people, can run into problems with personality conflicts, burnout and leadership issues. When problems occur, encourage an open and respectful discussion among the members, make sure the discussion does not become a meeting of personal attacks, and try to guide the group toward the desired outcome. Some people try to avoid dealing with conflict because it makes them uncomfortable and some people try to approach conflict as if they were in a battle and determined to win. It is best to resolve conflict immediately and many disagreements can be resolved through negotiation. Disagreements among association members can be an opportunity for growth, change and new understanding.

When a Point is Being Discussed Too Long:

- Summarize or suggest tabling the subject for a later time.
- When two members get into a heated discussion:
 - Summarize points made by each and turn the discussion back to the group and/or
 - Invite the two to stay after the meeting when the three of you can talk it over.
- When coping with the “one-man” show:
 - Interrupt with a statement giving the speaker credit for his contribution but politely asking him to hold his other points until later and/or
 - Interrupt with “You have brought up many points that will keep us busy for a long time. Would anyone like to take up one of these points?”
- When a speaker drifts from the subject:
 - Interrupt, give him credit for his idea but explain that he is departing from the main point; or
 - Propose to the group the question of whether it wants to stray from the outline or follow it; or
 - Bring the discussion back to the topic by using the related idea as the transition.
- When a member has difficulty expressing themselves:
 - Build up their confidence by expressing appreciation for what they have said and then rephrase the material with a preface such as “Is this you mean, Ms. Jones?”

Participation

- Set realistic expectations about attendance. You may not need large attendance at every meeting. Do not focus on what you consider poor attendance. Concentrate on coming up with techniques to increase attendance.
- Set a tone at meetings where everyone’s ideas are welcome and respected and no one is put down.
- Consider establishing a Membership Committee to focus on recruiting new members.
- Be realistic about what people can do given their other responsibilities. Respect all contributions, no matter how small.

Ending the Meeting

Meetings should end with a plan of action.

Ask committees to research an issue and report back to the group. Summarize what has been decided. Then, decide on the date, time and place of the next meeting before members leave.

And, most importantly, in addition to addressing concerns in the neighborhood, plan enjoyable neighborhood activities that will bring the neighborhood together, such as a block party, neighborhood

garden, or card club. If those in the neighborhood see the exciting activities happening around them, they will be more likely to want to participate in your Neighborhood Association.

Meeting Reminders:

- Remind the neighborhood of the time and date, by email, phone call, flier, letter or Next Door.
- Regular meetings are important so that members are informed of current and future issues and projects.
- It is not always necessary to call a full group meeting to make minor decisions. When minor decisions need to be made, using an executive committee or board can be better.
- If a regular meeting is scheduled, but there really isn't anything important to discuss, then create something. This can be done by inviting a guest speaker, organizing a neighborhood tour, or having a potluck. It is important to have contact on a regular basis.
- Location is important. Choose a place that is centrally located and familiar to the neighbors. The location can set the mood and the friendliness of the meeting.
- The meeting room should be comfortable and arranged in a manner that will encourage everyone to participate.
- Have an agenda available. Members can begin familiarizing themselves with what is to be discussed and will be aware of the order of topics while waiting for the meeting to begin. The agenda should be short and concise.
- Don't forget a sign in sheet, you will be able to keep all information up to date and keep new members involved.

PLANNING YOUR NEXT STEPS

COMMUNICATION

Communication is very important to the success of your Association. Sharing information is a great way to build a sense of community in your neighborhood, get new people to join your Association and enlist support for your events. Here are some ideas to get the word out.

Channels for Communication

- Publish a Neighborhood Association newsletter. Collaborate with other Neighborhood Associations to share the cost and assist in design.
- Announce your meetings and events in weekly area newspapers, schools, and church and club newsletters.
- Distribute fliers door to door or use door hangers.
- Distribute a neighborhood survey and the results by mail, email, phone or door to door.
- Telephone tree/email list.
- Block Representatives.
- Ask local businesses to place fliers or posters in their businesses.
- Send letters or emails to all within the neighborhood boundary.
- Post to City of Edina's Facebook page.
- Next Door.
- Conduct a survey.

IDENTIFY ISSUES AND DEVELOP A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

A neighborhood plan will help your Neighborhood Association focus their energy on top priorities. First, conduct a neighborhood inventory. An inventory is a collection of facts about the neighborhood including information on residents, types of homes, area businesses, churches and schools.

After gathering your inventory of the neighborhood, identify a few problems, concerns or desires (problems can be identified by hosting a meeting where neighbors can share concerns). Problems and concerns typically addressed by Neighborhood Associations may include crime, physical improvements, traffic, street lights, preserving unique features of the neighborhood, zoning concerns or meet and greet for neighbors.

What a Plan Should Include

The plan should include:

- Why an Association was formed.
- The principals that will guide the Association and its work.
- When and how often the members will meet.
- How meetings will be conducted.
- The goals and outcomes of the Neighborhood Association.
- An action plan for accomplishing the goals set by the neighborhood association.



ESTABLISH COMMITTEES

Some neighborhood associations work well when divided into committees. The leadership group should be responsible for determining what those committees are, how many are needed and the goals of the committees.

Examples of Committees and possible duties:

- Bylaws Committee
 - Determine how the association will conduct meetings and votes.
 - Make decisions to resolve disagreements among members about procedures.
- Crime Reduction Committee
 - Act as a liaison to Edina Police Department to coordinate education workshops to educate neighbors on crime prevention.
 - Assist with organizing Home Watch programs in the neighborhood.
- The Green Committee
 - Organize neighborhood clean-ups.
 - Work with the Parks and Recreation department to adopt-a-park.
- Social Event Committee
 - Coordinate Night to Unite party.
 - Coordinate neighborhood golf tournament at Braemar.

KEEPING INTEREST IN THE ASSOCIATION

This by far is the biggest challenge for any neighborhood association. In general, members will participate if the following are present:

- Business and social events in which to participate,
- Issues of importance to discuss,
- Clean and visible accomplishments,
- Organized, competent leaders, and
- Event to recognize participants.

STEPS TO VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Recruit people to events and activities - not to business meetings. Sign-in sheets, nametags, and follow-up recruitment calls should be standard procedure in your organization. Give new members a chance to participate through activities such as passing out information at meetings, working on a neighborhood project, or contacting their friends to come to the next event. These activities should make the volunteer feel useful and productive. When recruiting volunteers, enthusiasm is important. Show

confidence by knowing what you would like the volunteer to do and be enthusiastic about the task at hand. Be able to explain how volunteers enhance the neighborhood.

1. Be Prepared

Have in mind a mini-strategy consisting of how you will explain your goal and what you want the person to do. Review what you know about the person, such as interests, experience, and family. Look and listen for clues as to what interests this person.

2. Legitimize Yourself

Find a common background or a mutual friend. Explain that you have the same problem that they do. Mention people that they might know. Explain why the persons participation will make a difference.

3. Listen, Listen, Listen

Draw people out. Listening is more important than just not talking. It is asking good questions, providing encouraging remarks, and using body language that says you are interested. Be sure to listen to for special skills, useful contacts, and organizational networks that can be useful to your neighborhood.

4. Challenge

Encourage people to produce change. Challenge people to care about the organizations goals.

5. Get a Commitment

Never leave a conversation open-ended. Get a commitment with a firm deadline. Write it down, make a note for follow-up and clarify exactly what should happen next.

6. Follow-Up

Have greeters or a welcoming committee at meetings, introduce new people to experienced volunteers, and keep the lines of communication between you and your volunteers open at all times.

Keeping volunteers is just as important as recruiting them. Your Neighborhood Association could create a committee or program designed especially for volunteer and membership issues. This program should include training, supervision, recognition, and leadership development. Always explain the organizational importance of each task and assign tasks to fit the time that the volunteer is able to give. Recognize volunteers and make them feel a part of the team.

IDEAS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS

ACTIVITIES

Parties

Holding a party is a great social event for neighbors of all ages. Here are some party ideas:

- May Day – kick off the summer
- Night to Unite – first Tuesday in August
- Monthly Birthday Party
- Neighborhood Trivia
- Baby Shower for a expecting neighbor
- Last Day of School
- Potluck
- Halloween
- Cook out/Picnic
- Progressive dinner

Kids

Some ideas for the kids in your neighborhood:

- Movie in the park night
- Kids or pet parade
- Kickball
- Crafts
- Sidewalk chalk
- Lemonade stand
- May Day baskets
- Scavenger Hunt
- Back to School

Projects

Many neighborhoods come together to take on projects that benefit from many hands. Some project ideas are:

- Neighborhood clean-up
- Community garden, tree planting, follower planting
- School supply drive or food drive
- Murals or neighborhood art project
- Neighborhood scrapbook or video
- Crime watch program
- Neighborhood entrance signs
- Security lighting
- Tool lending libraries
- Tutoring program for youth
- Home tours
- Neighborhood t-shirts
- Paint/fix up projects
- Paint swap
- Speakers on topics of interest of the neighborhood
- City or school board representation at meeting
- Philanthropic projects, such as “sponsoring” a family who needs assistance
- Babysitting co-op

Outdoors

- Field games in the park
- Ice cream social
- Dog walking group
- Running club
- Deck Crawl – appetizers/cocktails
- Lawn games
- Christmas decoration contest
- Pumpkin carving contest
- Neighborhood garage sale

Indoors

- Book club
- TGIF get together
- Coffee/dessert
- Card party



- Fall/winter chili cook-off
- Soup or cookie exchange
- Cooking club
- Scrapbooking group
- Men's/Women's small group

RAISING FUNDS

The City of Edina's Neighborhood Association Policy does not allow for neighborhood associations to require membership dues. The motivation behind this decision was to make participation accessible without creating a potential financial barrier. However, a neighborhood association can accept donations.

If your neighborhood association wants to raise funds for regular operations, special events and projects there are several opportunities to get hold a fundraising event in the community. Funds can be raised by the group itself, private donations, or private and government grants.

A neighborhood association can create a fund raising committee who can be selected to prepare a budget and to oversee projects. Here are some examples of fundraising that has worked well for other neighborhood associations:

- Rummage/ Garage Sales
- Raffles
- Cook Offs
- Parties or Concerts
- Craft Fair
- Sporting Tournaments



Managing Funds

Neighborhood Associations have multiple options to manage neighborhood funds. One option to consider is the Edina Community Foundation. The Edina Community Foundation provides the opportunity, free of charge, to take the fiduciary responsibility of funds for a Neighborhood Associations. To inquire about this service or ask more questions, please contact the Edina Foundation at edfoundation@edinamn.gov. Please know a neighborhood can very successfully manage their own funds independently as well.

WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CITY STRUCTURE

Voters/Residents

Voters have direct access to legislative power through the initiative/referendum process. This applies to legislative action only (contrast: administrative or quasi-judicial) in state, home rule county, or city with appropriate charter provisions. It can either propose grass roots legislation or challenge a decision by policy makers in referring their action to popular vote.

Elected Officials/City Council

Elected officials are a source of information, advocates for local policy changes, and intermediaries for citizen groups or citizens.

Boards/Commissions

Edina's advisory boards and commissions are appointed by the Edina City Council. City Council take recommendations from the boards and commissions, however, the City Council may weigh a recommendation against other priorities and override the recommendation or request additional information before making a decision. All Board and Commission meetings are advertised on the City website and provide a place holder on their agendas for "Community Comment".

City Manager

The City Manager is hired by the Edina City Council. City Managers oversee City Staff and the daily operations for the City.

City Staff

Department directors and City Staff support all the efforts of the City. These professionals are a source of information and advice. They can make decisions within the scope of their job responsibilities.

IF YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD HAS A CONCERN

Email

You can write to all of the City Council at mail@edinamn.gov.

Community Comment

If you would like to raise an issue not on the agenda you may do so during the Community Comment portion of City Council the agenda.



Edina Neighborhood Connections