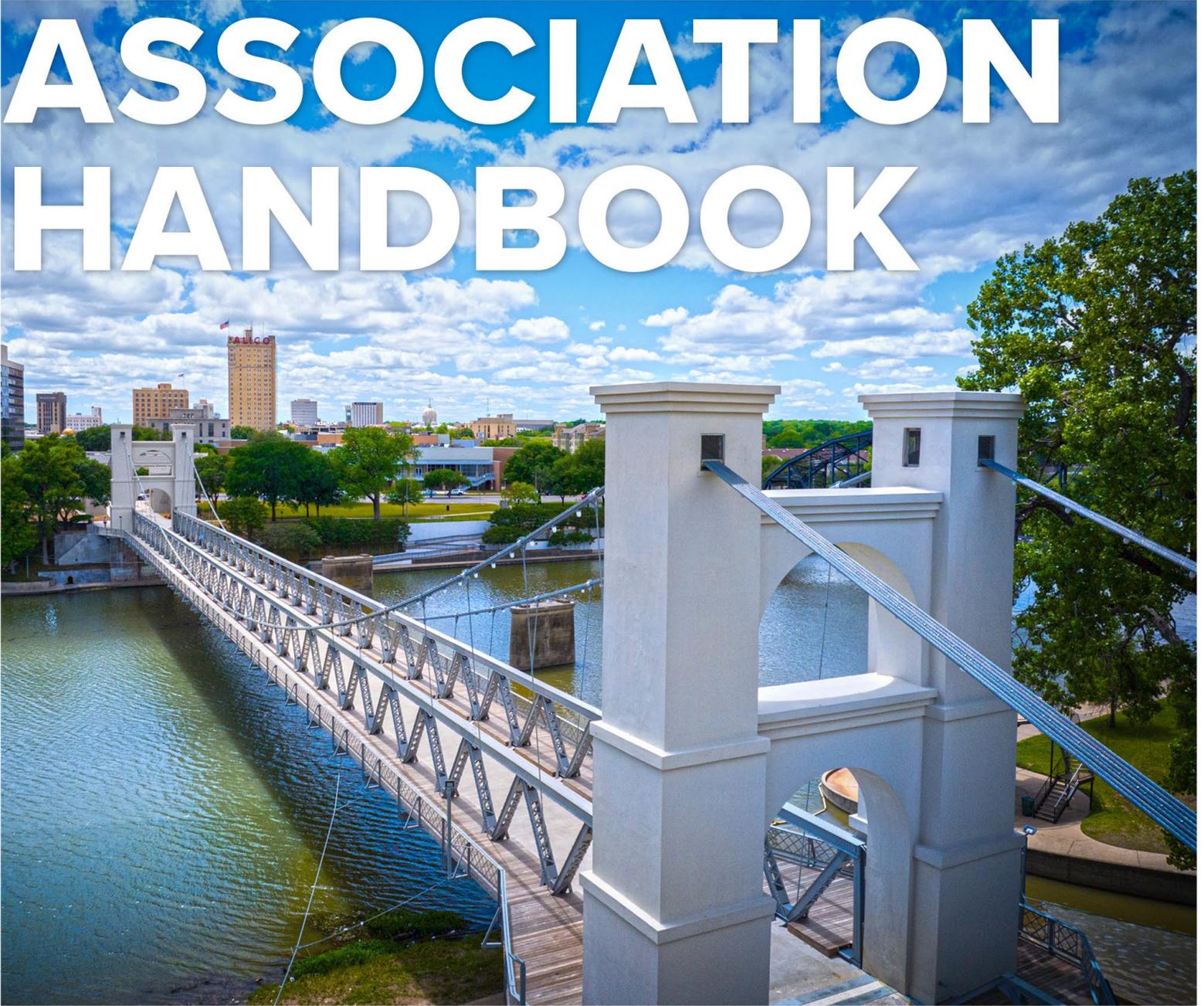


# NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION HANDBOOK



CITY OF WACO  
2023-2024





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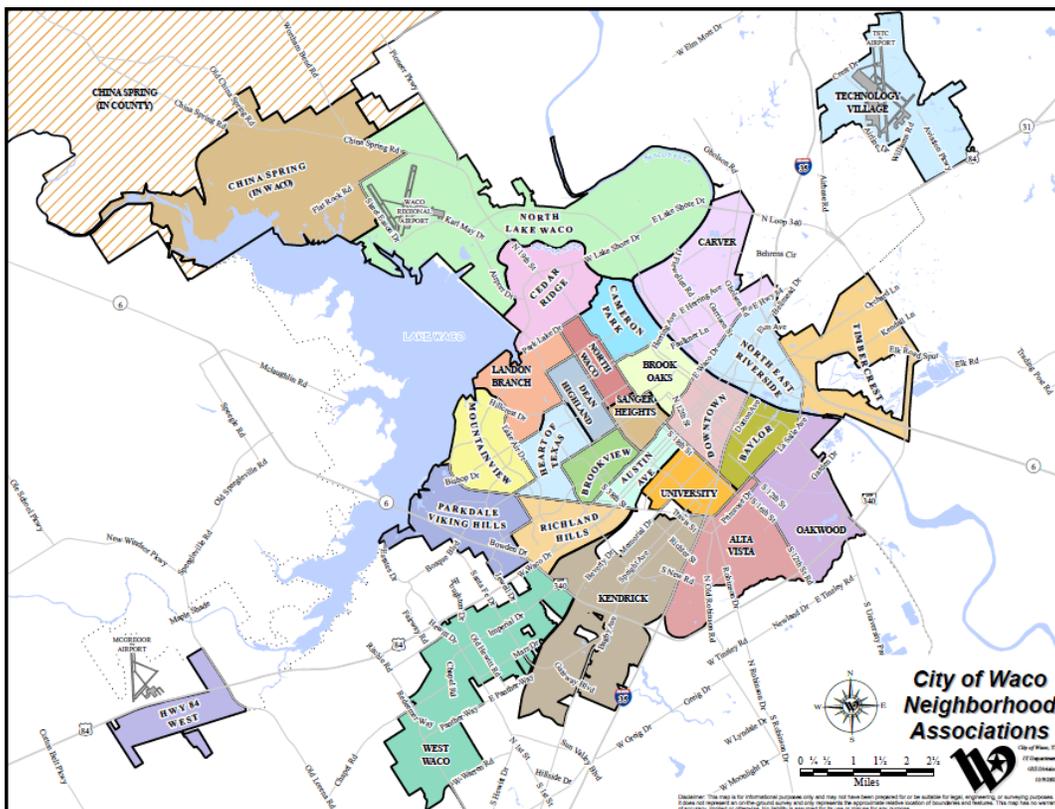
\*Originally adapted from the City of Carrollton’s “Involved Neighbors of Carrollton: A Handbook for Neighborhoods”, the City of College Station’s “Taking Action! A Manual for Neighborhood Associations”, and NeighborWorks Pocatello’s “Building A Strong Neighborhood Association” and compiled by Grassroots Community Development for the City of Waco in 2020. Most recently updated - August 2023

# Introduction

Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of the community, and their health and vitality are essential to the future of Waco. Strong neighborhoods are not just a collection of houses within a neighborhood boundary; they contribute to a unique sense of place and community identity with residents contributing to partnerships, leadership, and civic involvement. In many ways, a community is only as strong and sustainable as its neighborhoods.

Neighborhood associations play a vital role in representing and engaging the residents in their local community. The residents of Waco have demonstrated a great willingness to dedicate time and energy to make a difference in the community. This manual will help residents focus their efforts and organize their neighborhoods for action. Whether your neighborhood association has been in existence for twenty years, two years, or you are just forming one, there is information in this manual that will be helpful.

The City of Waco believes that increasing citizen participation benefits the whole community by creating a positive environment of shared responsibility and collaboration. The City challenges your neighborhood to have an active association that makes a difference in the community. You can utilize this manual to help start an association where there is none or increase the effectiveness of an existing organization.



For individual neighborhood association maps, visit: [www.waco-texas.com/neighborhoods](http://www.waco-texas.com/neighborhoods).



## Why do neighborhoods organize?

*Neighborhoods organize for a variety of reasons. Most want to:*

### Address a Concern

When they are effective, neighborhood associations are unique organizations based on the will of those who know their neighborhoods best. Neighborhood associations can serve as:

- Powerful advocacy groups.
- Hubs for neighborhood residents to come together, discuss problems, and come up with solutions.
- Organizational structures to create a common voice for a neighborhood.

### Empower Residents

Neighborhood associations have the potential to speak — with authority — to local government and elected officials. When neighborhoods organize, they acquire power and a responsibility to the community to accomplish something. Neighborhood associations work with their community members and provide input to local government officials to ensure that their neighborhood maintains or achieves their desired quality of life with adequate amenities and services.

### Foster Community

Neighborhood associations build social networks by creating spaces for neighbors to get to know and develop relationships with one another. These relationships strengthen the group's ability to engage in open dialogue, which can lead to more informed decisions and the ability of the neighborhood to act and unite the diverse skills of its residents.



## Benefits to Organizing Associations

*Through neighborhood organizing, residents get to know each other better while working to improve their community.*

Other benefits include:

- Identifying common neighborhood goals.
- Facilitating achievement of common neighborhood goals.
- Providing the neighborhood with a common voice and an effective means of communicating with government officials and other instrumental groups.
- Empowering neighborhoods to provide input and be a part in the decision-making process that affects their neighborhoods.
- Planning and holding social activities for the neighborhood.
- Organizing neighborhood improvement and preservation projects.

The Office of Neighborhood Engagement is the City's primary liaison with neighborhood organizations and maintains ongoing communications with community groups that can have a positive impact on neighborhoods. As with any successful relationship, all parties share responsibility in creating an alliance that is effective and beneficial to all involved.



## Role of the Citizen

*Citizens have a very important role in the health and spirit of a community. Active participation is the best way to ensure that your desired quality of life is fulfilled.*

Citizen involvement includes voting regularly, serving in a public capacity, or organizing neighborhood projects or activities. All these examples are equally important to the process of building strong communities. Citizen involvement and engagement is crucial to improving the quality of life in their neighborhoods and the city.

### Neighborhood Commitment

In the spirit of partnership, active neighborhood associations will:

- Have an active board with officers in place.
- Provide Neighborhood Engagement with a list of all association board officers' contact information and notify Neighborhood Engagement when there are association leadership changes in personnel or contact information.
- Distribute information communicated from Neighborhood Engagement to the association's board and to all association members, as appropriate.
- Hold at least one annual meeting where the entire neighborhood is invited to attend.
- Provide Neighborhood Engagement with notice of upcoming meetings at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting. (It is preferential to provide more advance notice, so that the meeting can be advertised on city media platforms, and staff can make plans to attend.)
- Provide Neighborhood Engagement with a copy of current association bylaws and any amendments to the by-laws (recommended).
- Provide Neighborhood Engagement with association meeting agendas at least 72 hours prior to meetings and an annual update on the neighborhood organization, which should also be provided for consideration to the membership at the annual meeting (recommended).



## Role of Local Government

*The preservation and maintenance of an area's quality of life is a shared responsibility. Local government is responsible for ensuring that the common good is protected and public services are carried out in an orderly and efficient manner.*

### City of Waco Commitment

To promote neighborhood integrity — in partnership with Waco neighborhood associations, other City divisions, and community organizations — the City of Waco will work through Neighborhood Engagement to:

- Provide start-up support to neighborhoods establishing or revitalizing associations.
- Assist with special event permitting needed for annual or large neighborhood meetings or events.
- Attend or provide information for Neighborhood Association general membership meetings as needed or upon request.
- Coordinate Neighborhood Association requests for information from the various City departments.

- Maintain a list of Neighborhood Associations who wish to communicate with the city to enhance community communication.
- Notify associations of public hearings pertaining to development, public works, and other municipal projects in the vicinity of their neighborhood.
- Act as a central access point within the City to direct questions, concerns, and complaints to various departments.
- Serve as the liaison between the City departments, City Managers, the Mayor, and neighborhoods.

Providing your neighborhood leadership contact information to Neighborhood Engagement will improve communication between citizens, government, and other useful groups.

To assist the Neighborhood Associations to be active, viable organizations that help make their neighborhoods better, cleaner, and safer places to live, the City has agreed to provide certain services to the Neighborhood Associations at no cost:

- Certain City facilities may be reserved, free of charge, for neighborhood association meetings and activities during the facility's normal hours of operation. (This does not include special events that require an Outdoor Event Permit.)
- The Communications & Marketing Department will promote the neighborhood association meeting calendar on the City's website with links directing residents to the calendar from the City's e-newsletter and in the "City Limits" newsletter that accompanies all water bills.
- Solid Waste will supply roll-off dumpster service at three neighborhood cleanups each year. Two of the cleanups must be held on predetermined dates that coincide with Baylor's Steppin' Out (community volunteering days). The other date can be chosen by the Neighborhood Association but must be coordinated with Keep Waco Beautiful (254-750-5728) at least one month in advance of the cleanup date.
- The City will annually provide a specific amount of "free services" with subject to approval tailored to each neighborhood association for general operation needs, such as copies, postage, mailings, yard signs, etc.). The amount will be determined each budget year.
- The City will allow a neighborhood association to obtain a garage sale permit to cover the entire neighborhood boundary. This may occur up to two times each year for neighborhood associations per the Garage Sale Ordinance.



## How to Get Involved

*Whether you are new to a neighborhood, or you are a long-time resident, starting or joining a neighborhood association is very simple.*

To reach an officer of the neighborhood association for your neighborhood, check with your neighbors, contact Neighborhood Engagement, or check the online directory on the City of Waco website at [www.waco-texas.com/neighborhoods](http://www.waco-texas.com/neighborhoods) . Becoming involved will be a great opportunity to meet your neighbor and have a great time. You will also be a part of making your neighborhood a better place to live.

There are several opportunities to participate, including:

- Attending regular meetings
- Volunteering for activities
- Becoming a member of the association
- Attending regular association events and programs
- Becoming an association officer

## Getting Started: Forming a Neighborhood Association

If your neighborhood does not have an existing neighborhood association, you may want to create one. The following outlines steps for forming a new neighborhood association.



### Form a Neighborhood Core Group

*If there is an interest and need for a neighborhood association, talk with your neighbors to find a strong group of individuals who are also interested in developing your community.*

Once you recognize that a neighborhood association can make your neighborhood a better place to live, first make sure that a neighborhood association does not already exist in your neighborhood. You can check with the Neighborhood Engagement office or ask your neighbors if one exists. If one does not exist, you can develop one.

Start by talking with your neighbors and other neighborhood inhabitants (schools, businesses, and other organizations) about their interest and willingness to serve on a steering committee or as a core group to organize the neighborhood association. Invite interested neighbors to a meeting virtually or in person in a safe, comfortable, inclusive, and appropriate location. Begin by asking a few basic questions:

- Why do you think we should organize?
- What are the issues that need to be addressed?
- What resources are available in the neighborhood?

Ideally, you want a team of four to six neighborhood members who are willing to invest time in organizing the neighborhood association.

Once a neighborhood core group is formed, reach out to Neighborhood Engagement to share your interest in starting a neighborhood association. Neighborhood Engagement has information and resources to share, such as, how other neighborhood associations in the City function, the typical process for starting a neighborhood association, and example bylaws.

**Tip:** The key is to get a strong core group that is made up of individuals who are consistently willing to devote time each month. Set realistic goals that stand a good chance of success. The only way to maintain interest is through energetic participation and ongoing communication. It also takes positive reinforcement, acknowledgement, and a constant sense of accomplishment.



## Host a Neighborhood-Wide Interest Meeting

*The purpose of this meeting is to determine if there is interest from other neighbors to continue organizing a neighborhood association.*

The core group should begin creating an Interest Meeting Plan for this meeting, which should be in a comfortable, informal, and familiar community meeting space within the neighborhood, such as a community center or a school. See [Appendix A](#) for a sample planning document. Begin to get the word out about this event through social media, personal invitations to neighbors, and flyers passed out door to door.

It is also recommended that the group create a neighborhood survey ([Appendix B](#)). This will allow more neighborhood residents to voice their concerns and share how they would like to be involved in the association. This survey can be passed out door to door with the flyers and shared at the Interest Meeting. In addition to the survey and agendas for the meeting, be sure to bring a sign-in sheet ([Appendix C](#)), any relevant handouts, an area map, nametags, and contact information for members of the Core Group.

Remember that this is your neighborhood meeting. A Neighborhood Engagement staff member can be there to discuss the process for becoming an association and answer any questions. As neighbors arrive to the meeting, be sure to have someone from the core group welcome each neighbor and introduce themselves. Start the meeting on time and begin with introductions before moving into the agenda for the meeting. Agenda items could include some of the following:

- Introductions and what made people interested in the meeting
- Core group interest in forming the neighborhood association
- The process for becoming a neighborhood association (a Neighborhood Engagement staff member can help share this)
- Choose a short-term leader or co-leaders
- A vote on if a neighborhood association should be formed

Get everyone involved to accomplish your neighborhood's goals. At the first meeting, you may want to ask for volunteers to help with future meetings, to create fliers, and to provide light refreshments. All ideas are welcome and worth consideration.

If residents vote to continue organizing a neighborhood association, wrap up the meeting by setting the next meeting date, time, and location. Ask your neighbors to bring another neighbor to the next meeting. Close the meeting and thank everyone for attending.

**Tip:** Relationships between members are essential to an effective neighborhood association — they are the grease that make collective action possible. Take time to build and foster these connections at meetings.



## Create a Formal Structure

*Once you have decided to form a new neighborhood association, there are many tasks to be done and decisions to be made. First, you must decide how to structure your organization to meet the needs of your neighborhood and be most effective.*

As the core group is planning for and hosting future meetings, the group should also begin having open discussion regarding the goals of the association. This should include making decisions on what the formal structure of the neighborhood association will look like. The core group will likely have several meetings to discuss and create the association's mission statement, bylaws, and officer positions. Although the core group will take the lead on creating this formal structure, it is important for these things to be developed in consultation with other members of the association.

### Mission Statement

Mission statements are used to guide organizational actions. Rather than focusing on specific goals of the organization, the mission statement is a broad overarching statement that describes an organization's purpose. The general statement must be specific enough to guide actions without being so restrictive that it stifles neighborhood goals or activities.

Most mission statements will focus on the conditions of the neighborhood; however, a commitment to the large community is also important. A neighborhood is only as good as the community it belongs to, and this will help ensure the interests of the whole are considered.

**Example:** The \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Association is organized to foster and promote a strong sense of cooperation and neighborliness between residents, businesses, and institutions in the \_\_\_\_\_ area of Waco, TX, and to assist and encourage the preservation, and the improvement of the area, and to restore a feeling of security and respect of young and old alike.

### Bylaws

Bylaws are the guidelines that neighborhood associations follow to maintain consistency as members and leaders change. They serve as a constitution that establishes the legal requirements for the association. Bylaws should reflect the grassroots and democratic nature of the neighborhood association. They should outline democratic processes for decision making that are open and transparent.

Writing bylaws can be a tedious procedure for new organizations, but they are very important to the success of the organization. They help members clearly define and understand the purpose, procedures, and role of their neighborhood association.

A sample outline from a set of bylaws found in [Appendix D](#) contains information that you may consider including when writing your association's bylaws. The sample outline is inclusive, so do not feel your association must have every article or section. While it is important that certain information be included, the bylaws should be tailored to meet the needs of your association. Be specific, but still allow flexibility within your association. The bylaws will be part of your neighborhood association for a long time.

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 the rules are continuing to meet the needs of the group. Whenever bylaws are updated, they should be provided or made available to the membership (via social media, email, or other means). It is also helpful to provide updates to Neighborhood Engagement.

Tip: It is important that bylaws outline grievance procedures. Conflict is inevitable when individuals are working together as a group and having a process for resolving disagreements and differences helps ensure quick and uniform treatment of grievances. The sample bylaw outline in [Appendix D](#) includes an example grievance section.

## Membership

It is important for the neighborhood association to be as inclusive as possible. Any resident or property owner within the neighborhood association boundaries, or who meets the criteria outlined in your association bylaws, is a prospective member and will be able to participate in your association.

## Officers

Once the initial group of interested neighbors is established, the group should select a short-term leader. Later, when the association is formalized, the association will need to choose permanent leaders that are elected to official terms.

Your bylaws should describe all the positions, election procedures, how often they are elected, and the major responsibilities expected from each position. The positions created typically make up the neighborhood association board members. There are several duties and responsibilities involved in forming an organization. It is important to have enough people on the board to delegate the many tasks that need to be completed. The following positions are the minimum number needed for the governing board of your association.

### Chairperson or President

This person is responsible for the overall leadership of the association board and sets the agenda and facilitates all meetings. It is important for this person to be objective and judicial. A chairperson should never dominate discussions. The chair keeps the meeting running smoothly while allowing participation and is the person who makes sure people keep to the agenda, both in content and timing. Some responsibilities of the chairperson are:

- Making sure members are notified about meeting dates, times, and locations.
- Representing the association in a public capacity.
- Keeping the meeting focused and within the allotted time frames as outlined in the agenda.
- Mediating membership discussion and clarifying decisions made by the group.
- Having an organized agenda and bringing issues to a vote, as needed, in an orderly manner.
- Reviewing tasks and making assignments.
- Ensuring that all members follow bylaws and procedures.
- Giving credit and recognition for accomplishments.
- Following up on decisions made at meetings.
- Meeting with the successor and ensuring transfer of records, files, etc.

### **Vice Chairperson or Vice President**

This person assists the chairperson. The person serves in an advisory capacity to the Chair. In absence of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson conducts the meetings and exercises all the usual duties of the chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson should also be a person with strong leadership qualities. Some of the responsibilities of the Vice-Chairperson are:

- Effectively managing and facilitating meetings in the absence of the Chair.
- Assuming the Chair position in the event that the Chair is unable to complete his/her term.
- Following up on tasks assigned to members of the association.

### **Secretary**

The secretary records the minutes of the meetings and makes sure that copies of the minutes, agendas, and other records are available for the board and the public. Some responsibilities of the Secretary are:

- Recording minutes during all association meetings and making them available to members after the meeting.
- Maintaining current and comprehensive membership records.
- Recording all official correspondence of the association, neighborhood plans, and by-laws.
- Passing along important information to be included in association newsletters or posted on social media.

### **Treasurer**

The treasurer is responsible for the funds of the neighborhood association. Some boards require monthly reports, other boards may only require an occasional status report from the Treasurer. See [Appendix E](#) for a sample Treasurer's Report. However, someone should be selected that will take the duties of the position very seriously, since the fiscal condition of the association is crucial to the wellbeing and trustworthiness of the group. Some responsibilities of the Treasurer are:

- Paying all the association's expenses in a timely and accurate manner.
- Collecting and depositing all funds received by the association.
- Maintaining an adequate, thorough financial accounting system for the association.
- Collecting voluntary dues from members of the association.

### **Tips:** How to Make Your Job as Chairperson More Manageable

- Introduce yourself at the beginning of a meeting. Do not assume everyone knows who you are. If the group is a reasonable size, have everyone introduce themselves as well.
- Review the agenda and establish ground rules, which should include not speaking over each other and/or being respectful of all ideas and people.
- Direct the discussion. Keep people on the topic. If irrelevant issues are being brought up, remind the group that there will be a time for requests for new business at the end of the meeting. If people are repetitive, briefly restate the information that they have shared and move on to the next speaker. If a decision needs to be made, call for a motion and take a vote. Keep your own opinions to a minimum.
- Facilitate voting and decision making. Never assume there is an agreement until it is put to a vote.
- Do not abuse the power of the Chair. Do not ignore people who want to speak and do not monopolize the floor. A Chairperson should be neutral. If you want to voice your opinion, temporarily step out of your role as the Chair, and then voice your opinion. When finished, return to your role as the Chair. When your turn is finished, do not continue to speak.
- Disagreement amongst the membership is inevitable. Mediate arguments when they arise. Remain impartial and fair. Give each person an opportunity to state his or her own point of view.
- Publicly state in review next steps and goals. Review all discussions, decisions made, and the tasks to be assigned. Make sure that people leave the meeting with a clear understanding of what decisions have been made, and which tasks are to be done by whom.
- Make every attempt to be as organized as possible. Use a watch and follow the agenda. When it is almost time to end a discussion, announce that time is almost up. Select the final speakers and their order from those still indicating a desire to speak. The discussion should end when those people have had their turn.
- Do not be afraid to delegate duties and tasks. Be aware that you cannot do everything on your own and that others have chosen to be an active member because they want to be a part of the association.
- Follow-up on the assignments after the meeting. Sometimes members need to be encouraged to get things done. You may need a lot of positive reinforcement to get things accomplished. Stay on top of things to ensure completion and success of the assigned task.

## Structuring Options

Structure matters. The structure of an organization has a large impact on the effectiveness of the organization. Structure determines how decisions are made, how power is distributed, and how members interact within the organization. Below are a few suggestions for structuring neighborhood associations. Your organization should consult its own tax or legal professional to answer questions you may have about the advantages and disadvantages of different structures.

## **Tax Identification Number**

Neighborhood associations should have a federal tax identification number to do business with the city. It can also be used to open or manage financial accounts, file IRS tax forms, and apply for tax-exempt status. Organizations do not need to be incorporated to receive a tax identification number.

The required federal form is convenient and simple. Contact an Internal Revenue Service agent in Austin, Texas and ask for Tax ID Form SS-4 or download the form online [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov). Return the completed form to the IRS tax office in Austin at the address noted on the form. You should receive your tax ID number in six to eight weeks. If you need to use the number before you receive it in the mail (for bank accounts, etc.), state that you have applied for it, but have not received it yet.

## **Unincorporated Non-Profit Organization**

An unincorporated organization is the least restrictive structure options for a neighborhood association. These organizations are not required to install officers or hold regular meetings unless the organization's members want to. Under this structure, liability for organizational actions rests with the members personally and donations to the association are not tax deductible.

## **Incorporated Non-Profit Organization**

Incorporation is optional to all organizations but may be beneficial to your neighborhood association. Incorporating your neighborhood association creates a legal entity separate from the individual members. Incorporating a non-profit organization helps define the group and protects the personal liability of group members. An incorporated non-profit organization must have a board of directors and write and observe bylaws. In Texas, non-profit incorporation costs \$25 to file and there is no renewal fee. There is typically renewal paperwork that must be completed, or the organization may cease to be recognized by the State. If you decide to incorporate, you can learn more by contacting the Secretary of State Corporation at 512-463-5555 and by reviewing the Certificate of Formation at [sos.state.tx.us](https://sos.state.tx.us).

## **Tax-Exempt 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization**

In order to apply for tax exemption, a group must first be incorporated. The federal government gives tax-exempt status upon application to the Internal Revenue Service. Applying for and maintaining nonprofit status requires a great deal of paperwork and record keeping. The benefits of being a 501(c)(3) include the ability to accept tax-deductible donations, avoid paying income in qualifying circumstances, and qualifying for additional grant opportunities. Organizations seeking to become a 501(c)(3) are encouraged to seek professional assistance.

## **Liability**

There are several actions the association can take to protect board members from potential personal liability for board actions.

- Become an incorporated non-profit organization, so that board members can be protected from individual financial liability as a result of board service.
- Conduct regular board meetings and keep members well informed.
- Utilize a dependable system for keeping detailed minutes of all board meetings, recording which members attended, and the nature and seriousness of all board discussions.
- Obtain adequate insurance coverage for all activities that are sponsored by your organization.
- Consider adding coverage to your personal homeowners' policy that includes your volunteer activities. Check with your insurance agent to see what volunteer coverage is available.



## Become a Neighborhood Association

*The final step in forming a neighborhood association is approving the bylaws, electing officers, and sharing this information with Neighborhood Engagement.*

When there is consensus on the bylaws of the new association, a neighborhood association meeting is held to adopt bylaws and elect officers. The new neighborhood association now exists! Now the real work and fun can begin.

Once a new neighborhood association has approved their bylaws and elected officers, this information should be shared with Neighborhood Engagement. The neighborhood association information and future meeting dates can then be posted on the City's website. Your association will also be kept informed of events in your area and contacted for feedback by various public agencies.

## Sustaining Momentum

Once you have your neighborhood association up and running, you must keep members interested and involved. This section is designed to provide helpful suggestions for running a successful organization. Relationships are important to accomplishing change efforts. Knowing and having communication with members and non-members is a great way to gain additional information and perspective—and provides additional opportunities.



## Building and Maintaining Membership

*Member recruitment is important for organizational longevity. Many groups attract members by hosting meetings on issues that could impact a large portion of residents.*

Sometimes members may dwindle away. Many organizations experience this problem, so you need to be creative to avoid this dilemma. Here are some actions your group can utilize to recruit and sustain membership:

- Have meetings that are meaningful, so residents believe it is worth their time to attend and participate. Create meetings they do not want to miss out on because of the good things being discussed and planned.
- Have a membership drive encouraging all current resident members to participate. It could be a phone call, email, or virtual event. Then host a gathering to celebrate the volunteers who participated and the new members. Your members would have the opportunity to meet and interact with each other, as well as share and learn from each other's experience.
- Distribute materials to encourage residents to get involved. This could be in the form of a letter from the president, a flyer, an email, or in person going to door to door to share details on upcoming events or issues. Membership forms should also be available digitally and by mail.
- Designate block captains or ambassadors that can welcome new residents, distribute flyers and newsletters to prospective new members, and communicate information to the block via email, text, or phone call. They can also serve as a sounding board for specific problems or issues on the block and organize volunteers to help with activities they might be interested in.
- Recruit new members through community gatherings or other events, such as sponsor a booth

at a community festival or event. This is a great opportunity to talk to people in your area. Have membership sign-up sheets, membership forms, and information packets about the association available at these events.

- Watch for new faces at each meeting and have officers and other members welcome them. New or potential members should be introduced to someone who lives near them. Designate an official “greeter” at every meeting.

Keeping members involved and active can be quite challenging. For every member that is active in the association, there are probably two who would be involved if they were properly motivated. Below are some ideas to retain new members:

- Help new members find a place in the association. Organize a list of volunteer activities and encourage everyone to sign up for at least two activities that they are interested in participating. This will be a good opportunity for new members to work with current members and learn from each other.
- Avoid the appearance of cliques among activities. New people who see the same people running every project will feel excluded and may not return. A variety of people should be appointed to positions of leadership. This will help create a sense of belonging. Delegating tasks and projects to all members ensures that everyone will take ownership of the organization; the association is less likely to lose members if they are interested and actively engaged as a part of the organization.
- Encourage new ideas and input at all levels of the organization. Create an environment where everyone’s perspective is respected and valued. People who are new to an organization often bring a new view and sometimes provide new solutions to old problems. New perspectives can assist the whole group in problem solving. See [Appendix F](#) and [Appendix G](#) for example worksheets.
- Have a well-planned meeting to display a sense of accomplishment from the beginning. Have a written agenda for every meeting and stick to it. All items on the agenda should represent the strongest commitment to organization and purpose for the association. Lack of purpose and consideration of everyone’s time will result in low or no attendance over time.
- Maintain current membership records. Keep a file with members’ names, addresses, phone numbers, family member names, occupations, special talents, areas of interest, etc.
- Have fun. Being part of a neighborhood association is not all work. Sponsor family and kid friendly parties and celebrations to get to know your neighbors better and to foster a strong sense of community spirit.
- Recognize people for a job well done. Thank them openly at meetings. Have a yearly event to show appreciation for association members’ work.
- Ask those who were formerly active why they are no longer participating. Listen and take any criticisms with an open heart and mind. It might provide great insight or ideas.



## Meeting Regularly

*Regular meetings are important so that members are informed of current and future issues and projects, as well as the accomplishments of the group.*

### General Meeting Rules

Your association should establish some general operating rules for meetings, so that they run smoothly and without difficulty. The operating rules could be included in the association's bylaws so that all members are aware of them. Implement the rules from the first meeting because this meeting will set expectations for the organization. Some common rules for all meetings are the following:

- One person speaks at a time
- No derogatory remarks of yourself or others
- Speak from your own experience
- No crosstalk (i.e., no side conversations or interrupting the speaker to dispute points)
- Share the air space, do not dominate the conversation

### Meeting Tips

#### **Executive committee**

A full neighborhood-wide meeting should not be called to make minor decisions. This is the job of an executive or board committee. Most groups have an executive or board committee meeting once a month unless something important requires an additional meeting. In order to prevent member burnout, meetings should not be longer than one hour.

#### **Agenda**

Be sure to have enough copies of the agenda available when members arrive for the meeting. 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. You can also provide an agenda prior to the meeting to be distributed via email. The agenda should be short and concise. A sample agenda is provided as [Appendix H](#) of this manual.

#### **Location**

Choose a place that is centrally located and familiar to the neighbors. The location can set the mood and the friendliness of the meeting. Try to estimate the number of people that will attend. Notices about the meeting with RSVP requests can also help in estimating the number of people that will attend. The room should be comfortable for the size of the group, but not too large to lose the neighborhood feel.

#### **Place/Setting**

The meeting room should be arranged in a way that will encourage everyone's participation. Arrange the chairs in a semi or full circle so that everyone can be seen. Avoid having all the chairs facing the speaker as in a typical classroom. If tables are needed or used, make sure to also arrange them and the chairs for everyone to be able to sit around it and see each other. Tables can also be arranged outside of the meeting structure to provide information and literature related to the meeting.

## Attendance/Notes

Assign someone as secretary or ask for volunteers to rotate the task for taking notes and records for the meeting. They can also help with setting up a welcome table with a sign in sheet for attendance, the agenda, and other materials. They should take detailed notes and/or record the meeting to transcribe and verify notes. This is important for accountability purposes of what was discussed, when decisions are made or voted upon, and for providing information at the next meeting and to those not in attendance.

## Rules/Order

Many groups are comfortable using Robert's Rules of Order, but feel free to use whatever method works best for your group. A special effort should be made to ensure that a vote truly represents the desire of the group. Keep meetings orderly and democratic.

**Tip:** If a regular meeting is scheduled, but there really is not anything important to discuss, then create something. This can be done by inviting a guest speaker, organizing a neighborhood tour, or having a potluck. Do not cancel the meeting altogether because it is important for groups to have contact on a regular basis.

Refer to “Tips for Having Successful Meetings” for more tips on holding meetings ([Appendix I](#)).



## Cultivating Leaders

Although nurturing new leaders takes time and effort, the results are worth it for a healthy organization with leaders who are fresh and enthusiastic.

Once your neighborhood association has been up and running for a while, there should be a plan to encourage new leadership within the organization. If an association stays with the same leadership year after year, there is a very real risk of “burning out” those leaders.

## Leadership/Position Terms

Setting term limits for officers are helpful in forcing leaders to make way for new people. Committee chairs and project leaders are ways to the path of leadership. They can be used as a tool to test out new leaders.

## Identifying Potential Leaders

Developing a system for tracking members and their participation can be very helpful when identifying potential leaders. Sign-in sheets and activity or project spreadsheets are useful for tracking members who are actively involved.

## Association Leaders should:

- Reflect the demographics of the neighborhood
- Be knowledgeable about local government and how to influence decision making
- Use democratic participatory methods to make decisions
- Communicate regularly with the group and members
- Articulate issues clearly



## Committees

*Organizations can accomplish objectives through the dedicated work of committees, which are subgroups of association members.*

Neighborhood associations serve many purposes and work to achieve many goals. Committees make that work easier. A committee is a group of people, from the larger association, who are appointed to work on a specific task. The tasks and the types of committees depend on the overall purpose and structure of your neighborhood association. Here are two types of committees to consider:

### **Standing or Internal Project Committees**

Committees can be standing, meaning that they are always working on a task or towards a goal. Some examples are membership, welcoming, beautification, fundraising, meeting arrangements, communications or publicity, bylaws, and social events.

### **Neighborhood Project Committees**

Committees can be working on an issue, one-time event, or temporary situation within the neighborhood. Some examples of neighborhood projects are housing conditions, police/neighborhood relations, economic development, neighborhood maintenance, community services and resources, and traffic safety.



## Communication

*You will be planning several great programs for your neighborhood, so do not keep them a secret. This will help others in the neighborhood join you in your efforts and take part in making a difference.*

A good communication network is important in keeping members informed in the neighborhood association's activities and projects. It is also a way to increase membership in your association. Below are some ways that neighborhood associations can communicate with their surrounding neighborhood.

### **News Releases**

News releases are used when you want give information about an event to the public, such as a neighborhood cleanup or election of officers. When writing a news release, keep the following in mind:

- News releases should be about one typewritten, double-spaced page.
- Your first paragraph should include who, what, when, and where.
- The following paragraphs should provide details and background.
- Include information for a contact person with their name and phone number.
- Include a "release date" and "do not use after" date.
- Send a copy of the news release at least two weeks ahead of time.
- Provide this information to Neighborhood Engagement for inclusion in the weekly newsletter.

## Public Service Announcements

Public Service Announcements (PSA) can also be used when you want to announce an event. When writing a PSA, follow the same format as a news release except for the following:

- PSAs are shorter than news releases and are often only a paragraph.
- When sending a PSA to a radio station, be sure it can be read in 30 seconds (7 or 8 lines) and attach the details and background on a separate sheet.
- When sending a PSA to a large newspaper, find out what section would give your PSA the best exposure. Send the PSA to the editor of that section.
- The Waco Tribune-Herald can also publicize meetings and events in the Waco area news briefs section typically the week or day-of the meeting or event.

## Website/Social Media

Websites and social media pages are a great place for your association to publicize events and meetings. You can build pages for the association and post current issues, an association calendar, and an e-mail address so the association can be contacted. This is a great way to distribute information and associations should utilize it. The Neighborhood Engagement Office also maintains a website available at [waco-texas.com/neighborhoods](http://waco-texas.com/neighborhoods) that includes information about each neighborhood association and includes a calendar with all neighborhood meetings and events. Keeping this information accurate and up to date requires the efforts of neighborhood associations and Neighborhood Engagement staff.

## Flyers

Flyers can be used for any activity, project, or goal. Some tips to keep in mind are:

- Keep wording bold enough to see from ten feet.
- Use colorful paper.
- Post flyers in markets, laundromats, schools, stores, or any other place frequently visited by the people you are trying to reach.

## Posters

Making large posters can be effective when using these tips:

- Use large pieces of cardboard boxes.
- Use black enamel paint to rainproof your poster.
- Keep the message brief.
- Keep artwork to a minimum.

## Logos

Designing logos can be a fun and attractive way to display the group's name and bring members together with an image. The logo can be simple and should be unique to the group, so it can have a maximum impact.

## Buttons, T-shirts, and Decals

Once the group has a logo, you can transfer it to t-shirts, decals, and buttons. They can be sold for fundraising or distributed to volunteers. Using these items can also increase awareness of your group around the city.

# Building Financial Capacity



## Raising Funds

*Associations need to raise funds for regular operations and special events and projects. Funds can be raised by members, private donations, or from public or private grants.*

### Dues:

Annual membership dues help pay for activities and common costs of running a neighborhood association. Several neighborhood associations in Waco have different membership types depending on if you are a resident, senior, or business/organization within the neighborhood. It is important to keep annual dues at a reasonable cost to ensure this is not a barrier for residents becoming members of the association.

### Fundraisers:

Fundraisers can be a fun way to bring members together while also benefiting the neighborhood association. Remember to be creative and put your effort toward fundraiser events/activities that will have mass appeal in participation. Whenever possible, find ways to highlight the neighborhood, neighborhood businesses, and/or neighborhood members.

### Community Garage Sales

This fundraiser is a simple event that can be enjoyed by the entire community where several group members can donate a large variety of items for the garage sale.

1. Form a committee of people responsible for the event.
2. Choose a date. Saturdays and Sundays are the best days to hold the sale.
3. Choose the location. Have the sale in the garage of someone who lives on a corner or near a main street or have the sale in a neighborhood community center.
4. Decide beforehand what percentage of the profits will go to the association and to the individuals who gave items for the sale.
5. Try to have a good variety of items that draw great crowds, such as televisions, dining sets, dressers, and beds, and include knickknacks, glassware, dolls, and children's clothes. Keep junk items to a minimum.
6. Advertise for the event.
7. Thank buyers for supporting the neighborhood.

\*NOTE: There is no permit required for garage sales. A Neighborhood Association may "host" up to two neighborhood-wide garage sales per year. For more information on garage sales: <https://www.waco-texas.com/permits.asp#gsc.tab=0>

### Additional Fundraiser Ideas

Raising funds for a neighborhood association is only limited by your imagination. Additional fundraising ideas, include:

- Neighborhood newsletter with local business ads
- Neighborhood art show
- Community carnival
- Neighborhood calendar featuring neighborhood sites
- Raffles
- Silent auctions
- Neighborhood concert
- Neighborhood restaurant tour

## Connecting with Neighborhood Businesses

Many local and neighborhood businesses will readily help a neighborhood group with either merchandise, gift cards, or a cash contribution. Depending on the interests of a business, the association can either ask them to become members of the association or reach out to them for donations for specific annual events. Assess merchants according to the size of their business. Remember these points when soliciting for contributions:

### Tips:

- A good customer is the best person to approach a merchant.
- Do not solicit a merchant at the beginning or end of the business day or during peak business hours. (i.e. mealtime at restaurants)
- Bring a letter from your organization (preferably on letterhead) introducing you as the member who is authorized to solicit contributions.



## Managing Funds

*All associations collect sums of money for various reasons. A management system needs to be in place for dealing with any funds handled by the association.*

The best thing to do is to open a bank account for the group. But with so many different types of accounts available, how do you know what kind of account to set up? Research needs to be dedicated to finding out the benefits of certain types of accounts and a decision can be made on an account that will be most beneficial for the group. Check with several banks to get the best deal for the group. Whether you are a corporation or just a designated person, either can open a bank account for the group. If you are a corporation and have nonprofit status, you may be eligible to receive free or reduced fee banking privileges at some banks.

Three things to consider when determining the type of bank account for your neighborhood association are:

- How often will you withdraw money?
- How much money will your association have to deposit?
- Do you have enough to keep a minimum balance in your account or pay service fees, if any?

Even though many organizations do not have much money, it is important to keep track of whatever money that comes into or goes out from your organization. It is a good idea to have an accountant or bookkeeper help you set up the accounts from the start. The Treasurer or someone who feels

comfortable with numbers and figures can take on bookkeeping responsibilities. The sooner the system is established, the easier it is to keep accurate financial records.

The following is one common system to help keep your group's records accurate. It provides a record of all money received and where it came from, and all the money paid out and the purpose for which it was utilized.

### **Cash Receipts and Cash Disbursements**

Money coming into or out of the organization should be recorded. These transactions are recorded in a format called a journal.

#### *Cash Receipts Journal*

A record of the total amount of money (cash or checks) and the source of each dollar amount (i.e., contributions, grants, sale of advertising, etc.) on the day it is received.

#### *Cash Disbursement Journal*

Record each disbursement from each bank account. Disbursements made by check should be recorded with the check number, date of check, the payee (who the check is made out to), amount of the check, and the purpose of the disbursement. For savings accounts without preprinted checks, record the date of withdrawal, amount, and purpose (use) of the funds. Photocopy the withdrawal slip and file with the cash receipts journal to create a record of who withdrew the money.

## Committing to Action



### **Neighborhood Projects**

*Neighborhood projects are a good way to form group unity and focus on important issues in your neighborhood.*

Organizing neighborhood projects can provide opportunities for neighbors to work together and stay active. It also builds the credibility for the group as a moving force in the community. There are projects and activities that you can do by yourself, as a neighborhood association, and in partnership with the City of Waco and other partners.

#### **Tips:**

- Focus on issues that the majority of the neighborhood can rally around.
- Choose projects that are beneficial for the majority of the neighborhood in order to gain more participation.
- Identify potential partners who may also be interested in the project.

### **Approaching Potential Projects**

Keep in mind that Neighborhood Projects can take various forms. There are some things that can be done individually as a neighbor, done as a group, or even together as a larger community. Be sure to

find multiple ways for your membership to engage in neighborhood projects.

### **What can I do as a Neighbor?**

Take steps to learn more about:

- Code enforcement guidelines
- Homeowner education, including property tax exemptions and repair and homebuyer assistance programs offered by the City and local non-profits.
- Trash pick-up days and holiday schedule changes are available on City of Waco Curbside Services app available for free on the Apple App Store and Google Play. Information is also available on the website at [waco-texas.com/solidwaste](http://waco-texas.com/solidwaste).
- Home care tips
- Emergency preparedness at home

### **What can we do as an association?**

Take steps to organize or create:

- A neighborhood infrastructure inventory, including stop sign, streetlight, and sidewalk assessment.
- A neighborhood directory with member and business contact information.
- A community asset map or resource guide to identify community members and businesses with particular skills or resources.
- A Neighborhood Crime Watch program with the Waco Police Department.
- Neighborhood events. (Special event permits must be obtained from Waco Parks & Recreation.)
- A neighborhood garage sale. (Two free permits are available online per year for each Neighborhood Association.)
- Block parties. (Special event permits must be obtained from Waco Parks & Recreation for street closures.)
- Home improvement demonstrations (Local hardware and home improvement stores may provide programs in store or at a meeting.)

### **What can we do together as a Community?**

- Infrastructure projects, such as improving or adding streetlights, sidewalks, and roads
- Neighborhood event, such as National Night Out (Register with the Waco Police Department.)
- Code enforcement concerns
- Beautification projects, such as parks or streetscapes
  - Your group can organize a variety of enhancement projects to make your neighborhood a great place to live. Start by identifying what your neighbors value most and what they think needs to be done.
- Neighborhood improvement, including repairs or redevelopment

## Neighborhood Association/Other Partnership

- Neighborhood events
- Neighborhood business directory
- Neighborhood cleanups:
  - Cleanups are a great way for neighbors to feel proud of where they live and provide immediate results. Remember that Solid Waste will supply roll-off dumpster service at three neighborhood cleanups each year. Up to 3 dumpsters total per neighborhood. Neighborhoods are encouraged to consider holding cleanups on dates that coincide with Baylor's "Steppin' Out" community volunteering days, in order to request additional volunteers from Baylor students. However, you can hold a cleanup whenever works for your neighborhood association, as long as rolloff dumpsters are available through Solid Waste. It is also recommended that the cleanup be coordinated with Solid Waste (254-299-2612) and Keep Waco Beautiful (254-750-5728) at least one month in advance of the cleanup date. KWB also provides help in the form of cleanup supplies.



## Neighborhood Plans

*Making work plans for each project will help members stay focused and on target.*

Meeting goals, planning events, recruiting volunteers, and strengthening the organization will be easier when time is taken to prepare an outline of expectations and objectives, and then make a plan for meeting those goals. Some helpful questions to ask when preparing a work plan are:

- What is the purpose for doing this project? If this is an annual work plan, review the purpose of the organization, then define goals for the year.
- Is there a need for it?
- What resources are available to help attain these goals?
- Have other neighborhood associations attempted this activity? Can they help?
- What tasks are involved with this project?
- Who will do the tasks?
- How much time is needed?
- What resources are needed to accomplish this project?
- Will this cost money? Does the association have the funds? How will you raise the money needed?
- Are there enough volunteers or members available to complete the project?

### Tips:

- Include diverse voices/perspectives in the planning process
- Set clear times lines and responsibilities.
- Act quickly and decisively
- Celebrate accomplishments

Neighborhood Engagement can be contacted for planning assistance. Staff is available to help

associations work toward neighborhood goals that align with city goals.

## Accessing City Resources

### City Neighborhood Services



*In order to assist neighborhood associations to be active, viable organizations that help make their neighborhoods better, cleaner, and safer places to live, the City of Waco has agreed to provide certain services*

Services provided to the Neighborhood Associations at **no cost** with subject to approval:

- Neighborhood Liaisons and other City staff will attend (or provide information for) Neighborhood Association general membership meetings as needed, or on request and coordinate inquiries for information from the various City departments.
- Certain City facilities may be reserved for Neighborhood Association meetings, activities, and events during the facility's normal hours of operation. (primarily Community Centers and Libraries)
- The Neighborhood Engagement Department will include neighborhood associations' meetings on the Neighborhood Calendar, and general information on the City of Waco website [www.waco-texas.com/neighborhoods](http://www.waco-texas.com/neighborhoods) and will provide information on neighborhood meetings and events in the Neighborhood Engagement e-newsletter.
- Solid Waste will supply up to three roll-off dumpsters for cleanups each fiscal year. Saturday cleanup events must end by noon. The cleanup must be coordinated with Solid Waste at least one month in advance of the cleanup date to ensure dumpster availability. Dumpster availability is first come, first served, and there are limited dumpsters (6) available on any day.
- The Parks & Recreation Department will waive the cost of one Outdoor Event permit application fee per year for neighborhood associations. Additionally, the City will cover the first \$1,000 in City fees and costs associated with one event, as long as the event meets all needed requirements. Some restrictions may apply, and are outlined in [City Ordinance 2018-792, Sec. 13-488](#) (call the Events staff at Parks & Rec to learn more). If additional costs are accrued (i.e. insurance, security, portable restrooms, etc.), such costs will be the responsibility of the neighborhood association. All applications are due at least two months prior to the event.
- The City will annually provide a specific amount of services tailored to each neighborhood association for general operation needs, including copies, mailings, meeting signs, etc. The amount will be determined each budget year.
- The City does not require garage sale permits. A Neighborhood Association can organize & advertise a garage sale, either as a fundraiser, or as a benefit for individual residents. (To comply fully with the ordinance, each residential address should not hold a garage sale more than twice per year).



## City Hall 101

*The City of Waco has several departments that often interface with neighborhood associations.*

**Plan Commission:** A Commission (community of community volunteers) responsible to act as an advisory body to the City Council which shall have and perform additional duties as prescribed by ordinance. (most commonly reviews zoning changes, special permits, annexation and platting.) For more information, contact the Planning division of the Development Services Department, 254-750-5650 or visit: [waco-texas.com/planning](http://waco-texas.com/planning)

**Building Standards Commission:** A mediation tool between the City of Waco and citizens that hears appeals and provides final interpretations of the ordinances relating to building codes. For more information, contact the Building Standards Commission at (254) 750-5970 or visit: [www.waco-texas.com/code](http://www.waco-texas.com/code)

**Housing & Community Development:** Programs for applicants within the City of Waco to apply for help with some priority housing needs. For more information, contact Housing at (254) 750-5656 or visit: [www.waco-texas.com/housing](http://www.waco-texas.com/housing)

**Parks & Recreation:** Provides athletic and recreation services for a better quality of life. For more information, contact Parks & Recreation at (254) 750-5980 or visit: [www.waco-texas.com/parks](http://www.waco-texas.com/parks)

**Development Services (Planning & Zoning/Inspections/Code Compliance):** Directs the orderly growth of residential and commercial development within the city. For more information, contact Planning & Zoning Services at (254) 750-5650 or visit: [www.waco-texas.com/planning](http://www.waco-texas.com/planning)

**Solid Waste:** Responsible for all aspects of garbage collection and disposal. For more information, contact Solid Waste at (254) 299-2612 or visit: [www.waco-texas.com/solidwaste](http://www.waco-texas.com/solidwaste)

**Streets (Public Works):** Responsible for the maintenance of city streets and drainageways. For more information, contact Streets (Public Works) at (254) 750-8690 or visit: [www.waco-texas.com/streets](http://www.waco-texas.com/streets)



## City Directory

*Important contact information for city departments that most commonly interface with neighborhood associations.*

### Office of Neighborhood Engagement

Melett Harrison  
Program Director  
[meletth@wacotx.gov](mailto:meletth@wacotx.gov)  
(254) 750-5643

Marissa Zuniga  
Program Coordinator  
[marissaz@wacotx.gov](mailto:marissaz@wacotx.gov)  
(254) 750-5774

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## Appendix A: Steps for Planning Your First Neighborhood Meeting

1. Gather four other neighbors together to help you organize the first meeting:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Decide on a date \_\_\_\_\_ and time \_\_\_\_\_ for your first neighborhood meeting.
3. Decide on an agenda and any guest speakers desired for the meeting. (See Appendix H for a sample Agenda.)
4. Identify any special needs for your neighborhood. (Place a check mark next to each.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Language Translation	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking Distance
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance for the Elderly
<input type="checkbox"/> Handicap Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Impaired
5. Decide on a meeting place and make necessary arrangements to acquire it. Some possibilities, include:

<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood School (Cafeteria)
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Library	<input type="checkbox"/> Church/Temple
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbor's Home or Yard
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Business/Restaurant
6. Contact the guest speakers and arrange for them to attend.
7. Prepare a flyer announcing the meeting.
8. Distribute the flyers on social media, to neighbors, and in schools, stores, or other places frequently visited by people within the neighborhood.

## Appendix B: Sample Neighborhood Survey

Please complete the following survey to assist in organizing a new neighborhood association or learning more about your neighbors.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you a homeowner \_\_\_\_\_ or a tenant/renter \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Which of the following are your greatest concerns for the neighborhood? (Check all that apply. If you are checking more than one, please rank them with 1 being most important and 2 being the next most important, etc.)
  - Rank \_\_\_ Safety and crime prevention
  - Rank \_\_\_ School improvement
  - Rank \_\_\_ Building a community/getting to know your neighbors
  - Rank \_\_\_ Code violations
  - Rank \_\_\_ Neighborhood beautification
  - Rank \_\_\_ Neighborhood involvement in city activities
  - Rank \_\_\_ Other (Please specify.): \_\_\_\_\_
5. What suggestions do you have for social events or neighborhood projects?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What are the best times and days for you to attend a neighborhood meeting?  
Times \_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_
7. What frequency is best for you to attend neighborhood meetings?
  - Monthly
  - Every other month
  - Quarterly
8. Would you be willing to volunteer to assist in the meetings or to serve on a leadership committee for the neighborhood association (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, board member)? Yes  No   
If yes, please specify, which you would be willing to help with: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:

*Name*

*Address*

*Phone*

*Email*

# Appendix C: Sample Sign-In Sheet

(Note: Document formatted in landscape orientation is more effective.)

First Meeting?	First and Last Name	Address	Email	Phone Number
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
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Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				
Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				

# Appendix D: Sample Bylaws

## **Article One. Name and Purpose**

### **Section 1. Name**

The name of this association is:

\_\_\_\_\_.

### **Section 2. Purpose**

The purpose of the neighborhood association shall be to promote a better neighborhood and community through group action.

## **Article Two. Area Defined**

For the purposes of this Association, the \_\_\_\_\_ neighborhood has the following boundaries within Waco, Texas: \_\_\_\_\_ on the north, \_\_\_\_\_ on the east, \_\_\_\_\_ on the south, and \_\_\_\_\_ on the west.

## **Article Three. Membership**

### **Section 1. Eligibility**

Any individual who is interested in the objectives of the Association is eligible for membership. Membership in the Association shall consist of those persons who pay timely membership dues. Voting membership shall be available to individuals who live within the Area or who own and operate businesses within the Area.

### **Section 2. Membership Year**

Membership in the Association shall be for one membership year. Each membership year will be \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ unless the Board of Directors otherwise determines.

### **Section 3. Dues**

The following schedule of dues is hereby established and authorized by these bylaws:

Type of Membership	Voting	Non-voting
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### **Section 4. Privileges of Membership**

Each member shall have the right to attend all General meetings of the Association, and each member or business shall be entitled to one vote on any matter submitted for vote at such meetings. Nonvoting members shall not be entitled to vote, but all members shall have the

right to be heard on any subject properly before any meetings of members consistent with the orderly process of such meetings. No member of the Association may use the name of the \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Association without the permission of the Board of Directors.

### ***Section 5. Meetings***

An annual meeting of the Association will be held in July of each year, at a time and place to be designated by the Board of Directors. Bimonthly meetings shall be held in the months of March, May, July, September, and November on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of those months, excepting conflicts with holidays or conflicting important events (advance notice of any change will be provided to the membership). Additional meetings of the Association may be called by the Board or at the written request of ten percent of the voting members of the Association. The President or Secretary will provide at least seven (7) days written notice of all membership meetings, including notice of the times of business to be conducted.

The voting membership present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any duly called meeting of members for which seven days written notice has been given by the Secretary, and any resolution presented at such meeting shall be adopted by a majority of the members present and voting, unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws. No proxy voting will be permitted.

### **Article Four. Board of Directors**

#### ***Section 1. Powers and Duties***

The direction and management of the affairs of the Association and the control of its business shall be vested in a Board of Directors. Subject to any restrictions imposed by law, the Articles of Association or these Bylaws, the Board may exercise all the powers of the Association, including creation and appointment of committees.

#### ***Section 2. Membership on the Board***

The Board of Directors shall be composed of elected officers. Each Board member shall serve for a one-year term concurrent with the membership year. A Board member may be reelected but may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

A vacancy shall be declared on the Board of Directors upon the death, removal, or resignation of a Board member, or upon the failure of a Board member to pay membership dues. A Board member's seat shall be declared vacant if he or she fails to attend any three consecutive Board meetings without an excuse acceptable to the Board. Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by a majority vote of all members of the Board.

#### ***Section 3. Meetings of the Board***

The Board of Directors shall meet at least monthly at a time and place to be designated by the Board. A special meeting of the Board may be called at any time by the President or by a simple majority of the Board members upon request to the President. Each member of the Board must be notified at least three days prior to any Board meetings.

At all meetings of the Board, a majority of Directors must be present in order for official business to be transacted. All Board actions shall be taken by a majority of the Directors present at a meeting in which a majority is present.

***Section 4. Annual Report***

The Board will present an Annual Report of the affairs of the Association for the year to membership at the annual meeting. A copy of the Report will be available for inspection by any member of the Association.

***Section 5. Redress***

Any decision of the Board of Directors may be nullified by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at the next duly called meeting of the Association.

**Article Five. Officers**

***Section 1. Titles Term, and Election***

The officers of the Association shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, and each shall serve a one-year term. No person may serve more than two consecutive terms in any one office unless it is specifically and separately approved by a vote of the general body at the annual election.

***Section 2. Duties and Powers***

President: The President will preside at all meetings of the Association and of the Board of Directors. The President will establish committees and appoint all committee chairs as priority needs of the neighborhood dictate and shall serve ex officio as a member of all committees. He or she will exercise general supervision over the affairs of the Association and will ensure that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Directors are executed. Subject to the approval of the Board, the President shall have the power to execute contracts and other instruments in the name of the Association, except as provided in these Bylaws.

Vice President: The Vice President shall plan, arrange, and coordinate programs for meetings of the Association's membership and for special events. The Vice President will preside, in case of the absence or disability of the President and shall exercise the powers of that office.

Secretary: The Secretary will keep minutes of all meetings of the Association and Board of Directors. These minutes will be available for inspection by any members of the Association. The Secretary will be responsible for giving notice of meetings as provided in these Bylaws. The Secretary will be responsible for the correspondence and records of the Association as directed by the Board.

Treasurer: The Treasurer will have charge of the funds of the Association and shall secure their deposit as directed by the Board. The treasurer will keep records of the Association's finances, and these records shall be available for inspection by any members of the Association. All checks, orders for the payment of money, and notes or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of the Association must be signed by the following: President or Vice President, and Treasurer.

## **Article Six. Committees**

The President, with agreement of the Board, may establish committees as they deem necessary for the effective operation of the Association. Any special committee shall have such power and authority as shall be assigned to it by the President, with agreement of the Board. The President will appoint the chairperson of each committee. The committee chairperson will appoint the members of their respective committees.

## **Article Seven. Grievances**

### ***Section 1. Other Forms of Conflict Resolution are Encouraged***

All parties are encouraged to resolve disagreements and disputes through one-on-one dialogue, discussions with directors and members, and/or formal mediation whenever possible.

### ***Section 2. Eligibility to Grieve***

A person or group harmed as a result of an activity or decision made by this association, may file a formal grievance if they believe the action taken by the association violated a provision of these bylaws or a formally adopted policy of the association.

### ***Section 3. Filing a Grievance***

Grievances must be submitted, in writing, to the association president and/or secretary, within 45 business days of the alleged violation. A grievance must identify the date of the action being grieved and the provision of the association's bylaws which allegedly were violated, describe how the provision was violated and how the grievant was harmed by this action, and identify the remedy the grievant is seeking.

### ***Section 4. Initial Review and Response***

The board or the board's designee will review the proposed grievance and determine whether it meets criteria for a grievance as defined in this article. If the proposed grievance is found not to meet the criteria, the board or its designee will inform the grievant in writing of this determination and the reasons for the determination. If the proposed grievance is found to meet the criteria, the review process continues.

### ***Section 5. Grievance Committee***

If the process continues, as per Section 4, the board, or a committee designated by the board, shall offer the grievant an opportunity to present information relevant to the grievance and shall gather other relevant information. The body carrying out the review will develop its findings and recommendations and submit them to the board.

### ***Section 6. Board Action***

The board shall consider the findings and recommendations and render a decision on the grievance. The board shall notify the grievant of the board's decision, in writing, within 60 calendar days from the receipts of the grievance.

**Article Seven. Parliamentary Rules**

The proceedings of all meetings of the Association and the Board of Directors will be governed and conducted according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws or the Articles of Incorporation.

**Article Eight. Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Association present and voting at a duly called meeting, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment shall have been provided to the Membership of the Association in accordance with Section 3.5 of these Bylaws.

## Appendix E: Sample Treasurer's Report

[Name of Neighborhood Association]			
The Month Of: [MAY 2019]			
	<b>PRESENT BUDGET</b>	<b>CURRENT MONTH</b>	<b>TO DATE</b>
Balance On Hand [APRIL 30, 2019]			<b>\$100.25</b>
Receipts			
Members' Dues	\$550.00	\$150.00	\$150.00
Summer Barbecue	\$1,200.00	0.00	0.00
Fall Garage Sale	\$750.00	0.00	0.00
Donations	\$50.00	0.00	10.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$2,550.00</b>	<b>\$160.00</b>	<b>\$160.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$260.25</b>
Disbursements			\$100.00
Monthly Newsletters	\$1,200.00	\$100.00	
Neighborhood Project	\$1,000.00	0.00	0.00
Youth Summer Picnic	\$350.00	0.00	0.00
Supplies for Association	\$50.00	\$15.00	\$15.00
Contingency	\$50.25	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$2,650.25</b>	<b>\$115.00</b>	<b>\$115.00</b>
<b>Balance On Hand: MAY 31, 2019</b>			<b>\$145.25</b>
Submitted By Treasurer: [Name of Treasurer]			

### Notes:

- There are many ways to keep books. This is just one of them.
- **PRESENT BUDGET** is the approved annual budget
- **CURRENT MONTH** is receipts and disbursements within the given month.
- **TO DATE** is the **CURRENT MONTH** added to all past receipts or disbursements up to that month within the annual year only.

## Appendix F: Problem-Solving Procedures

1. List below the problems your Neighborhood would like to solve:

△ _____ ○	△ _____ ○
△ _____ ○	△ _____ ○
△ _____ ○	△ _____ ○
△ _____ ○	△ _____ ○
△ _____ ○	△ _____ ○

2. Prioritize the above problems and place numbers from 1 to 10 with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important in the triangles to the left of the listed problems.

*Prioritizing problems can be difficult, and you may want to get several neighbors' input. What may be a top priority to you may not reflect the top priorities of the rest of your neighborhood.*

3. Grade the expected ease of solving the above problems, and place numbers from 1-10 with 1 being the easiest and 10 being the most difficult in the circles to the right of the listed problems.
4. Fill out a Problem-Solving Worksheet for each problem (Appendix G).
5. Choose one or two of the top priority items to address at your first Neighborhood Meeting.

*Sometimes it helps to pick a more easily achieved goal to accomplish along with a more difficult goal. An early success can help a Neighborhood bond together and renew strength to solve more difficult, long-term problems.*

# Appendix G: Problem-Solving Worksheet

*Issue:* \_\_\_\_\_

1. Explain the problem as briefly as possible:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. List possible causes of the problem:

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

3. List possible acceptable solutions to the problem:

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

4. List possible means/people (include phone numbers) to help solve the problem:

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Things to do:

Date completed

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Resolutions/Decisions/Accomplishments:

Date completed

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H: Sample Agenda

1. **Introductions** [President/chairperson introduces him or herself, welcomes everyone, introduces City Council Members, guest speaker, board members, recognizes new residents attending, and thanks anyone who furnished refreshments.]
2. **Approval of Last Meeting Minutes** [Any corrections should be noted in the new minutes.]
3. **Read and Approve the Treasurer's Report** [Relevant only if association collects money. Allow members to ask questions on any item listed.]
4. **Old Business**
  - a. Committee Reports [List each committee individually]
  - b. Concerns [List each unresolved concern that had no final action taken previously and is not overseen by a committee.]
5. **New Business**
  - a. Introduction of City Councilmember or presentation by guest speaker [Note: Place this first when applicable.]
  - b. Concerns [List each new concern.]
6. **Review Meeting** [Restate any motions made and action taken.]
7. **Set Agenda for Next Meeting** [Name any committee that should have an update at the next meeting. Restate any concerns tabled. State date, time, and place of next meeting.]
8. **Adjourn Meeting** [List approximate time of adjournment. Always ask if anyone has anything else that needs to be discussed. Thank everyone for attending and ask for a motion to adjourn.]

## Appendix I: Tips for Having Successful Meetings

1. SMILE! No matter how serious the purpose of the meeting, remember the meeting itself is a positive event. Neighbors are coming together to solve problems.
2. Make everyone feel welcome. Personally greet as many people as possible.
3. Encourage everyone to fill out and wear nametags.
4. Keep the meeting moving. As soon as you can wrap up one Agenda item, move immediately to the next.
5. Encourage participants to speak their minds freely but stay on schedule. Be polite, but firm. (For example: “Basically, then, what you are saying is...” Or “So, you think we should....”)
6. When a speaker begins getting off the subject, gently, but firmly return their focus. (for example: “That’s a subject we’d all like to talk about another time, but right now we need to resolve (this issue) first.” Then call on someone else.)
7. Treat everyone with respect. Do not belittle or criticize any participant.
8. Accept all ideas equally, even those with whom you disagree. Use the discussion period to voice your preferences, but be willing to accept the majority opinion gracefully, even if you do not agree with it.
9. Do not let disagreements between participants become personal arguments. Try to stop arguments before they get started. (For example, “Okay, that’s good. We have two completely opposite ideas on this subject. Let’s hear some other ideas now.” Or, “Would someone else like to comment on these ideas?”)
10. Never complain about members. Praise the people who came to the meeting instead of complaining about those who did not. Praise those who volunteer to help. Never complain about those who do not.
11. Keep the meeting upbeat. Generate enthusiasm and hope. People with positive attitudes can accomplish almost anything.
12. Always adjourn the meeting on a positive note. Thank everyone for their interest and participation.

## Appendix J: Neighborhood Self-Evaluation Checklist

The following checklist provides a way for a group to rate their skill or knowledge in different areas. The list is fairly extensive, so not all of the areas will apply to your group. Simply mark each point with the using the following scale:

**NI** (Needs Improvement)

**E** (Excellent)

**S** (Satisfactory)

**NA** (Not Applicable)

You may also add comments to the list. Feel free to recopy this list and add columns for your comments.

### Self-Evaluation Checklist

#### 1. **Organization**

- Mission statement and bylaws (or operating procedures) are established, effective, and being followed.
- Develops annual goals and work plan
- Annually evaluates organizational activities
- Meetings are held regularly, widely publicized, and open (and accessible) to the public
- Meetings are well organized; a written agenda is available and is followed
- Meetings begin and end on time
- Written minutes are kept and distributed

#### 2. **Leadership**

- Reflects neighborhood population
- Articulates issues clearly
- Democratic participatory methods are used to make decisions
- Communicates regularly with group about financial status, key issues, and work plan, etc.
- Knowledgeable about local government and how to influence decision making

#### 3. **Communication**

- Newsletters are produced and distributed regularly
- An Annual Report or Fact Sheet is produced and distributed
- A record of decisions and policies is well-maintained
- Meetings have adequate publicity throughout the neighborhood and areas where neighbors frequent
- An annual meeting is held for the entire membership/community
- A good relationship with local media is maintained
- Makes presence known at public hearings and before official bodies

#### 4. **Diversity**

- Leaders and members reflect the neighborhood's diversity (race, homeowners/tenants, income levels, etc.)
- Meeting places are accessible to all persons
- Group involves non- or limited-English speaking persons
- Issues addressed by the group are representative of active and not-so-active members

#### 5. **Volunteers**

- Group recruits and maintains active members
- Group provides orientation for new members
- Volunteers understand their role clearly in the group
- Volunteers are held accountable for their assignment
- Volunteers are motivated and stay involved
- Volunteers are clear about the group's agenda, goals, and tactics

#### 6. **Resources**

- Group members have diverse fundraising skills
- Annual fundraising goals are set
- Annual fundraising plan and calendar is developed
- Fundraising events are planned and implemented
- Fundraising plan is evaluated at least once a year
- Timely research is done for sources for renewable money
- Maintains 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, if applicable