

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Date: October 10, 2016
Item No.: 15.a

Department Approval

City Manager Approval



Item Description: Discuss Recommendations Regarding Neighborhood Associations from the Community Engagement Commission.

BACKGROUND

At the April 25, 2016 meeting, the City Council received the Community Engagement Commission's (CEC) report on neighborhood associations. On August 8, 2016, the City Council discussed the report findings and received public comments about the recommendations. Staff is bringing the discussion forward at this time to have the City Council provide direction on whether to implement any of the recommendations of the report. Community Engagement Commission Chair Scot Becker will be in attendance to provide additional background on the recommendations. Attached to this report is the CEC's Report and Recommendations regarding neighborhood associations.

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The City of Roseville values community engagement and transparency of its operations and decisions. Fostering the creation of neighborhood associations will further this commitment for meaningful community engagement of Roseville residents and businesses.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The costs for implementing these recommendations are unknown at this time. While it is not contemplated under the existing recommendations that an additional staff person would be needed to assist neighborhood associations, it is expected that existing staff will spend time working on the issues. The new costs will be dependent on the level of support to neighborhood associations that are desired (costs of mailings, operating grants, etc.).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The City Council should discuss and provide direction to staff for next steps regarding implementing the recommendations regarding neighborhood associations.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Discuss and provide direction to staff for next steps regarding implementing the recommendations for neighborhood associations.

Prepared by: Patrick Trudgeon, City Manager (651) 792-7021

Attachments: A: City Council minutes from April 25, 2016
B: City Council minutes from August 8, 2016
C. Community Engagement Commission's Report and Recommendations Regarding Neighborhood Associations

sive plan update, causing him concern about the validity of that point. Mayor Roe stated he could also not support the findings related to safety and traffic as stated.

Councilmember Laliberte clarified that there is a process for allowing the City Council to re-examine areas between comprehensive plan updates; and she had asked on several occasions for a review of current HDR designations. Councilmember Laliberte stated she was not opposed to make changes in between, but could support this motion as stated and based on the findings outlined.

Roll Call

Ayes: McGehee, Willmus, Laliberte and Etten.

Nays: Roe.

Motion carried.

Recess

Mayor Roe recessed the meeting at approximately 9:24 p.m., and reconvened at approximately 9:29 p.m.

d. Receive Recommendation Regarding Neighborhood Associations from the Community Engagement Commission

Mayor Roe welcomed and introduced Community Engagement Commission (CEC) Chair Scot Becker and Commissioner Gary Grefenberg.

Chair Becker presented the report and CEC recommendations regarding neighborhood associations, as tasked to the CEC, and briefly reviewed and highlighted sections of the report. Chair Becker noted the "affiliation" terminology used was open to various perceptions, and suggested the City Council, during their review and future consideration may want to use their discretion in revising that term.

Chair Becker noted that there were additional expectations the City Council may wish to consider, but had not received consensus of the CEC for formal recommendation (lines 190 – 199)

Commissioner Grefenberg asked, as the City Council discusses this report in the future, that the CEC be invited to the table in Worksession format to further review some points. If additional document was requested by the City Council, Commissioner Grefenberg noted the CEC's willingness to provide that documentation as applicable.

At the request of Commissioner Grefenberg to respond to any public comments received tonight, Mayor Roe clarified that the primary purpose tonight was to receive the report. While the City Council would take questions and receive comments from the public, Mayor Roe advised that any discussion by the City Council would be subsequent to this meeting.

Councilmember Laliberte recognized the considerable time and effort of the CEC and original Neighborhood Association Task Force in developing this report, and

acknowledged their work. Councilmember Laliberte expressed appreciation for the good information provided for consideration and future discussion at a City Council Worksession.

Public Comment

Sherri Sanders, McCarrons Boulevard

Having served on the original Neighborhood Association Task Force from its inception to end, Ms. Sanders expressed her opposition to these recommendations. Ms. Sanders stated her respect for many efforts of the CEC and Task Force members, including those efforts of the five participants who felt compelled to resign. However, Ms. Sanders expressed her disappointment in the overall process used without any outreach to the greater community, and encouraged the City Council to revisit these recommendations and seek that public input.

Ms. Sanders opined that the report misconstrued the actual idea of community engagement, and she found it dangerously exclusive of homeowner associations, not mandated by local government. In her role as Chair of the Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association, the oldest neighborhood association in Roseville, Ms. Sanders encouraged the City Council not to waste any more resources on this effort until Roseville residents request forming neighborhood associations and requested assistance from their local government to do so. Ms. Sanders expressed her interest in Roseville residents also welcomed to the table at an upcoming City Council Worksession.

Diane Hilden, Bayview Drive

Ms. Hilden asked the City Council to shelve this document until future community engagement is heard from the public. Ms. Hilden noted frustrations and subsequent resignations of others serving on this effort who had given their permission to her to speak on their behalf.

Mayor Roe clarified that tonight's public testimony would remain focused on this report and not involve comments on the process.

Ms. Hilden opined that community engagement is the process, and this document is not representative of community engagement, but simply a manifesto of certain individual input. Ms. Hilden further opined that the City of St. Louis Park did not represent ideal or even reasonable practices for Roseville; and speaking for the Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association advised they would not support it. As a fluid, community-driven neighborhood association, Ms. Hilden opined that it was not a wise thing for the City Council or city to take time to regulate this type of activity.

Ms. Hilden stated that community engagement values a large number in the community and condensing their interest versus creating policy. Ms. Hilden strongly recommended a publicized community conversation series be used to vet neighborhood associations for ideas; in addition to collaboration with the Rose-

ville Police Department's Community Relations Coordinator Cory Yunke to hear his work with block clubs and their processes.

Lisa McCormick, Wheeler Street

Ms. McCormick stated she had asked to speak last tonight and thanked the City Council for their patience, consideration and the process she observed earlier tonight, opining it was a beautiful thing to watch, especially how it had turned out.

Mayor Roe cautioned that beauty was always in the eye of the beholder.

Ms. McCormick noted her questions to audience members in the hallway as to whether or not they had a neighborhood association representing the full Council Chambers tonight, with their confirmation that they were not formally organized. Ms. McCormick expressed her personal appreciation for residents being willing to attend meeting and share comments on issues of interest to them.

Regarding this report, Ms. McCormick noted that the objective was to further meaningful community engagement and questioned if this report or the process to get here was necessary to fulfill that objective. Ms. McCormick opined that, rather what the City Council did here tonight will further that objective when people are invited to come and allowed to voice their concerns and see those concerns acted upon. Ms. McCormick opined that was what community engagement is and what was necessary.

In following the comments of previous speakers, Ms. McCormick opined that this report is premature. Having listened to the presentation at a CEC meeting by the Community Liaison for St. Louis Park, Ms. McCormick noted she said the neighborhood association structure had been formed at the request of residents asking for it. Ms. McCormick noted that this was not the case in Roseville. As one of the early proponents to get to this point, Ms. McCormick stated she had been naïve and thought it had been vetted more in the community than it had been. Ms. McCormick stated that the original draft of this report was her work product; and as the author opined this report should be tabled. As she had originally shared with the Neighborhood Association Task Force, Ms. McCormick opined that the right questions weren't being asked, and at that point had changed her position. At this point in time, Ms. McCormick noted operations were like block groups or neighborhoods, and to move from that to a formal neighborhood association overnight was not only premature but unwise.

Ms. McCormick noted the City Council could change their charge based on her understanding from "encourage and facilitate neighborhood associations" to "encourage cohesive neighborhoods," and leave the second part unchanged, yet still achieve the same effect. While recognizing there was good work put into this report, Ms. McCormick opined it was not the right time for it. Ms. McCormick asked that the City Council table the report, which was unfortunate given that the

CEC and Neighborhood Association Task Force were both deeply committed to community engagement. However, Ms. McCormick opined everyone should be more on the same team, and for whatever reason due to the apparent strife during the process, things happened; and even a really great work product when it provided the wrong answer was still wrong no matter how it looked.

McGehee moved, Etten seconded, receipt of the CEC recommendations regarding neighborhood associations, and directed staff to include City Council discussion of the report on a subsequent Worksession.

Councilmember Willmus expressed his interest at a later date in hearing from Ms. Sanders, Ms. Hilden and Ms. McCormick if the City Council were to adopt this report how it would limit any group's ability to maintain an informal neighborhood association or an existing one as currently structured.

Councilmember Laliberte stated she would support the motion to receive the report; advising she did want to have future conversation about the recommendation, opining too much time and effort was expended by a lot of people. Councilmember Laliberte recognized there were lots of diverging thoughts, but opined to table the report would be a disservice to those thoughts, and welcomed that future conversation, whether or not it was determined these were things that may or may not be needed.

Mayor Roe clarified that his initial intent was not to move forward drastically in forming neighborhood associations, but to have a structure in place for anyone wanting to create an association and an ultimate framework in place to do so and be of assistance to them. Mayor Roe expressed his recognition that there were obviously still things that needed to be discussed as part of that effort.

Councilmember McGehee stated she wasn't sure if the City Council had received precisely what they needed at this point, but if a neighborhood association wanted to get together, at least there was a list available to work from without the need to start from scratch.

Roll Call

Ayes: McGehee, Willmus, Laliberte, Etten and Roe.

Nays: None.

On behalf of the City Council and staff, Mayor Roe thanked the CEC and Task Force members who had worked on this report as a means to start the conversation and move forward accordingly.

Motion to Extend Curfew

Roll Call (Super Majority Required)

Ayes: Willmus, Laliberte, Etten, McGehee and Roe.

Nays: None.

On behalf of the public and City Council, Mayor Roe stated interest in hearing the first annual report of the RACF.

For those residents interested in serving on a board such as the RACF, Mayor Roe also noted the Roseville Historical Society as another area of service.

Ms. Pust concurred with Mayor Roe.

Councilmember Laliberte thanked Ms. Pust for her long-term efforts in working on this update.

13. Business Items – Presentations/Discussions

a. Discuss recommendations Regarding Neighborhood Associations from the Community Engagement Commission

City Manager Patrick Trudgeon referenced the detail provided in the RCA as recommended by the Community Engagement Commission (CEC). Mr. Trudgeon referenced Attachment B, outlining the CEC's report and specific recommendations regarding Neighborhood Associations (NA). Mr. Trudgeon reviewed each section, starting with line 112 of Attachment B, seeking City Council feedback.

Criteria for "Affiliated" Neighborhood Associations (page 3)

As noted by Councilmember Laliberte, City Manager Trudgeon confirmed that no association had come forward to-date asking for this "affiliation" status; and the criteria provided were simply modeled from other communities with NAs.

When important issues came up in neighborhoods, Councilmember McGehee opined they rallied quickly and had the ability to self-organize to present their views to the City Council, often choosing their own spokesperson. Councilmember McGehee opined that the city should not be involved in this matter, and favored NAs being able to self-organize without interference and with no formal process requiring bylaws and coming before the City Council for approval. Councilmember McGehee further opined this was intrusive and unnecessary; nor was it necessary for the city to define their boundaries and dispute them if and when someone may feel left out. With existing block captains, NextDoor.com and other ways for a community to self-organize around city issues, Councilmember McGehee pointed out this had not arisen from the community wishing for such an idea. Councilmember McGehee stated she was not interested in pursuing this.

Councilmember Willmus stated he didn't see anything in this criteria that precluded neighborhoods from serving as NAs independent of this proposed process.

Councilmember McGehee then questioned the need to have it in place.

Mayor Roe noted this discussion was involving a portion of the document beyond that yet presented by City Manager Trudgeon. Mayor Roe clarified that if a NA chose to "affiliate" with the city, there were certain things the city would provide to the group in exchange for that "affiliation. Mayor Roe agreed with Councilmember McGehee's concerns with boundaries, opining those should be self-determined, and further stated he had no problem with overlapping boundaries of groups seeking further identify with a smaller area than the broader NA. However, Mayor Roe stated the city should not make that decision, and also expressed his concern in the city approving bylaws, suggesting there simply be a checklist for the NA to complete. Mayor Roe stated he did think it was good to require a NA to have bylaws to function well and avoid chaos.

Mayor Roe stated he did have a problem referring to NAs as "affiliated" and suggested it made more sense to call them "registered" to avoid any perception they were city-driven.

Councilmember Etten agreed with the comments of Mayor Roe, opining the city shouldn't get involved approving bylaws, but simply provided samples and let those organizations work for their efforts without city approval. As an example, Councilmember Etten noted his involvement in the larger Lake McCarron's Neighborhood Association, as well as in a smaller group functioning within that larger NA, both serving different purposes to build community. Councilmember Etten stated finding ways to assist neighbors in joining together was a good thing and benefited not only neighbors and the neighborhood, but the city as a whole, especially in more positive ways going forward versus being only a reactionary group. Councilmember Etten noted this provided neighbors to get to know about their neighborhood and city and make them more aware and involved. Councilmember Etten noted the block captain idea came from a public comment made in April when this was discussed; and suggested the city go to those contacts first to determine if there was interest in the registration process, and if so use that network as the starting point.

For someone coming to register with the city as a NA, Councilmember McGehee questioned how the city proved they represented those people.

Mayor Roe responded that would be evidenced as per the criteria outlined by City Manager Trudgeon. As with anything, Mayor Roe noted the city was depending on people being honest and straightforward, thus the criteria proposed.

Councilmember Willmus stated he had no issue whether a NA was referred to as “affiliated” or “registered.” Regarding boundaries, Councilmember Willmus asked Mayor Roe if he saw any need for oversight or how to provide a realistic guideline to avoid a boundary that may encompass the entire city or a good portion of it, or even possibly extend beyond the city.

Mayor Roe recognized it may involve some guidelines, but he didn’t think it necessarily should be based on so many members per acre, and acknowledge that people may identify in different ways and accept that. Mayor Roe suggested including instructive language discouraging conflicts related to boundaries, but otherwise didn’t see any issues.

Regarding the statement that this NA idea had not been brought forward by the public, Mayor Roe clarified that it definitely had been, and if not from the CEC, it had been members of the public that got them thinking about it; and noted formation of several other NAs over the last few years.

City Manager Trudgeon agreed with Mayor Roe, that prior to the creation of the CEC, the Civic Engagement Task Force provided a recommendation to foster NAs and brought that forward to the City Council, and subsequently turned it over to the CEC with the goal of fostering more civic and community engagement. Mr. Trudgeon noted this phase of the process was simply fleshing out the details.

Specific to boundaries, City Manager Trudgeon agreed it was a challenging issue, and noted the City Council’s discussion tonight mimicked those held by the CEC and its subcommittee. Referencing the City of St. Louis Park’s model with the city pre-determining boundaries by map divisions, Mr. Trudgeon noted that had become clear very quickly that it was not something the city was interested in doing. Mr. Trudgeon suggested allowing those boundaries to be self-determined by the NA, and spoke in support of a soft approval versus hard approval of their bylaws. While the City Council may consider those boundaries, if requested to do so, Mr. Trudgeon those boundaries may fall naturally. With the bylaws, Mr. Trudgeon reported that the CEC felt it was important to have things set up properly for the NA to function and be successful, with the intent for rules of governance and the strong feeling that an annual meeting was required and open to the public. While this language in Attachment B may be too harsh, Mr. Trudgeon referenced and suggested the St. Louis Park “tool kit” and sample bylaws and checklist for minimum criteria as a best practice to follow and the minimum submission to the city to be “registered.”

Mayor Roe agreed with that point, at a minimum to provide bylaws for a NA, but not for City Council approval, and only as an administrative function for staff to accept that registration and provide that registration on the city’s website. Mayor Roe opined that City Council Approval represented a whole level of politics, es-

pecially for a particular issue that may come before the City Council, and stated his lack of interest in setting up such potential conflicts.

Councilmember Willmus agreed with City Manager Trudgeon and Mayor Roe.

Councilmember McGehee reiterated that she saw no reason for bylaws or to be “registered,” since at this point anyone could access an agenda or notice and represented no specific public benefit for someone from city staff to talk to a NA, since that option already existed.

Councilmember Laliberte stated she preferred “registered” versus “affiliated” to serve as a way of recognizing the NA and to receive an exchange of services versus those NAs organically existing. Councilmember Laliberte also stated boundaries were not for the city to dictate, and people may want to participate in multiple areas or interest groups. Councilmember Laliberte agreed with Councilmember Etten that others could be blurred. Councilmember Laliberte stated she loved the idea that NAs develop for positive reasons and not just because they’re fighting about an issue, a development, or the city to be heard. Councilmember Laliberte opined that the goal in acknowledging a NA similarly was for the good of the community.

Neighborhood Association Expectations of the City (page 4-5)

Councilmember McGehee referenced the last bullet point (lines 186 – 189) and meeting with the City Manager annually. Again, Councilmember McGehee noted these items are readily available to the community or any group or neighborhood association asking for them. From this language, Councilmember McGehee opined that the perception is that if you or your small group isn’t “registered,” you are unable to partake of those activities. Councilmember McGehee opined that any neighborhood group should be able to use City meeting facilities at no cost, whether “affiliated” or not, with no special break just because you’re “registered.” Councilmember McGehee stated she didn’t see any check and balance in handing out these benefits; and would like to see evidence of a group and their acting as one versus someone stating they controlled a certain number of blocks in an area. While that may not happen often, Councilmember McGehee opined it could and referenced several cases in which she could see that happening. If a group wants to organize and the person in charge receives extra notification, Councilmember McGehee opined she had a hard time saying why this should be so different. Regarding the St. Louis Park model, Councilmember McGehee stated St. Louis Park is not only a different and much larger community with a larger staff than Roseville, but also operates under a different system. Councilmember McGehee reiterated her statement that she didn’t think this proposed NA process fit; and referred to recent community surveys indicating resident’s attachments to their neighborhoods and providing sufficient community input without this type of structure in place.

Councilmember Willmus responded that this structure didn't preclude them from what Councilmember McGehee was suggesting they already do, but simply provided a mechanism for more opportunity and for further connection with the city. Councilmember Willmus stated his only question was pertaining to the bullet points on lines 181 and 184, noting the comments of Councilmember McGehee on notification, and something available for anyone checking the box. Councilmember Willmus stated he had some questions as to whether or not that was absolutely necessary.

Councilmember Laliberte stated this provided a nice list of things that "could be" provided to a NA, but in some ways she found it too broad and long with the potential to tie up a staff person charged with doing this. Councilmember Laliberte noted just tracking what grants were available and their specific purpose and parameters was a huge task for a staff already overwhelmed. Councilmember Laliberte also expressed concern with including NA information in the city newsletter, opining that may prove difficult with the current every other month schedule that made it hard to get all of the city's existing timely information out to the public that the city was obligated to provide. Regarding mailing, if the mailing was intended as a one-time, NA set up notice, Councilmember Laliberte stated her agreement, but not as an annual meeting notice. However, Councilmember Laliberte noted this at some point brought up the issue of boundaries, or where that mailing went and who received the notice.

Councilmember Etten agreed with some of Councilmember Laliberte's points, noting his concern with being considerate of staff time in keeping up-to-date with grants. Councilmember Etten noted his interest in whether all NAs could become a collaborative group, not all inclusive, but in ways the NAs could work together for positive interaction with reasonable expectations. While the mailing may potentially be a good thing, Councilmember Etten noted potential funding sources for those mailings, whether a one-time starter mailing or other option, noting boundaries drove that cost. Instead, Councilmember Etten suggested a cost-participation cap for each NA that the city could support, but providing a specific source of and regulation of those funds. Regarding notifying a NA of things happening, Councilmember Etten stated his interest in continuing to inform that, and while things may not initially provide a perfect system, formalization for block captains was his preference with the goal to get more information out to neighborhoods and then ask those block captains to disseminate it to their community neighborhood. Councilmember Etten noted this provided another step and intentional effort for the city to reach and communicate with more people.

Mayor Roe stated he didn't have much problem with lines 181 – 185 and agreed with staff not spending too much time on those steps. Mayor Roe stated his interest in the collaborative feedback among NA's on grants that didn't require city research; and agreed with the lack of room available in the city's newsletter for NA

news as well as the additional staff time that would require. Mayor Roe agreed with the seed money concept for NA mailing leaving it up to them how they used it. Related to the notification process, similar to that used for land use issues, Mayor Roe noted this brought up the question of who provided the mailing list, suggesting that may be a service the city could provide, to determine what made the most sense versus an unlimited mailing. Mayor Roe agreed with the one-time only NA creation mailing.

Additional discussion and clarification included the initial mailing would be for a newly-forming NA to solicit for their membership in establishing as a group; clarification of the results of a mailing and what constitutes a NA by reporting the number to the city, without identifying members, just a head count; and preference for NAs to maintain communication with the city with updated meeting minutes or notes and a current tally of their membership on an annual basis.

Councilmember Laliberte noted her struggle in how to define members of a NA; while applauding NAs that strengthened their membership among themselves and funded their activities, opining that was the best case scenario from her perspective.

Councilmember McGehee agreed with Councilmember Laliberte, noting an example with the fence issue earlier this year, with a cohesive group coming together around a project, and continuing to get together around other projects and positive things and without an established boundary. Councilmember McGehee opined that certain personalities could make this idea problematic, and further opined how much nicer it was to have neighbors arrive spontaneously, and receive any additional information they requested from the city without the more formal aspects being suggested.

Councilmember Etten clarified that he didn't have a perception that city recognition would give a group some special powers; and suggested Councilmember McGehee was over-representing who NAs represented. Councilmember Etten further clarified that the goal was not to empower anyone, but to bring people together to communicate and provide a vehicle for them to do so, such as a NA. Councilmember Etten noted this was not guaranteeing people extra control over the city or their neighbors.

Councilmember McGehee opined that the Night to Unite event, block captains, and the NextDoor.com program provided significant and sufficient outreach.

City Manager Trudgeon noted this is all predicated on fostering NAs so they could foster community and civic engagement. Mr. Trudgeon noted there was a lot of information in this report, and clarified that there was no suggestion that everything be implemented all at once. Mr. Trudgeon suggested starting with basic resources and a tool kit for NA self-organization and offering the support

available to them from the city; and then to wait and see before implementing anything further. Mr. Trudgeon expressed his appreciation of the City Council's recognition of the staff time commitment, and especially if following this route, further noted his appreciation of a phased approach to not overburden staff. If the City Council is interested in proceeding, Mr. Trudgeon opined there were good nuggets provided in the report and models with which to move forward.

Benefits and Purposes of NAs (Attachment B, page 2)

Mayor Roe reviewed the intent of this effort.

Public Comment

Mayor Roe noted it would be helpful for the City Council if existing NA representatives could provide input as to the registration process and their experience in tracking membership.

Lisa McCormick, Wheeler Street

Ms. McCormick referenced how this NA process had historically come to be, based on her recollection and personal service on the task force and its report that served as a predecessor to the current CEC. With that original intent to create more cohesive neighborhoods that evolved into the NA concept, Ms. McCormick opined that idea met with some resistance at the CEC level. As to whether or not the idea was brought forward by members of the public, Ms. McCormick questioned that, noting she initially brought forward but then reversed her position; and stated she knew of no one else coming forward to request this.

Ms. McCormick opined this was premature, and to City Manager Trudgeon's point, it provided good information and things to initiate, there was no need for this formal of a process, but simply to strengthen the block program. Ms. McCormick referenced her starting of a NA several years ago and stated if she had more information at that time, would have used a different process to do so. Ms. McCormick referenced the work being done by the Police Department's Community Relations Coordinator Corey Yunke with block clubs. Ms. McCormick questioned for what purpose and what community engagement this effort was put forth. Specific to her NA, Ms. McCormick reported there were initially 40-60 residents at meetings and subsequently participating, but when they felt like they weren't being heard, it was difficult to maintain membership and keep good faith, even if and when decisions didn't have the preferred result of those participants.

Ms. McCormick questioned the goal, and suggested if the city pursued it there may not be the desired results that they had achieved and improved upon, including potential legal liabilities if they were encouraging incorporating entities and a level of involvement for the City Council in NA management. Under this proposal, Ms. McCormick stated she would not seek recognition as a NA as she was philosophically opposed to the requirements. Ms. McCormick opined when she was working directly with former Community Development Director Paul Bilotta,

she had contributed to the community, and by implementing this process, the city would be taking a step backwards. For members of the community to be allowed to meet in public spaces, Ms. McCormick asked if they needed to be recognized as a NA participant to do so. If so, Ms. McCormick opined that was a step backward.

Ms. McCormick referenced her research of the "Speak Up! Roseville" website, and past meeting videos, with most public comment coming from those attending tonight's meeting for this topic, without much other feedback received. Ms. McCormick noted this had yet to be vetted by the community; and stated that she found it fairly disrespectful that the fact there are three NAs in Roseville, one formally incorporated and two informally meeting, and only one acknowledged at a public meeting. As the founder of one of those informal NAs, and with the Chair of the formally incorporated meeting also present in tonight's audience, Ms. McCormick stated both had come forward to say this is premature, not collaborative, and not the right thing to do at this time based on their experience.

While there may be more conversation on this, Ms. McCormick asked that people be brought to the table to comment.

Sherry Sanders, Chair of Lake McCarron's NA, Resident of S McCarron's Blvd.

As a member of the Civic Engagement Task Force from its inception to its end, and after their report was submitted on which she had worked, as well as serving on the CEC, and as an involved community member, Ms. Sanders stated her interest in responding to this issue.

Ms. Sanders agreed with the comments of Mayor Roe and the city not defining boundaries, noting she had opposed that at the CEC level, and remained against that; and also opined the city should have nothing to do with NA bylaws.

Regarding concerns expressed by Councilmember McGehee, Ms. Sanders opined there was no need for that concern, as the Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association continued to persist and was basically ignored by many City Councilmembers over the years. Ms. Sanders noted she represents 3,000 people, and that included residents and businesses in their area – anyone owning property, none of whom had asked for this.

Ms. Sanders stated community and civic engagement was hard and messy, and noted you could always rally people temporarily around a common enemy, but stated that wasn't how she wanted to perceive things, but preferred something build on a positive aspect. Ms. Sanders noted her NA met monthly, had formal bylaws, regular meetings and membership dues.

Regarding the points outlined in the report, Ms. Sanders questioned why the City Council would even consider accepting it, other than simply receiving the report and reviewing it. Ms. Sanders asked that they not consider action now, opining the city already had too much going on already and suggested reacting to the report at a later date, and including public participation in that discussion. Of those working on the Task Force, Ms. Sanders noted after many hours sacrificed to consider NAs, none of them supported this or were asking for it to become city policy. While the report may have some good points, Ms. Sanders opined they were not necessary, even though she wrote some of them.

Ms. Sanders stated she had a problem with people without experience encouraging the City Council to make policy.

Regarding membership and vetting, Ms. Sanders addressed one group of residents seeking to be grandfathered in without any bylaws and holding no meetings to date. Ms. Sanders asked that the City Council take their time with vetting, and determine whether or not representation was in the actual area, opining otherwise messy things could happen down the road, when things should be done prudently and done right.

Ms. Sanders noted there were advantages for the city to help NAs advertise and with possible funding, but noted her NA did that on its own anyway, and referenced the Rice Street Gardens and Community Conversations as two examples of their efforts. Ms. Sanders noted their NA and those efforts were more resident-led initiatives and they could even do more.

Ms. Sanders offered her availability in the future to assist the City Council and bring in those with experience in creating and running real associations – block clubs that were a building block for associations form an organic foundation.

Ms. Sanders asked that the City Council wait until enough people want this and then do it right.

Peggy Verkuilen, 1123 Sextant Avenue W

Ms. Verkuilen expressed concern in attempting to draw boundaries, recommending if doing so, their borders needed to touch. While recognizing the need for rules of order for meetings, Ms. Verkuilen noted the difficulty with bylaws. Ms. Verkuilen noted the whole object was to get information out, and opined that was what should be included, and with the right person heading up the job it could be done.

Ms. Verkuilen noted her lack of support with mailings, opining the best thing was person to person contact and handing things to neighbors. With that personal contact and interest expressed, Ms. Verkuilen noted it allowed for ways to provide

personal information and a contact point through emails of door to door notice versus the cost of mailings.

Rick Sanders, S McCarron's Blvd., Lake McCarron's NA Co-Chair

Mr. Sanders asked that the City Council put this on the back burner, and opined the only benefit was funding for a one-time mailing list with everything else already available. If someone wants to start a NA, while it may be beneficial for them to receive this information, Ms. Sanders noted most if not all of it was available on line.

To have the municipal government involved in telling a NA how to run their organization, which he didn't think was their intent, Mr. Sanders questioned the rationale involved, and what potential harm could occur down the road.

Mr. Sanders encouraged the City Council to take it slow and give out information on what it would and could do, but avoid setting up boundaries, allowing block captains their role in providing fluent communication. Mr. Sanders opined that the goal was to see people come together and if they saw the city becoming too involved, they would back off. Mr. Sanders opined that any information residents sought of the city was readily available from the city website.

Mr. Sanders questioned what this whole movement was about; and as a member of an existing NA, opined he wasn't interested in what was being offered.

Additional City Council Discussion

Mayor Roe clarified his point in establishing NAs was voluntary for those wishing to do so, but further clarified that the city was in no way mandating it, and expressed concern that was the perception of this report and discussion. Mayor Roe categorically stated that was not what was being talked about by the City Council; and clarified the intent of the CEC was to have NAs register with the city and receive benefit from those collective efforts. Mayor Roe noted that ultimately the City Council would need to decide how to proceed; and determine whether there were benefits to registering as well as considering other aspects. Mayor Roe suggested that everyone leave this conversation acknowledging that there was nothing wrong with neighborhoods connecting with each other and forming an association; and also confirmed that there was no need for them to talk to the city to proceed, with no one suggesting that as a requirement. On the flip side, Mayor Roe noted the benefit of the process could be seen as the ability to connect with local government and be a part of that larger process. Mayor Roe stated any way to facilitate that participation was his objective with this process; and opined the rest was for discussion and consideration by the City Council.

Councilmember Willmus noted that, as he stated back in April of this year, his position had not changed. Councilmember Willmus stated that he saw nothing in this report that impedes any existing NA continuing to function as it had been;

and only provided an alternative for people choosing to go this route. Councilmember Willmus reiterated that it in no way should diminish residents or those existing NAs in any way. Councilmember Willmus opined, if things go forward, further review and consideration was needed; noting the report was nowhere near the point to move forward with it.

Out of respect to those with experience, Councilmember McGehee noted their advice was to wait; and until or if people come forward seeking assistance with forming a NA, the City Council and community needed to know that if they had something to discuss as a group, they were welcome to use public space to do so, as well as receiving City Council agendas as requested. Further Councilmember McGehee noted residents were free to contact their city leaders at any time about what they needed to form a collective voice. However, until she felt the need for this in the community or for the City Council or city staff to spend more time on this, Councilmember McGehee opined this was not in the city's best interest.

Councilmember Etten stated his agreement in general with Mayor Roe and Councilmember Willmus, noting this doesn't force anything, nor should it insult any existing NAs. Councilmember Etten stated he'd be very concerned if this intended to take away anything from groups not seeking registration, but opined he didn't think it did so. Councilmember Etten further opined that the vast majority of the points were intended for those seeking to do more in the community and to do good; and questioned why the city wouldn't want to encourage more people to make this happen and provide them with the tools and support they may need, but not forcing anything. Councilmember Etten stated this supported positive connections in the community, and opined there was a role for the city without formally forcing boundaries. While there were some things that needed working through, Councilmember Etten opined the city could help those not knowing how to develop neighborhood connections, the overall purpose of the city and for the good of the broader community.

Councilmember Laliberte stated this that she wasn't ready to do anything now, but she could support the baby steps approach. Councilmember Laliberte further stated she didn't want to create anything precluding an organization that wanted to be as loose or formal as they chose. However, the easy creation of a tool kit to assist them, similar to that created for neighborhoods interested in pursuing organized trash collection, Councilmember Laliberte opined was feasible, offering sample outreach options and bylaw models for them. Councilmember Laliberte opined it shouldn't take much more effort from the city than that. Councilmember Laliberte noted comments she'd received over the last few months that residents were not interested in paying for mailings for other residents. However, even though this already happens, Councilmember Laliberte noted the perception was out there. Councilmember Laliberte opined that one remaining question was whether those NAs not "registered" had the same recognition from the city as those who are. Councilmember Laliberte noted there were lots of things to work

through if the city provided any other benefits. However, if the intent was to help and encourage residents to build a more cohesive neighborhood in a formal or informal way, Councilmember Laliberte stated she was all for that, even though that was only one tiny part of this report.

Mayor Roe stated his tendency to agree with taking the first baby step of acknowledging the city felt there was a benefit in people forming NAs and a willingness to prove basic tools as resources. While he found this "tool kit" a good idea, Mayor Roe stated he wasn't supportive of tracking and providing grant information. Mayor Roe clarified that he wasn't suggesting authorizing the tool kit tonight, but stated that may be the first step in the future. Mayor Roe stated he didn't want to lose sight of this report and some of its suggestions; all toward the effort of encouraging neighborhoods to work together. Mayor Roe stated his take away from tonight's discussion was that there remained a lot of questions yet before moving forward with any steps.

Councilmember McGehee agreed that she wasn't ready to proceed even if the tool kit was very simple like that put together for organized trash hauling. However, Councilmember McGehee expressed her lack of understanding of the City Council's motivation in trying to make neighborhoods into NAs.

Mayor Roe clarified that this was not what he said; and restated his comment that he felt it was important for the city to acknowledge the benefit of associations, not disadvantages, by making positive communication efforts through that acknowledgement rather than the status quo which in effect served to discourage it.

14. City Manager Future Agenda Review

City Manager Trudgeon provided a preview of upcoming agenda items.

15. Councilmember-Initiated Items for Future Meetings

Mayor Roe requested meeting minutes of the June 21, 2016 Roseville Economic Development Authority (REDA) meeting be reviewed for approval at the next scheduled City Council meeting. Unless there was a reason not to do so offered by the REDA's legal counsel, Mayor Roe suggested future REDA meeting minutes be approved by the City Council as well, rather than waiting for the next REDA meeting to allow posting them on the city's website for public information without further delay.

City Manager Trudgeon reported that staff had intended to distribute them as part of the upcoming August 29, 2016 REDA meeting; but would consult on process protocol for future reference.

16. Adjourn Meeting

Etten moved, Laliberte seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 9:43 p.m.

Roll Call

Ayes: Willmus, Laliberte, Etten, McGehee and Roe.

Nays: None.

Community Engagement Commission's Report and Recommendations Regarding Neighborhood Associations

Introduction: Authorization and Background

This report is the Community Engagement Commission's response to the Council's charge to the Community Engagement Commission (CEC) to advise it on "how the City could assist and encourage the formation of Roseville neighborhood associations."

As discussed with the City Council, the CEC decided to establish a task force to advise it on how the aforementioned charge could be achieved. This task force, advisory to the CEC, was established to be an initial, short-term effort related to advancing neighborhood associations in the city of Roseville.

The task force held nine meetings over the course of five months, between March 11, 2015 and August 5, 2015. The task force, at its initiative, checked in with the CEC at its May 2015 meeting to confirm that it had correctly understood its charge from the CEC and to clarify that it was to recommend how the City—not the CEC—could:

- 1) Encourage and facilitate the formation of neighborhood associations, and
- 2) Foster and facilitate effective and authentic neighborhood participation in civic decision-making.

This advisory task force at its last meeting unanimously approved its final report to the CEC. The task force chairs, Donna Spencer and Jerry Stoner, presented the task force's report to the CEC at its August 13th meeting. (See attached task force report). Task force members did not necessarily agree on all topics and, for this reason, the task force report indicated areas where it recommended further consideration by the full CEC.

The CEC spent the next few months reviewing and analyzing these recommendations and assessing those issues the task force had not resolved and left to the CEC for their resolution. It also independently reviewed Edina and St. Louis Park's policies and guidelines for their neighborhood associations, the only two inner ring suburbs in the Minnesota metropolitan area which have "official" neighborhood associations. The CEC also received a presentation from the St. Louis Park Community Liaison Breanna Freedman, who assists St. Louis Park neighborhood associations in applying that city's association guidelines.

Primary Recommendation

The Roseville Community Engagement Commission recommends to the City Council that the City assist, foster, and support the creation and effective functioning of neighborhood associations in ways as follows in this report.

It should be noted that while these recommendations are based on the work of the Neighborhood Association Task Force, the task force recommendations have been subsequently reviewed and, in many cases, altered. Thus, in other words, the specific recommendations below are those of the CEC itself.

Finally, it is important to note that this CEC report does not go beyond neighborhood associations and address other ways that the City of Roseville could facilitate neighborhood participation in civic decision-making.

Benefits and Purposes of Neighborhood Associations

The purposes of a particular neighborhood association are determined by an association. Generally speaking, the following are purposes commonly identified by many neighborhood associations. The listing herein is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive but to serve as guidelines for existing or future Roseville neighborhood associations.

Neighborhood associations:

1. Build a sense of community and a culture of neighborliness
2. Involve residents in their democratic forms of government
3. Promote social activities of varied interest to residents
4. Maintain and enhance the quality of neighborhood life and safety
5. Provide the means by which issues and concerns of a neighborhood can be more effectively expressed and communicated, thus serving as a vital link between local government (City Council, departments, and City Commissions, as well as school district and county government) and the neighborhood
6. Promote community and civic engagement by presenting opportunities for resident involvement
7. Assist staff in disseminating timely and understandable information to provide for informed resident participation in government decision-making and planning, thus gaining better acceptance and understanding of government decisions
8. Function as a liaison enabling two-way communication between neighborhoods and government entities on matter of interest such as zoning changes, redevelopment projects and their neighborhood impact, park projects and Comprehensive Plan amendments as well as other planning efforts

Neighborhood associations are one of many ways in which the City connects with its residents in the development and implementation of policies, programs, and services. Neighborhood associations also encompass the process of communicating and working collaboratively with citizens and other stakeholders in balancing various interests and issues affecting their lives and neighborhood.

We recommend that the City recognize that neighbors can sometimes better understand and communicate their neighborhood's issues and concerns to City Hall, especially in a suburb that does not have ward representation.

Neighbors are often in a better position for raising the right issues and asking the relevant questions concerning a neighborhood. Their involvement and collaboration in civic decision-making provide City staff and officials an opportunity to answer their concerns and address their issues. Community members can also provide a valuable source of expertise to influence government decisions that improve neighborhood quality of life and delivery of public services.

Neighborhood associations are an important means to facilitate and encourage neighbors to become involved in their community and engaged in local government and to improve communications between residents and their government.

Potential benefits of neighborhood associations and their involvement in a collaborative decision-making process include:

1. Provides residents a means to express a unified and collective voice
2. Increases residents' overall awareness of issues, decisions, and other issues that affect the neighborhood and the City
3. Offers opportunities for local government officials, developers, and residents to prioritize important projects, development, and planning and for the City and developers to solicit input from residents before development plans are finalized and before City approval is secured
4. Allows the development of better and more creative ideas and solutions and encourages thinking 'outside the box'
5. Instills a climate of respect and acknowledgement of the interests of various participants, staff, and decision-makers
6. Facilitates the resolution of neighborhood issues within the neighborhood: provides City officials and staff a better understanding of what are the issues neighborhood residents are concerned about
7. Improves buy-in and acceptance of outcomes and improves confidence in the process leading to an increase in sustainable decisions and greater resident satisfaction with the City's decision-making process
8. Engenders trust between citizens and local government
9. Improves the City's access to the expertise of its citizens and expands the capabilities of existing city staff
10. Nurtures the potential pool of informed and engaged candidates for Commissions and other volunteer efforts in the city
11. Assists seniors and elderly desiring to age in place an additional sense of connectedness and support

Detailed Recommendations

In order to effectively achieve the primary recommendation, the Community Engagement Commission has created specific recommendations under two categories; 1) *Criteria for "Affiliated" Neighborhood Associations*; and 2) *Neighborhood Association Expectations of the City*.

Criteria for "Affiliated" Neighborhood Associations

- Neighborhood associations shall register with the City in order to be "affiliated". (*Not all existing neighborhood associations or other organizations need to register, of course, but "affiliation" is required in order to be integrated into the city's neighborhood association specific notification system and communications networks, and to receive most of the material support listed below*). Neighborhood associations wishing to "affiliate" with the City shall provide the following information to the City (in writing) upon registration:
 - Neighborhood association name and contact information
 - Recommended geographic boundaries as approved at the neighborhood association's most recent annual meeting

- **Note:** The process to establish the boundaries of individual neighborhood associations upon “affiliation” needs to be determined by the council.
- The specific CEC recommendation is: In order to ensure neighborhood association *boundaries are of reasonable size and non-overlapping*, the City of Roseville shall approve their boundaries as part of the “affiliation” process.
- Identification and description of the methods of communication of neighborhood associations to its members
- Association bylaws (or other organizational structures and procedures) approved by the members at the neighborhood association’s most recent annual meeting
 - An “affiliated” neighborhood association shall have bylaws (and bylaw amendments), approved by City, that will among other things, include a statement of purposes, the process of governance and election, membership requirements, standards of appropriate conduct, and require annual meetings open to public attendance (albeit possibly with voting rights restricted to its membership).
- An “affiliated” neighborhood association’s membership shall be inclusive to all residents (i.e. both home owners and renters). It is up to individual neighborhood associations to determine if businesses and/or non-home property owners within their boundaries can be members.
- An “affiliated” neighborhood associations shall not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, and national origin, place of residence, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, pregnancy, age, or any other class protected by local, state, or federal law.

Neighborhood Association Expectations of the City

- The City will provide a “how-to” document or tool-kit which supplies a neighborhood that is looking to form an association with an explanation of how to form and organize a neighborhood association, how to register their neighborhood association with the city for “affiliation”, and otherwise provides best practices that neighborhoods can utilize when exploring and organizing to form a neighborhood association. The CEC recommends that the City reference similar materials developed by Edina and St. Louis Park (see attachments) as examples for potential inclusion into the City’s materials. The CEC also recommends that these materials be made available primarily online but also as printed materials.
- The City will provide space on the City website offering further details of “affiliated” neighborhood associations with relatively static information such as links to their website; contact names, email addresses, and phone numbers; a map of geographical boundaries; one or two relatively static paragraphs of descriptive information; and the date, time, and location of their next meeting.
- The City will feature “affiliated” neighborhood association news in the City Newsletter of upcoming events and activities, as requested by individual associations.

- The City will allow “affiliated” neighborhood associations to reserve City Hall meeting rooms and City park buildings at no cost based on availability and in compliance with rental policies.
- The City will pay for and coordinate one mailing on behalf of each “affiliated” neighborhood association to all residences within the approved boundaries of the neighborhood association.
- The City will reasonably make staff and other officials available to speak and provide information to “affiliated” neighborhood associations on issues of concern and interest to the “affiliated” neighborhood association.
- The City will provide a staff liaison to assist neighborhoods in forming an “affiliated” neighborhood association and to assist residents seeking to join existing “affiliated” neighborhood associations.
- The City will develop, maintain and provide information to neighborhood associations regarding grants and other funding opportunities for neighborhood associations. The CEC recommends considering and deciding whether this information is basic, static, and included as a part of the above “tool-kit” or otherwise be separately made available and continually maintained by someone on city staff and/or representatives from “affiliated” neighborhood associations.
- If appropriate, the City will consider the establishment of grants or other funds to be used by neighborhood associations in City-approved projects, activities, and outreach.
- The City will formally integrate “affiliated” neighborhood associations into the normal notification process for significant City activities and proposed development projects occurring within its approved boundaries.
- The City will send out emails to “affiliated” neighborhood associations of upcoming City Council agendas
- The City shall host annual meetings between the City Manager and designated staff and the leadership of all “affiliated” neighborhood associations. The City Manager at her/his discretion may invite other City staff to attend. The City Manager will develop the agenda after consulting with the leadership of each “affiliated” neighborhood association.

Additional Neighborhood Associations Expectations of the City (Not Adopted by the Community Engagement Commission)

- 1) The City will acknowledge notification of “affiliated” neighborhood associations in RCAs and include “affiliated” neighborhood associations comments within the RCA if feasible and staff time permitting.
- 2) The City Council will, to the extent possible, explain how and why the “affiliated” neighborhood association’s public comments influenced the decision making process.
- 3) The City Council will duly consider information provided to them and will consider additional discussion on topic as is warranted.

Other Provisions:

- 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 resident shall be required to participate. Each neighborhood association shall determine its own priorities and desired level of activity.

- Neighborhood associations will be included in the public input process but will not be assumed by City officials to speak on behalf of all residents in any given geographical area and will not limit the ability of any person or entity, including “non-affiliated” neighborhood groups, to otherwise participate in the public input process.

Attachments to be included in the RCA

- 1) Roseville Neighborhood Association Task Force Final Report to the Community Engagement Commission - August 5, 2015
- 2) Excerpt from the minutes approved by Community Engagement Commission of its Feb11, 2016 meeting with St. Louis Park Community Liaison Officer Breanna Freedman
- 3) Example ‘How-to’ Organizing Kits from Edina and St. Louis Park Minnesota



Roseville Neighborhood Association Task Force Final Report to the Community Engagement Commission August 5, 2015

Introduction

This report summarizes the deliberations and recommendations of the Roseville Neighborhood Association Task Force. The Task Force was formed under the Roseville Community Engagement Commission (CEC). The charge of the Task Force, revised and finalized at the May 15, 2015 Commission Meeting, was to explore ways and make recommendations for the City to 1) encourage and facilitate the formation of neighborhood associations and 2) foster and facilitate effective and authentic neighborhood participation in civic decision making. The Task Force was established to be an initial, short-term effort related to advancing neighborhood associations in the city of Roseville. Ultimately, the Task Force held nine meetings over the course of five months, between March 11, 2015 and August 5, 2015.

The Task Force began with ten members with Gary Grefenberg, a member of the CEC, serving as convener. At the second Task Force meeting, Gary Grefenberg asked the Task Force to confirm his role as a co-chair and add another Task Force member as co-chair. The Task Force selected Gary Grefenberg and Donna Spencer as its co-chairs. At the seventh meeting of the Task Force on July 10, 2015, Gary Grefenberg voluntarily resigned as co-chair and was replaced by Jerry Stoner.

One Task Force member, Kody Thurnau, attended only the first two meetings, and over time, three people resigned from the Task Force. The final members of the Task Force and contributors to this report include: Gary Grefenberg, Diane Hilden, Sherry Sanders (CEC member), Donna Spencer, Jerry Stoner, and Amy Zamow. Members who resigned include Marcia Hernick, Lisa McCormick, and Peggy Verkuilen. Following her resignation, Lisa McCormick continued to attend meetings and provided public comment on this report. This document was approved by all five members present at the final August 5, 2015 meeting.

This report is divided into seven sections. First, it provides definitions that informed the discussions of the Task Force. The report then includes sections on the purposes and benefits

of neighborhood associations, city recognition of neighborhood associations, ways in which the city can encourage and facilitate neighborhood associations, and two-way communication between the city and neighborhood associations. Task Force members did not necessarily agree on all topics and, for this reason, this report indicates areas where further consideration by the CEC is recommended. Also, it is important to note that this report does not go beyond neighborhood associations and address other ways that the City of Roseville could facilitate neighborhood participation in civic decision-making.

General Definitions Informing Task Force Deliberations

What is Civic Engagement: Three years ago, the Civic Engagement Task Force (precursor of the CEC) defined Civic Engagement as follows:

"Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms—volunteering on city commissions and committees, involvement with neighborhood groups or other non-profit civic organizations, and/or organizational involvement for electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy."¹

What is a Neighborhood Association? A voluntary neighborhood-based group of residents within a specific geographic area who come together to protect, preserve, and enhance the livability of their neighborhood.²

Who is a Neighbor? Residents who either own or rent within a neighborhood. Some neighborhood associations may choose to include local business owners who operate businesses within the designated neighborhood area.³

Purposes of Neighborhood Associations

The purposes of a particular neighborhood association are determined by an association. Generally speaking, the following are purposes commonly identified by many neighborhood associations. The listing herein is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive but to serve as guidelines for existing or future Roseville neighborhood associations.

Neighborhood associations:

1. Build a sense of community and a culture of neighborliness;
2. Involve residents in their democratic forms of government;
3. Promote social activities of varied interest to residents;
4. Maintain and enhance the quality of neighborhood life and safety;

¹ American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/civic-engagement.aspx>

² NOTE: A neighborhood association should not be confused with a homeowner's association (often referred to as a HOA). A neighborhood association is a voluntary association formed around a particular community issue or interest. In contrast, a homeowner's association requires mandatory membership and arises out of ownership in a common-interest community, e.g., condominium, townhome, or other planned development. Such homeowner's associations deal primarily with financial obligations relating to the common property interest, e.g. maintenance and repairs, provided services, etc.

³ There was a public comment in disagreement with whether business owners should be included in neighborhood associations.

5. Provide the means by which issues and concerns of a neighborhood can be more effectively expressed and communicated, thus serving as a vital link between local government (City Council, Departments, and City Commissions, as well as School District and County government) and the neighborhood;
6. Promote community and civic engagement by presenting opportunities for resident involvement;
7. Assist staff in disseminating timely and understandable information to provide for informed resident participation in government decision-making and planning, thus gaining better acceptance and understanding of government decisions; and
8. Function as a liaison enabling two-way communication between neighborhoods and government entities on matter of interest such as zoning changes, redevelopment projects and their neighborhood impact, park projects and Comprehensive Plan amendments as well as other planning efforts.

Benefits of Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhood associations are one of many ways in which the City connects with its residents in the development and implementation of policies, programs, and services. Associations also encompass the process of communicating and working collaboratively with citizens and other stakeholders in balancing various interests and issues affecting their lives and neighborhood.

We recommend that the City recognize that neighbors can sometimes better understand and communicate their neighborhood's issues and concerns to City Hall, especially in a suburb that does not have ward representation.

Neighbors are often in a better position for raising the right issues and asking the relevant questions concerning a neighborhood. Their involvement and collaboration in civic decision-making provide City staff and officials an opportunity to answer their concerns and address their issues. Community members can also provide a valuable source of expertise to influence government decisions that improve neighborhood quality of life and delivery of public services. Neighborhood associations are an important means to facilitate and encourage neighbors to become involved in their community and engaged in local government and to improve communications between residents and their government.

Potential benefits of neighborhood associations and their involvement in a collaborative decision-making process include:

1. Provides residents a means to express a unified and collective voice;
2. Increases residents' overall awareness of issues, decisions, and other issues that affect the neighborhood and the City;
3. Offers opportunities for local government officials, developers, and residents to prioritize important projects, development, and planning and for the City and developers to solicit input from residents before development plans are finalized and before City approval is secured;
4. Allows the development of better and more creative ideas and solutions and encourages thinking 'outside the box';
5. Instills a climate of respect and acknowledgement of the interests of various participants, staff, and decision-makers;

6. Facilitates the resolution of neighborhood issues within the neighborhood: provides City officials and staff a better understanding of what are the issues neighborhood residents are concerned about;
7. Improves buy-in and acceptance of outcomes and improves confidence in the process leading to an increase in sustainable decisions and greater resident satisfaction with the City's decision-making process;
8. Engenders trust between citizens and local government;
9. Improves the City's access to the expertise of its citizens and expands the capabilities of existing city staff;
10. Nurtures the potential pool of informed and engaged candidates for Commissions and other volunteer efforts in the city; and
11. Assists seniors and elderly desiring to age in place an additional sense of connectedness and support.

City Recognition of Neighborhood Associations

The Task Force recommends that Neighborhood associations *have the opportunity to register with and be recognized by* the City. Further, the Task Force recommends that standards for Neighborhood association recognition be limited to a set of minimal requirements to allow for variation in associations across the City. It is important to note that the Task Force believes that not all Neighborhood groups should be required to be recognized. Instead recognition is suggested for groups that want to participate in the communication expectations and/or receive support from the City as described below.

While each recognized Neighborhood association will determine its own purpose, priorities, structure, level of formality, and level of activity, this Task Force recommends the following minimal standards for associations recognized by the City:

- Association name and contact information: The association will provide the City with the name of the association and the contact information (name, phone number, email address) for the primary association contact(s) to facilitate efficient two-way communication between the City and the neighborhood association.
- Association geographic boundaries: Each association will work with the city to recommend and determine its own geographic boundaries. The association will provide the City with an adequate description of the neighborhood. This description will identify the specific streets that form the boundaries of the neighborhood. The Task Force recommends that further consideration be given to the appropriate size of neighborhood associations when determining boundaries.
- Communication to members: The association must identify at least one pre-determined approach for communicating to its members (e.g., email, postal mail, phone) and will commit to communicating with its members when the City sends notices to the neighborhood association.
- Inclusiveness: The association will commit to being inclusive of residents within the neighborhood, with voluntary membership open to both home owners and renters in the area. The association will determine whether it would like to include businesses as part of its association.⁴

⁴ Supported by all five members present at the July 22nd meeting.

- Anti-Discrimination: The neighborhood association does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, place of residence, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, pregnancy, age or any other class protected by local, state or federal law.⁵

Other neighborhood association recognition criteria considered by the Task Force but not yet agreed upon are the following:

- Communications about the City: The association will commit to encouraging its membership to become involved in community engagement and civic activism.
- Association Organization: The association will submit with its application its bylaws or a statement of its purposes, a description of its process including any membership requirements and standards of appropriate conduct, its structure, and its method of governance.
- Annual meeting: The association will hold at least one meeting of the general membership per year.

One advantage of requiring recognition criteria is that they facilitate awareness and understanding of the association by the City, they facilitate city/neighborhood two-way communication, and they can promote important City values (e.g., inclusiveness). A disadvantage is that too many criteria or too strict of criteria could unnecessarily inhibit the formation and variation in neighborhood association purposes, priorities, formality, structure, and activity level. The Task Force recommends that further consideration be given to recognition standards for neighborhood associations by the CEC, including whether only one association per geographic area is recognized.

Recognized neighborhood associations and unrecognized neighborhood groups are not administrative or legislative bodies. Both types of entities will not be assumed to speak on behalf of all residents in its neighborhood. Both types of entities are voluntary, and no resident will be required to participate. Both types of entities will not limit the ability of any individual resident or group to participate in the local civic process on their own. Communication with a recognized neighborhood association will not replace the City's methods of communicating with City residents.

How the City of Roseville Can Encourage and Facilitate Neighborhood Associations

To **encourage** the formation of neighborhood associations and other neighborhood groups, the Task Force recommends that the City of Roseville provide the following:

1. Space on City website in "Resident Resources" under "Neighborhood Associations" offering a list of associations with contact names, email addresses, phone numbers, and an interactive map of geographical boundaries of each association along with the lead of each association;

⁵ Supported by all five members present at the July 22nd meeting. This text is modified from Roseville's official non-discrimination commitment.

2. Neighborhood association news featured in City News and on the City website of upcoming events and activities, as requested by individual associations; and
3. A how-to document or tool kit which supplies a neighborhood that is looking to form an association with an explanation of how to form a recognized neighborhood association.

To **facilitate** neighborhood associations that choose to be recognized (see above) by the City of Roseville, the Task Force recommends that the City provide the following:

1. Neighborhood associations can reserve and use space for meetings with scheduling of city and park buildings at no charge.⁶
2. Upon the request of a neighborhood association, the City will pay for and coordinate a neighborhood mailing notifying residents of information about the association at least once a year.
3. The City will develop and maintain a list of City resources such as Staff and Officials who can speak on community policing, safety issues, fire safety, common ordinances, city codes, building applications, land use applications, and other issues of neighborhood interest for the purpose of community education.
4. The City will designate a staff liaison to serve as a source of information available for residents interested in forming or joining a neighborhood association and for existing neighborhood associations.
5. The City will develop, maintain, and provide information about existing funding and grants for neighborhood associations.
6. The City will establish funds or grants available to neighborhood associations to assist in City-approved projects for neighborhood improvement, beautification, education, community-wide events, and other neighborhood activities.⁷
7. The City will provide a website or similar function to which the neighborhood association can provide content.

The above recommendations are an outgrowth of the City of Roseville's renewed commitment to community and civic engagement. Further study is recommended to explore how the City can continue to cultivate a change in culture that promotes community and civic engagement. Topics for further study include how to consult on upcoming projects, policies that increase transparency, and notifying associations of relevant documents relating to particular community issues.

City Expectations of Communications from Neighborhood Associations

A Neighborhood association, as any resident, has a variety of methods of communicating with the city. They can visit City Hall to meet with staff members. The City website also includes the phone numbers and email addresses for all City staff, and neighborhood associations can schedule meetings with staff. Neighborhood associations can also communicate with the City Council and Commissioners, directly by offering public comment at Council or Commission meetings or by sending emails. Members of the City Council and all Commissions have contact information, typically email addresses, available on the City website. There are also contact forms that can be filled out which will be communicated to the Council members or

⁶ Priority scheduling should be given to the association where appropriate.

⁷ One Task Force member had reservations about this item in its final form.

Commissioners. Last, a Civic Engagement Module, developed by the CEC, will soon be online and will provide another method of contact.

In communicating with the City on behalf of a neighborhood association, the association will:

1. Clearly identify that communication is coming from the neighborhood association;
2. Acknowledge that some communications to the city are considered Public Record;
3. Allow their opinions and comments to be incorporated into the Request for Council Action, to be included in the Council meeting packet prior to the Council meeting at which the relevant agenda item will be discussed; and
4. When providing public comment during a City meeting as a representative of a neighborhood association, be allowed additional time beyond the customary 5 minutes allotted per resident.

Neighborhood Association Expectations of Communications from the City

1. When a department or individual is communicating with a neighborhood association they shall:
 - a. Clearly identify itself/themselves and
 - b. Provide clear contact information.
2. The Task Force recommends that the City integrate the neighborhood associations into its normal notification process. Some suggestions for points of integration are (but not limited to):
 - a. Neighborhood associations shall be added to the City's database of parties requesting notifications.
 - b. When sending out communication based on geographic boundaries, the City should send that communication to any neighborhood association which covers at least a part of that geographic area.
 - c. The city should communicate regular broadcast emails with City Council agendas for upcoming meetings to the neighborhood associations.
 - d. Requests for Commission/Council Action shall be modified to include a checkbox to indicate notification of neighborhood association of a particular proposal (i.e. development proposal, land use application, etc.), as well as provision for inclusion of the association's position on an agenda item of relevance to the neighborhood association.
3. The Task Force recommends that the city look to organize group meetings between the City Manager and all neighborhood associations. These meetings should be at least quarterly or at the request of one or many neighborhood associations. The intent is to allow neighborhood associations to gather information to disseminate to their residents to improve the efficiency of public comment and more widely distribute information to the public. The CEC and the Council should assess the effectiveness of these meetings at regular intervals.
4. The Task Force believes that the City must more clearly communicate how public comments influenced the decision making process. The Task Force is concerned that too often public comment is solicited and accepted but not referenced. When a final decision has been made, the decision maker should indicate how public and neighborhood association comments affected the decision. If the eventual action differs

from the desire of the neighborhood association, some explanation should be made as to why.

5. If a neighborhood association gathers information from their members and presents it to the Council, the Task Force recommends that the information should warrant an opportunity for discussion.

Conclusion

The Task Force appreciates the opportunity to work on the important topics of neighborhood associations and neighborhood participation in civic decision-making and to provide these recommendations to the CEC. We are available to address questions and provide additional clarifications if requested. We recommend that the CEC continues to focus on neighborhood associations and ways in which the City of Roseville can better foster neighborhood engagement.

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Specific to a potential timeframe, Mr. Bilotta responded that each community's visioning process for its comprehensive plan update differed, with some having a process and others not having one. From that perspective, Mr. Bilotta expressed the need to not get bogged down with the details of the comprehensive plan, but utilize a visioning process where everyone sits back and thinks where the community will be in the future, not specifically reviewing individual lots citywide.

Mr. Bilotta noted that eventually the comprehensive plan process will get into that level of detail, but after the foundational visioning and public understanding and agreement with the vision. Mr. Bilotta noted that this may be as simple as one paragraph or up to a few pages in length.

Mr. Bilotta suggested the first step would be reviewing the existing vision and determining if it remained relevant and adequate enough to allow the Comprehensive Plan update to be built on that same vision, if it needed tweaking, or needed to be totally revised. Mr. Bilotta opined that was a key decision point to determine if the community wanted to stick with the previous vision or pursue an entirely separate process.

Chair Becker referenced the City Council's suggestion on Monday night to simply refresh the vision and keep it relatively short via a bulleted list.

6. Old Business

a. Continue Discussion on Neighborhood Associations

Since the St. Louis Park presenter was not yet present, Chair Becker adjusted the agenda accordingly.

ii. Discussion of Next Steps

Chair Becker briefly reported on his meeting with the City Council on Monday night, and his sense that they were eager to get pending recommendations from the CEC sooner rather than later. Specific to the neighborhood association recommendation, Chair Becker asked commissioners what if anything they felt was still missing; what additional learning was needed by the CEC; and whether or not the CEC was prepared to complete its analysis before making its final recommendation to the City Council.

At the request of Commissioner Manke, Chair Becker noted that the CEC had reviewed the minimum requirements expected by the city from neighborhood associations receiving city support or assistance. Chair Becker noted that the Commission has covered a lot of information to-date; but anticipated a concise and fluid set of recommendations rather than a rigid recommendation in a long,

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drawn-out report. Chair Becker suggested a set of recommendations and context for them in order to guide the City Council on this effort

Chair Becker clarified that it was the charge to the CEC to provide the recommendations, whether or not the City Council nixed some right away, sought additional input, or tweaked some items at its initial review.

Chair Becker noted City Manager Trudgeon's offer to sort out the first cut of those recommendations.

City Manager Trudgeon concurred, stating that he was happy to help assemble the document and get it into the appropriate format for the full CEC to look at prior to their presentation to the City Council. Given the amount of time the City Council had been awaiting this recommendation, Mr. Trudgeon suggested that review, including looking at old reports, meeting minutes and other background information and materials, could be helpful to the Commission in making their final decision as well as moving the process along.

Commissioner Grefenberg thanked City Manager Trudgeon for that offer, recognizing that it represented a time-consuming on his part. Commissioner Grefenberg asked that both he and Chair Becker be allowed to participate in that review since both had been directly involved in bringing the Neighborhood Association recommendations this far.

Chair Becker asked commissioners if they were aware of any further analysis or discussion needed, remembering that the focus was to remain at a higher level rather than providing details. Chair Becker asked if commissioners felt the CEC was ready to compile its recommendations for review as a complete set.

Commissioner Manke opined she was ready to compile the recommendations in order to have something tangible in front of the CEC and tweak it as necessary; and then move onto the next project.

Commissioner Grefenberg cautioned that there may be some additional issues raised with the St. Louis Park presentation that needed to be addressed. Therefore, Commissioner Grefenberg stated that he wasn't yet ready to provide a final answer to Chair Becker since St. Louis Park provided an excellent example of how neighborhood forums are held, an issue that remained unclear to him, and how to deal with the issue of determining neighborhood association boundaries

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Discussion ensued regarding how the city's website would be available to existing neighborhood associations or affiliated associations. It was clarified that this issue had been covered in the material support discussion at the last Commission meeting.

Chair Becker added that at the last CEC meeting the initial recommendations had been that the boundaries could not overlap nor could they be too large or too small. Chair Becker reiterated that the specific method should remain a City Council decision as they discuss their approval of boundaries and the process depending on the specific situation. Chair Becker noted that the City Council could determine if they wanted to delegate that to the City Manager or make that decision as an elected body and suggested that the CEC not get bogged down in those details.

Depending on how quickly staff is able to view background materials, and assist the working group of Becker and Grefenberg in developing the initial draft recommendations followed by full Commission review, Chair Becker opined that conservatively he anticipated that the final version could come to the CEC by April of 2016 and be placed on the next available City Council agenda. Chair Becker noted his impression that the City Council was more than eager to see the recommendation; and expressed his eagerness to move onto other work for 2016.

i. Presentation from St. Louis Park

Chair Becker welcomed St. Louis Park Community Liaison Breanna Freedman who provided brief personal biography and a history of neighborhood associations in St. Louis Park. Ms. Freedman distributed numerous handouts during the discussion and referenced that material as well as other items she volunteered to provide city staff for dissemination to the Commission if not available on the St. Louis Park website.

Ms. Freedman touched upon how neighborhood associations were initiated in St. Louis Park by citizens who found the City Council in favor of and open to their formation; a map (trail map) identifying and highlighting boundaries for those associations, how they started and where the process was at now; and the geographic area and the number of dwelling units in each neighborhood. St. Louis Park had originally been divided into 35 areas during previous neighborhood revitalization efforts. Now there were 26 associations whose boundaries were determined by using major highways, natural boundaries, or commercial areas, resulting in each unique and specific neighborhoods. Additional discussion included the St. Louis Park Community Development Department initially partnering with and hosting

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neighborhood meetings based on the relationship within the community; drawing of neighborhood boundaries after they were surveyed, and the huge engagement part of that process.

At the request of Commission members, Ms. Freedman reviewed the type and frequency of support offered associations by the city: funding and city staff performing the first initial post card mailing expressing interest of the neighborhood in organizing mailed to every household and apartment in that identified boundary without releasing that mailing list, but providing information on the meeting (e.g. time, date, etc.) with a representative usually working with Ms. Freedman; space provided for that meeting at city hall or a park building at no charge; and continued meeting space at no fee for all future meetings.

Ms. Freedman reviewed the City of St. Louis Park's use of grants through its Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program, funded by city tax dollars from housing rehabilitation monies, and in place since 1996. This grant program provided up to \$30,000 in grant funds distributed among neighborhoods. The grant application process ran from May through April of the following year; the process included eligibility requirements which served to help determine if a neighborhood is a valid association and eligible for city grant funds.

Chair Becker asked Ms. Freedman to summarize what hadn't worked as if St. Louis Park could start the program over again; and what challenges she saw or what her city had learned.

Ms. Freedman prefaced her comments by acknowledging that she had not been employed by the City of St. Louis when the program was initiated. However, Ms. Freedman opined that she found the key was communication and maintaining a supportive role to continuously encourage each association as it got going. Ms. Freedman also noted the need for all parties to have clear expectations of what is expected and their role and place in the City.

Ms. Freedman added that her staff role was huge in keeping that daily communication going, attending a number of meetings as needed; and while not seeing it necessarily as a challenge, it required that the staff position have some flexibility that could be depended upon as a consistent resource to keep associations on track and answer their questions.

At the request of Chair Becker, Ms. Freedman advised that she was full-time in this role; but also served as Human Rights Commission liaison for the St. Louis Park Police Department, part of their community outreach efforts. By having the Police Department

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involved, Ms. Freedman noted that it helped keep them involved in neighborhoods and what was happening in each area of the community. Ms. Freedman advised that her outreach team attended various events and tried to maintain as much public contact as possible by spending face-to-face time with the community, including working with annual National Night Out efforts, with 139 different registered parties in 2015 requiring a considerable amount of coordination in having a Police or Fire Department presence in each neighborhood.

Commissioner Grefenberg asked if St. Louis Park required a set of bylaws for each neighborhood and whether it had examples bylaws to help associations get started.

Ms. Freedman advised that the City of St. Louis Park provided two model bylaw templates for developing an association's specific bylaws, not specifying if one or the other needed to be used, but providing options of what those bylaws could look like. Ms. Freedman noted that it was helpful if a neighborhood had organized in the past, with those bylaws being provided and the association membership voting on changes for new bylaws going forward versus starting from scratch.

Commissioner Manke asked what type of structure St. Louis Park asked of associations.

Ms. Freedman responded that at a minimum the City of St. Louis Park required a Chair or President, and a Vice Chair, basically two roles; with some deciding they wanted a Secretary or Treasurer office as well; Others may choose a detailed programming committee, others may wish to have a volunteer coordinator. Thus the organizational structure could range anywhere from 3 to 10 officers or leaders, depending on the size, function, and kind of neighborhood involved.

Commissioner Grefenberg noted the population of St. Louis Park is 45,000; and noted that the population couldn't determine the average size of neighborhood associations. Commissioner Grefenberg opined that was one issue the CEC was grappling with: should there be a maximum size for a neighborhood. He sought input from Ms. Freedman on this issue of whether there was an optimal minimal and maximum size of neighborhood population.

Ms. Freedman responded that they had no size requirements; and had found that the sizes or membership didn't change with boundaries in place; even though some neighborhoods may be more densely populated than others, advising that the city may then try to balance things out based on that density level.

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As addressed by Chair Becker, Ms. Freedman recognized that most associations resulted from block parties or smaller block groups naturally coalescing and not city dictated. Ms. Freedman advised that the City of St. Louis Park had a sworn Community Outreach Officer who worked directly with block captains, often someone who has stood out as a natural neighborhood leader and their desire to be involved in their neighborhood.

Chair Becker asked if Ms. Freedman was aware of any other free-standing organizations not identified as an official neighborhood, who attempted to receive free city website space or free mailings.

Ms. Freedman advised that this was not a problem; and that the incentive for becoming an official neighborhood association was the availability of City grant monies, opining that it didn't make sense to have an organization if not applying for support to fund it. However, Ms. Freedman noted that, even without that grant funding, a lot of those neighborhoods would continue to thrive as an informal association.

Commissioner Manke asked what the grant funds could be used for.

Ms. Freedman responded that the City allowed considerable flexibility and each neighborhood association varied, with some used for environmental efforts (e.g. compostable products, park improvements, park clean-up supplies) or insurance component for volunteers, among other uses.

Ms. Freedman advised that until recently, they hadn't seen many businesses typically involved in neighborhood associations, but clarified that the city didn't have any policies in place if a neighborhood chose to be inclusive to businesses and left it up to them to determine the extent they wanted to be. However, Ms. Freedman advised that the city didn't encourage businesses being part of the neighborhood's steering committee, and preferred that be left to residents, whether single-family home owners or those in rental units.

Chair Becker asked how and when renters participated in St. Louis Park.

Ms. Freedman advised that typically they saw renters involved in organizing neighborhood associations, even though it could be challenging to get their involvement.

City Manager Trudgeon asked how city businesses, land use decisions, street projects and other issues flowed into neighborhoods and how

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those neighborhoods plugged into the City Council decision-making process. City Manager Trudgeon also asked how their city handled automatic mailing notifications and how that worked.

Ms. Freedman advised that neighborhood meetings were a big deal for the City of St. Louis Park for those impacted; with the neighborhood association contact or chairperson used as the main point of contact to alert their neighbors. However, Ms. Freedman clarified that city staff ran those informational meetings, and sought input from the appropriate association as to the best location to hold these meetings and other logistics. The City's Planning Department hosted these meetings on a regular basis, and thus significantly involved neighborhoods, with attendance varying depending on how controversial an issue is.

Ms. Freedman advised that City staff took those meetings very seriously and assured appropriate staff representation was available. For instance, Ms. Freedman noted that the Police Department was undertaking its second year of meeting with all neighborhoods, in its four different police districts (similar to wards) and inviting appropriate staff depending on what's happening in their neighborhood to respond to questions. Ms. Freedman noted that, as much as possible, the City used team resources to touch base with neighborhoods at every opportunity to gather their input and feedback. Ms. Freedman further noted that the City of St. Louis Park had a ward and at-large system for electing their six council members, with four wards and two at-large positions.

Discussion continued regarding whether or not neighborhoods advocated for their residents at the City Council level or leaders spearheaded the efforts on various issues through listening sessions and direct engagement efforts, or through engaged individuals active in their neighborhood taking the initiative to pursue various concerns. Ms. Freedman added that attendance by St. Louis Park Council members at public open forums allowed them to hear directly from their residents which input often influenced their decision-making. Commissioner Grefenberg asked Ms. Freedman if the City of St. Louis Park placed any specific expectations or responsibilities on neighborhood associations beyond an annual meeting and adopting bylaws, such as requiring annual election of officers to avoid the associations becoming insular with the same people getting elected repeatedly.

Ms. Freedman responded that the City did require each association to had some method of transferring leadership from one year to the next in order to provide an opportunity for new leadership to step forward.

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Ms. Freedman noted that it didn't have to occur at their annual meeting, but typically that made the most sense. As part of their requirements, Ms. Freedman also noted that the City of St. Louis Park requires that the City be advised of the annual meeting date, which was part of each association's grant application that serves to verify the date and also questions how they plan to encourage new residents to become involved in the steering committee. Ms. Freedman noted that one association's bylaws require election of a new president annually, which has proven successful for them; in her opinion, this provision allowed those associations and neighborhoods to thrive without the City dictating their governance model.

At the request of Commissioner Manke, Ms. Freedman noted that there were also some associations that kept the same president year after year; and others that rotated that office among their steering committee.

Commissioner Manke expressed her preference for term limits, which Ms. Freedman agreed with as more advantageous.

Ms. Freedman further reported that, as part of the grant application and program, the City required neighborhood associations to provide evidence of how they engaged and incorporated neighborhood input; and to report on how their grant funds had been and were intended to be used. Ms. Freedman noted that this information could be obtained by each association in a variety of ways, including a suggestion box, paper surveys, online surveys, other broad and creative ways to help ensure all residents are given an opportunity to be engaged in the decision-making process as they desire. Ms. Freedman noted that this helped keep one person or group from monopolizing or taking over the neighborhood association.

At the request of Commissioner Grefenberg, Ms. Freedman answered that she personally reviewed and approved each association's bylaws in her position as the St. Louis Park community liaison. Ms. Freedman noted that the current bylaws had to be submitted annually with the grant application; but were more closely scrutinized when a group was first organizing.

Ms. Freedman advised that she retained a master contact list for each neighborhood association and/or their steering committee, and whenever a big event was coming up in St. Louis Park of interest to them, an email was provided to all steering committee members, not just the president, to ensure that everyone was included and invited.

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Ms. Freedman further noted the annual leadership forum to which all neighborhood leaders were invited to attend, with an annual theme and speakers that may involve particular grant options or city leaders. Ms. Freedman advised that grant awards are presented and monies distributed at that meeting.

Commissioner Grefenberg referenced the task force report suggesting setting up meetings of all affiliated neighborhood chairs or presidents with the City Manager 2-3 times each year.

Chair Becker expressed his appreciation for Ms. Freedman's reference to emailing the entire steering group as their point of contact rather than only one person (e.g. the president) filtering information. Chair Becker asked if Ms. Freedman was aware of any neighborhood associations violating rules or excluding renters, or any other problematic issues.

Ms. Freedman reported that she actually had neighborhood leaders coming to her seeking suggestions for contacting renters and getting them included, which always was a challenge. Ms. Freedman advised that she frequently referred them to property managers for posting event flyers to advertise their activities and encouraging them to become part of the process by providing input and ideas. Ms. Freedman noted that grant funds help further the community engagement attempt.

Ms. Freedman reported only one problem she was aware of regarding Chair Becker's concern regarding contacts and control of associations. Ms. Freedman noted a recent instance when a neighborhood resident asked that all email communications be sent to her directly, which raised flags whether her intent was to filter information. Ms. Freedman noted a neighborhood association may provide a sign-up sheet for email communications, with another role in having a newsletter editor and having them email any city communication from and to the editor and the city, or from the city to the steering committee to disseminate that information to their full email list. Ms. Freedman noted that the City of St. Louis Park also used NextDoor.com to disseminate that information.

Commissioner Grefenberg asked Ms. Freedman to report on how the City of St. Louis Park ensured accountability beyond requiring an annual meeting per year or whether there were other ways to hold neighborhood associations accountable to their neighbors. Ms. Freedman stated that she hadn't seen any issues with neighborhoods wanting to keep information to themselves, since a

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required goal of each Association's steering committee was to bring people in, adding that each association governing entity was advised to seek as many options as possible to engage their neighbors.

Ms. Freedman noted that there hadn't been that tension or need for the city to get involved if there were issues over an association's accountability; she anticipated that could be part of her role as liaison if that problem ever became evident. In her conversation with peers and colleagues, Ms. Freedman reported that she had not heard of that being a problem elsewhere, especially when neighborhood associations aren't necessarily formed around issues but created for the purposes of maintaining quality relationships between residents and allowing access to the City Council, city staff, and city resources. Ms. Freedman noted that this purpose, rather than issue-based, allowed promotion to be a good neighbor and addressed the general upkeep of neighborhoods and personal investment in their communities.

Commissioner Grefenberg noted, as a recent example: The Twin Lakes Redevelopment Area where local impact seemed to be a sensitive issue overriding a citywide impact.

Ms. Freedman referenced a similar situation when the City of St. Louis Park was redeveloping citywide, and the decision-making included how to establish project boundaries. Ms. Freedman suggested that one way to avoid negative issues was to recognize and highlight that each neighborhood was unique and different, while all may be experiencing similar issues. Ms. Freedman offered to do further research from meeting minutes from their city's neighborhood revitalization committee and send that information to the Roseville CEC for their reference.

Commissioner Grefenberg referenced his favorable impression with the City of St. Louis Park's website which had information available on each neighborhood association and its organization, beyond just a map and contact people, but providing neighborhood characteristics and information on the association itself. Regarding authorship of that information, Commissioner Grefenberg asked Ms. Freedman if there were any problems or if she reviewed that input before it was added to the City's website.

Ms. Freedman reported that this information was in place before she was employed as by St. Louis Park as community liaison less than three years ago; and as referenced by Commissioner Grefenberg, provided neighborhood demographics and characteristics, and if in organized neighborhoods, their consent was sought before publication by the City. Ms. Freedman advised that she was only aware of minor

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731 and infrequent issues with newsletter content, since the City supplied
732 printing costs for newsletters, even though most are being done
733 electronically now or gone from 4 pages to a single page and
734 distributed more frequently. Ms. Freedman reported that the problem
735 had been with some neighborhoods advertising political campaigns,
736 creating a conflict of interest with the city supplying that resource and
737 the neighborhood supplying the newsletter, and creating local political
738 issues in wards. However, after the City created some newsletter
739 policies, Ms. Freedman reported that these problems had been
740 squelched.

741
742 Ms. Freedman also noted that some associations used advertising as a
743 revenue source for their newsletters, and of course, that was being
744 taken advantage of at times, requiring the city to put a cap on some of
745 those practices. Ms. Freedman further noted that local businesses had
746 an opportunity to advertise, however, and this allowed neighbors to
747 support those important resources in their community, and develop
748 relationships with those businesses, thus allowing them to become
749 involved and engaged with neighborhood associations, frequently by
750 donating goods or services to the association for a special event.

751
752 At the request of Commissioner Manke, Ms. Freedman advised that
753 each neighborhood association put together their individual
754 newsletters, which were in turn reviewed by her according to city
755 policy; but clarified that the city did not mail it out. Ms. Freedman
756 reported that typically the block captains or volunteers commit to
757 distribute the newsletters. Ms. Freedman noted that this was part of
758 the grant application process, with the neighborhood associations
759 reporting on their in-kind match of city grant funds.

760
761 Commissioner Manke asked if neighborhood associations had a link
762 on city websites to their own websites if available.

763
764 Ms. Freedman reported that she had seen that done, but noted that
765 most neighborhood associations don't have a website, but typically use
766 Facebook or shift to NextDoor.com.

767
768 Commissioner Grefenberg noted that NextDoor.com had its own
769 national prohibitions regarding political postings that was not subject
770 to municipal authority. Mr. Grefenberg reported that approximately
771 15% of Roseville residents were involved in NextDoor.com; leaving
772 85% of its residents needing informed of decisions through another
773 method of communication.

774
775 Ms. Freedman stated that the City of St. Louis Park used every
776 available social media to promote and inform residents about

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neighborhood meetings. She recognized that a good portion of its residents didn't depend on social media; and therefore if possible meeting information was also included in the local newspaper or city newsletter, depending on timing. Ms. Freedman emphasized the importance of communication as the key to make contact with residents and encourage their involvement, further noting the importance of community and neighborhood leaders in assisting with those opportunities.

Chair Becker thanked Ms. Freedman for the information; and Ms. Freedman offered to provide any other information as requested by the CEC.

b. Update on Community Listening and Learning Events

With Commissioner Gardella unable to attend tonight's meeting, Chair Becker asked City Manager Patrick Trudgeon to report on her behalf subsequent to his meeting last week with Commissioner Gardella, a representative from the Advocate for Human Rights and Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association President Sherry Sanders.

City Manager Trudgeon reported on that meeting and discussion on how the recently-awarded grant award could be incorporated into the larger vision of the working group and residents in SE Roseville. City Manager Trudgeon noted that this discussion led to clarification that the proposed listening/learning sessions intended for funding from grant funds was more about welcoming new arrivals into the area and their interaction directly with the neighborhood association, the Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM), and School District No. 623. Mr. Trudgeon noted that while there may not be a direct role for the City of Roseville, there remained a definite interest by them.

Given the broader timeframe required for SE Roseville efforts from the City's perspective and partnering agencies and stakeholders, Mr. Trudgeon advised that those efforts would be more long-term and much more expansive than just targeting a specific population, such as the Karen community. Keeping that in mind, Mr. Trudgeon expressed appreciation for these background opportunities that would certainly serve to inform the broader process. Mr. Trudgeon recognized that, due to timelines and grant deadlines, the process may have been more convoluted and while not falling within city grant application procedures, it was still a great step to build relationships and connections or systems that would become the foundation for future needs.

Commissioner Grefenberg enquired whether Mr. Trudgeon knew that the Commission itself was neither aware of this specific proposal nor had it

How to Start a Neighborhood Association



Experience **LIFE** in the Park

A neighborhood association is a group of neighbors who work together to make a stronger neighborhood.



Andrew Tilman/SLP Friends of the Arts

Vision: St. Louis Park is committed to being a connected and engaged community.

Why should my neighborhood organize?

Before you ask your neighbors to organize, you have to be able to explain to them the benefits and value of forming a neighborhood group.

Organizing is mostly about developing relationships with each other, the city government, and other neighborhoods.

When deciding whether or not to organize as a neighborhood, ask yourself and others the following questions.

- Do you know how to get in touch with neighbors in case of an emergency?
- Would you like to address some problems in your neighborhood that need to be corrected?
- If your children needed to reach someone nearby for help when you're not home, would they know who to call?
- In the case of a

neighborhood emergency would neighbors know how to get in touch with you?

- Could your neighborhood be friendlier?
- Would you enjoy more planned activities in your neighborhood for children and adults?

Did you answer "yes" to a majority of these questions?

If so, let's work together to organize your neighborhood!

Getting Started—Build a Core Group

The first thing to do is meet with the neighbors who want to form a neighborhood group. Create a core group that will serve as the temporary steering committee until you

decide the formal structure of your neighborhood association and officers are elected. The core group, three or four are enough, handles arranging and advertising the first few meetings.

Often the core group is made up of all the people who have decided to form a neighborhood group.

Inside:

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Experience **NEIGHBORHOODS** in the Park



Adjo Habia/SLP Friends of the Arts

“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

Hold Core Group Meetings

As the temporary steering committee, the core group will be the one that picks the first issues to discuss (not necessarily to act on!), selects the location and time for the first general meeting, and gathers information that will help the whole group begin to work on issues that people care about. Here is what your core group should work on during the first few meetings:

- Come up with some ideas for kick-off projects. Start with fairly simple activities like a block clean-up or a potluck. This will give the people who come to the first general meeting a list of projects to get involved in and think about. Remember, when you have other people on board, they may come up with other sug-

gestions. It's always a good idea to make the first project one that is visible and gets quick results. This shows people that your group means business and can get things done. People are more likely to join a group that works on issues they care about and that can really make some changes.

- Decide who you want to tell about your new organization. Which neighborhood organizations, businesses, etc. can you involve to help you spread the word? Make a list of organizations with contact names and phone numbers. You'll want to start contacting them after the first general meeting.
- Start to divide up tasks based

on people's interests. Keeping people interested is the best way to keep them involved. Some of the tasks that the core group will take on are:

- * Contacting other groups within the neighborhood.
- * Recruiting residents to be general members of the neighborhood association.
- * Creating the agenda and arranging for future core group meetings.
- * Researching specific issues in depth so you have all of the information you need when it's time for the general membership to meet.

Plan a General Meeting



Max Bentley/SLP Friends of the Arts

As soon as you are ready, your core group should decide on a time, date and place for a general membership meeting. Choose a time that is convenient for the largest number of people to increase your chances of a good turnout. An evening during the week or a day during the weekend generally works best. Church buildings,

community centers, schools, and public libraries are usually easy for neighborhood residents to get to and will often provide the room without charge. Do you really want to get people to come? Have some local teenagers provide babysitting and make sure you put that on your outreach flyer!

Simple rules to remember to have a good first neighborhood association meeting: 1) All ideas should be given fair consideration. 2) People need to be treated with respect. 3) No one should leave the meeting without a task. 4) Everyone should sign in. Collect contact information.

How to Start a Neighborhood Association

General Meeting—continued

When you prepare an agenda for your first general meeting, keep in mind that the purpose of this meeting is to lay the groundwork for the organization. Your goal is to come out of this meeting with an agreement on the goals for the organization and the issues that it will take on. A good agenda should look something like the one below. Note—the information in parentheses is for your reference only and should not be on the agenda.

1. Introduction

- Meet the core group (The core group should introduce themselves and someone from this group should explain the purpose of the meeting.

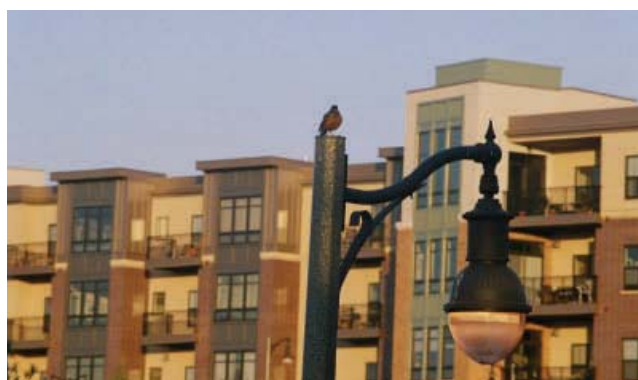
- Meet everyone in the room (Everyone should share who they are, where they live, and what they would like to see happen in our neighborhood.
- 2. **Discussion of issues and challenges** (At this point in the meeting, everyone should have the chance to voice their opinions and make suggestions. You may have to work hard to make sure everyone has this chance and keep the agenda moving.
- 3. **Setting priorities**
 - Brainstorm (based on the challenges discussion, help everyone brainstorm their interest in helping the community as a neighborhood association.)
 - Top priorities selected (Prioritize one or two areas of interest that your group can work on first.)

- Project ideas developed (Develop projects or ideas based on areas of interest that were top priorities.)
- Volunteers assigned (Break project ideas down into a series of tasks. Assign volunteers to be responsible for the tasks that need to be done. If the work is complicated or if there are a lot of people involved, ask someone to head a committee on each issue.)
- 4. **Creating the structure**
 - Leadership team (ask the general members to approve the current core group as the steering committee or to choose new leaders for a temporary period of time)
 - By-laws and elections (The structure should be kept simple. Samples by-laws are available)
 - Time and date of next meeting



Marcie Murray/SLP Friends of the Arts

Neighborhoods can be made up of single-family homes, condominiums, apartments, townhouses, or all of the above!



Ruth Rasmussen/SLP Friends of the Arts

Reach out to the Community

Outreach is the one job that never stops for a block or neighborhood association. Getting the word out and bringing in new participants will ensure that your group is well balanced and fully representative of its community. After every meeting and event, and between meetings, you will want to have people talking to their neighbors and community organizations to let them know what you're planning and doing to try to get them involved. Don't give up too

soon. Once neighbors start coming together and making changes, more people will get involved and then, the possibilities are endless.

Here are some tips to reach out to your neighbors and recruit them to come to the general meeting:

- **Flyers:** Print flyers listing time, date, place and purpose of the first general meeting. Post them in apartment buildings, lobbies, coffee shop or grocery store bulletin boards, etc.

- **Door-to-door visits**—take the flyers you created and distribute them door to door in your neighborhood.
- **Survey**—conduct a survey of neighborhood needs and issues
- **Attendance**—your first meeting may be large or very small, low attendance is common for organizations just starting out, so stay positive and work with the people in attendance to reach more neighbors.



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Bylaws

Bylaws explain the purpose of your organization and spell out the rules and procedures for how your group will function. Each neighborhood group should have its own bylaws to make its operation more predictable and less confusing. The core group or other subcommittee should develop bylaws, and then present them to the general membership for modification and approval. Final approval of bylaws should come after your neighborhood

group has met several times and you have a good idea about where the group is heading.

Bylaws do not have to be complicated. Bylaws should include the following items:

- Name and purpose of your group
- Requirements for membership (living in the neighborhood is the only requirement for most St. Louis Park neighborhood associations)

- Structure of your group (including terms of officers)
- Membership dues (if any, most St. Louis Park neighborhoods do not have dues)
- How often the group plans to meet
- How decisions are made
- Process by which bylaws are approved and changed.

Use the sample bylaws as a guide and adapt them to your neighborhood.

City Services and Resources

The City of St. Louis Park values strong neighborhoods and has set aside limited funds to assist neighborhoods.

Each year the city offers Neighborhood Grants for organized neighborhoods. These grants can be used for community building activities, communications such as newsletters, and service projects in the neighborhoods.

In addition to Neighborhood Grant there are several other

ways the City supports Neighborhood Associations. Included in this organizing kit are the following resources to help you get started and to learn what the City has to offer:

- Neighborhood Support
- Sample Bylaws
- Sample Start-Up Letter
- Sample Survey
- Park Volunteer Opportunities

The St. Louis Park Community Liaison is here to help you organize your neighborhood or re-organize if your neighborhood association has not been active for awhile.

Congratulations on taking the first step to organize your neighborhood!

For more information contact:

Marney Olson
Community Liaison
(952) 924-2184
molson@stlouispark.org
3015 Raleigh Ave S
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Sources:

"Yes we can! How to Start a Neighborhood Association" Battle Creek, MI

"RNeighborhood Association Toolkit" Rochester, MN

St. Louis Park Organizing Book

Experience **NEIGHBORHOODS** in the Park



Neighborhood Support

Updated: April 2008

The City of St. Louis Park has set aside limited funds to assist neighborhoods in need of the following services. *This list is not intended to be all inclusive of the services that may be provided to a neighborhood. Therefore if a neighborhood is interested in a service not listed please contact the Community Liaison at 924-2184.*

1. The City will copy neighborhood newsletters and fliers. Neighborhoods should provide their copying projects to the Community Liaison at 924-2184. Copying projects usually take two to four days.
2. The City will provide postage for mailing notices for a neighborhood's initial organizing meeting. Additional mailings will need to be covered by the neighborhood via dues, donations or with grant funds. Many neighborhoods utilize block captains or other volunteers to deliver newsletters or fliers. Contact the Community Liaison office located in the Police Department, 3015 Raleigh Ave S, or call 924-2184.
3. Meeting space is available at the City and school buildings free of charge. For City meeting space please contact the City Operator at 924-2500. For meeting space at a school or community center, contact the school district at 928-6060.
4. The City will assist newly organized neighborhoods in designing neighborhood identification signs. The organized neighborhood must submit a rendering of a logo. The City will have the logo adapted to the established sign format. Neighbors will be responsible for funding the production of the signs and the city public works staff will install them. Contact the Community Liaison at 924-2184.
5. The City offers a Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program that is available at the beginning of each year to organized neighborhoods. A neighborhood may receive funding for activities or projects that are targeted to enhance or build community within their neighborhood. Grants range up to \$2000 per neighborhood. Contact the Community Liaison at 924-2184.

Experience Neighborhoods in the Park

6. The City will provide additional resources for organizing upon request. Contact the Community Liaison with any questions and for help with the initial neighborhood organization start-up.
7. Other services provided to neighborhoods by City Departments:
 - a. City Park and Recreation Department provides a variety of items for parties and information on park services. Associations may have tables & chairs delivered for their outdoor picnics for a small delivery fee. Contact the Park and Recreation Department at 924-2540.
 - b. City Fire Department is pleased to meet with neighborhoods to discuss fire in general, home safety, fire prevention, and careers in fire service. Contact the Fire Department at 924-2595.
 - c. City Police Department is committed to neighborhood policing and will meet with neighborhoods on issues relating to safety, block clubs, crime watch, etc. Contact the Community Policing Officer at 924-2661.
 - d. City staff will meet with neighborhoods to provide assistance and information, which may help to keep your association active and successful. Contact the Community Liaison at 924-2184.



Park Volunteers Wanted

Do you have a special neighborhood park? If so, here is your chance to volunteer in your special park. The Volunteer Office is looking for people who are interested in volunteering as individuals, families or civic groups for the following programs which are all designed to help keep the parks beautiful:

Pick-up the Park: Volunteer to give your neighborhood park a good spring cleaning during the month of April. Volunteers are assigned a neighborhood park and will receive a kit from the Volunteer Office with garbage bags and a form for reporting any needed repairs to the maintenance department. Time commitment: about 2-3 hours during the month of April.

Adopt a Park: Volunteer to adopt your neighborhood park. Help the maintenance department by patrolling the park at least once a week, helping to keep the park clean and reporting any vandalism or needed repairs. Park volunteers report to the Manager of Grounds and Natural Resources. Volunteers may adopt the park of their choice. Time commitment: about 1-3 hours a week during the summer.

Park Gardener: Do you enjoy beautiful gardens and have a green thumb? If so, please consider volunteering to tend your neighborhood park's annual garden. Volunteers will be responsible for maintaining their annual garden by weeding and pruning as needed. All the flowers are provided. Volunteers may request a garden in the park of their choice. All gardening volunteers will report to the Manager of Grounds and Natural Resources. The time commitment is about 1 hour a week during the summer.

Note: If you take a summer vacation, we will work around your schedule.

To volunteer or receive more information, please call Sarah in the

Volunteer Office for the City and Schools of St. Louis Park at 928-6790

Experience **NEIGHBORHOODS** in the Park

Sample Neighborhood Association

Bylaws

- Purpose:** To promote and maintain our neighborhood through group action representing the interests of our residents; to represent neighborhood interests to city and county affairs; to work for the improvement and beautification of our neighborhood, and; to promote a sense of community in our neighborhood.
- Membership:** Membership is open to all residents and property owners of the neighborhood who are at least 18 years of age.
- Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee and committee chair persons shall comprise the Steering Committee. They will be elected by the membership. Elections will be held during the annual neighborhood meeting, to which all members of the neighborhood are invited.
- Executive Officers:** The officers of the association including Chair or Co-Chairs, Treasurer, and/or Secretary will be appointed by the Steering Committee Members and will be members of the Steering Committee.
- Officers:** The officers will manage the day to day business of the association. They hold all duties and responsibilities for the association including chairing all general meetings, taking action between meetings (as instructed by the membership) and dealing with emergency problems.
- Committees:** Committees will be formed on the basis of neighborhood interest and volunteer action.
- Meetings:** Steering committee meetings will be held as needed. Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by the Executive Officers. Members will be notified of special meetings and the annual meeting.
- Newsletter:** The Executive Committee will keep the membership notified of progress and upcoming events by publishing newsletters or event announcements.
- Amendments:** Amendments to the bylaws may be made by a majority vote of the members present at the annual meeting.

SAMPLE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION BYLAWS

Adopted December 5

Name: The name of the association is the Sample Neighborhood Association.

Purpose: The purpose of the association is to promote a better community through group action, representing the interests of residents and institutions in the neighborhood, with particular attention to strengthening community spirit and connectedness, enhancing safety, and maintaining the climate of quality and affordability of living.

Membership: All residents, businesses and non-profit institutions located within the Neighborhood, which is defined as _____.

Meetings: Meetings will be held at locations to be announced. General Membership Meetings will be held at least semi-annually on the second Monday of the months of April and October. Special Meetings may be called by the Steering Committee, as needed, or also may be called by collective action of at least twelve (12) members who must each sign the meeting notice with their membership class address.

All members will be notified of any General or Special Membership Meeting prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Officers: The Association shall have four officers (a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer), each holding office for the term of one year beginning in January. Officers will be elected at the October meeting, and a transitional meeting for both old and new officers shall be held during the two months following the election.

Committees: A Steering Committee shall consist of all officers and Committee Chairs. Other committees shall include, initially, a Newsletter Committee, which shall be responsible for publication of a newsletter periodically; and a Social Committee, and a Neighborhood Development Committee, which shall define issues, concerns or needs worthy of action by the Neighborhood Association and bring them, with appropriate research, to the attention of the Steering Committee and the General Membership. Additional committees may be recruited and organized at the initiative of the General Membership Meeting. The Steering Committee may create and recruit task forces for short-term purposes or to purpose to the General Membership as new committees.

Quorum: The Quorum required for action at any General Membership of Committee Meeting of the Association shall consist of a majority of the members present at the meeting.

Voting: At any General or Committee Meeting, each member (of the Association, for General Meeting; of the Committee, for a Committee meeting) present is entitled to one vote.

Amendments: Amendments to the Bylaws may be made by a 2/3 vote of those members present at General Membership Meetings.

Sample Letter



Greetings Neighbors,

Our neighborhood has the opportunity to form a neighborhood association. The first part to getting started involves finding out the interests of all neighbors. Please complete the enclosed survey and mail the survey back to the address on the back of the postcard or email your response to the email address listed on the bottom of the card.

What Is A Neighborhood Association?

A neighborhood association is simply a group of neighbors who come together to coordinate efforts to maintain or improve a good neighborhood. Most neighborhood associations in our city keep neighbors updated through a newsletter or regular email updates and sponsor community building activities. You can see some of the ideas for activities listed on the postcard survey. Unlike a condo association or an historic preservation district, our city neighborhood associations have no governing authority and cannot implement ordinances or regulations.

What Assistance Is Available?

The City of St. Louis Park has a program to support neighbors who want to form associations. While we are getting started, the city will pay for the postage for a couple of mailings. After we officially form our association, we are eligible for neighborhood signs of our own design and grant money for neighborhood activities or capital improvements. Community Liaison Marney Olson is available to assist us as we get started. You can reach Marney at the police department, 952-924-2184 or email molson@stlouispark.org.

Next Steps

After the survey is completed, a second meeting of the start-up committee will gather. The start-up committee will analyze the results of the survey, draft organizational bylaws and plan the next neighborhood wide meeting. At the neighborhood wide meeting, neighbors will be asked to elect officers to guide the organization. Elected officers will then work to apply for a neighborhood grant and decide what activities to host over the next year.

Thank you for your time and interest. I encourage you to take part in our new Neighborhood Association.

Neighborhood Start-up Committee

Experience NEIGHBORHOODS in the Park

Sample Neighborhood Survey

What Is A Neighborhood Association?

A neighborhood association is simply a group of neighbors who come together to coordinate efforts to maintain or improve a good neighborhood. Most neighborhood associations in our city keep neighbors updated through a newsletter or regular email updates and sponsor community building activities.

Please take a few moments to complete the survey below regarding your interest in a Fern Hill Neighborhood Association.

	Interested in seeing	Willing to Help	
Name: _____	☐	☐	Neighborhood Assoc. Start-Up Committee
	☐	☐	Youth Activities/Play Groups
Phone: _____	☐	☐	Community Gardens
	☐	☐	Park Improvements/Additions
Address: _____	☐	☐	Neighborhood Newsletter
	☐	☐	New Neighbor Welcome
Email: _____	☐	☐	Crime Watch & Block Captains
	☐	☐	Fundraising
Please return survey to your neighborhood steering committee by mail or email. If you have any questions, please contact the steering committee chair.	☐	☐	Helping out Neighbors (raking leaves, etc.)
	☐	☐	Neighborhood Beautification
	☐	☐	Other _____

Sample Neighborhood Survey

What Is A Neighborhood Association?

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Name: _____	☐	☐	Neighborhood Assoc. Start-Up Committee
	☐	☐	Youth Activities/Play Groups
Phone: _____	☐	☐	Community Gardens
	☐	☐	Park Improvements/Additions
Address: _____	☐	☐	Neighborhood Newsletter
	☐	☐	New Neighbor Welcome
Email: _____	☐	☐	Crime Watch & Block Captains
	☐	☐	Fundraising
Please return survey to your neighborhood steering committee by mail or email. If you have any questions, please contact the steering committee chair.	☐	☐	Helping out Neighbors (raking leaves, etc.)
	☐	☐	Neighborhood Beautification
	☐	☐	Other _____



Experience **LIFE** in the Park

St. Louis Park Neighborhood Association Ideas

There are a lot of great things you can do as a neighborhood association. Be creative and have fun! Here are some examples from other neighborhoods:

- Neighborhood Picnic
- Winter Party (& ice skating)
- Volleyball, Frisbee, Kickball game and BBQ
- Family Bike Event
- Ice Cream Social
- Halloween Party
- Oktoberfest
- Family Camp Out
- Spring Egg Hunt
- Hayride
- Movie Night
- National Night Out
- Garage Sale
- Pizza Night
- Neighborhood Signs
- Adult Gathering
- New Neighbor Welcome

Service Projects such as:

- Trail Beautification
- Earth Day Event
- Pond or Marsh Clean-Up
- Flowers and Tree Planting
- Sign Planting
- Park Pick-Up after your dog signs & bags
- Environmental Service Project
- Community Garden
- Plant sale/exchange
- Service exchange such as shoveling, painting, raking, babysitting, etc.

Other Ideas:

- Neighborhood Newsletter
- Dedicated Park Bench



For more information, contact
 Marney Olson
 Community Liaison
 Phone: 952-924-2184
 E-mail: molson@stlouispark.org

Experience **NEIGHBORHOODS** in the Park

Twelve Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood *Right Now*

Adapted from training materials for:

Community Involvement Training: A course in community renewal

Copyright 1999-2000 © Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc.

The following list is intended to introduce the neighbor who has never participated in a crime prevention effort to simple steps that can be taken now to make a difference.

1. Report crime promptly. Neighbors sometimes don't report criminal activity because they don't want to bother the police, they assume police are too short-staffed to respond, or they believe that there isn't much an officer can (or will) do about a given problem anyway. Whether the issue is graffiti, petty vandalism, or something much more serious, police cannot act without first hearing about the problem from you. Calling won't guarantee that police can fix the problem, but failing to call can guarantee that they won't. Also, don't assume someone else has called. Make the call yourself.

2. Report nuisances and other non-criminal problems promptly. Examples: Junked cars on front lawns, abandoned autos in the streets, old mattresses left to rot in a backyard, garbage dumped illegally in a vacant lot. When you find yourself thinking, "someone ought to *do something*," *do something*. Call code enforcement, non-emergency numbers, landlords, residents, local business owners, or any other person or agency that may have influence on the issue. Then call your neighbors and ask those who are also concerned about the issue to call and report as well. Then keep calling until the issue is resolved.

3. Take away the opportunity for crime. Think about your home, your car, and even your lifestyle and ask what you could change to take away the opportunity for crime. Lock your car and never leave valuables, even for a few minutes, in the car where would-be thieves might see them. Trim bushes or trees on your property that offer too-convenient hiding places. Also trim where trees and

bushes block a clear view of your front door and address from the street or make it difficult for a person to see out of windows in your home. In short, make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like it has its "eyes" (windows) open.

4. Meet the youth who live on your block and greet them by name. This is one of the simplest steps an adult can take, yet it can make a profound difference should there be a future need for adults and young people to speak to each other in the midst of a neighborhood crisis. Also, it is difficult to help form a safe and supportive community for children without the adults and children knowing each other. Even those without children should know to whom the various children in the neighborhood belong. In this way, each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to discuss problems immediately as they arise.

5. Make a list of the names and phone numbers of every neighbor on your block. Not just two neighbors — set a goal of at least 10 and preferably 20 or 30. Find almost any citizen who has turned around a problem block and you will find a citizen who really knows the people who live there. Did you grow up in a neighborhood where "everyone knew each other" and find that today your neighborhood isn't like that? That's true for many people. That's not "society's" fault. Instead, think of it as your own fault, and you can fix it. Unless you know neighbors' names and numbers, you can't call them about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem. Learn the names and phone numbers of your neighbors this weekend.

6. Make a list of landlords in your area as well. As owners of property in the community, landlords are responsible to the neighborhood

and most are rightly concerned about the health of the community in which their properties stand. You can find out the name and address of the person or organization that owns any property, including the rental house next door, by contacting your county tax assessor's office. Do it today.

7. Turn your porch light on. Do this every night at dusk and keep it on till dawn. Crime tends to decline in neighborhoods that are well lit. Turning on porch lights is a simple way to start this process. It also makes the street feel more "welcome" to good residents who are out for a walk in the evening. It communicates a higher level of caring for the neighborhood by residents. This can become a daily routine or it can be accomplished by installing a timer. It is also immediate — while you wait for local government to install that new street light that everyone is asking for, go ahead and add a little more light yourself. Then encourage other neighbors to do the same.

8. Walk around the block. It sounds simple enough, but neighbors benefit over time when more responsible citizens walk about more, particularly for those who are comfortable doing it, at night, every night around their block. At minimum walk around the block, once every day, preferably at night *if* you feel comfortable doing so. Take a moment to chat with neighbors, including youth, when the opportunity arises.

9. Drive *slowly* on neighborhood streets. While we often call for stop signs, lights, and speed bumps, we often forget that we can organize a means to slow down neighborhood traffic sooner. Remember that it is legal to drive a few miles per hour *below* the speed limit in your neighborhood. For example, if the speed limit is 25, try 20 instead. Regular, slower driving on neighborhood side streets

by multiple neighbors will dampen the desire of racers to use your street — it isn't as fun to cut through a neighborhood if the likelihood of being stuck behind a car traveling at a more respectful pace has increased. Also, do it on every side street in the neighborhood, not just the one near your home.

10. Pick up the litter near your home, even if you didn't put it there. Most people are less likely to litter where they don't see litter already. You can help stop the growth of trash in your neighborhood by taking away the existing litter that attracts it.

11. Stay where you are. Stable neighborhoods are built on the commitment of long term residents who would rather live in a healthy community than move to a bigger house. Communities reach stability when conscientious citizens allow their roots to grow deep and help transform a geographic area that exists as a "neighborhood" in name only into a real community of involved people. Please, stay and help.

12. Help your neighborhood association or similar groups. If you are willing, decide what greater contribution you would like to make — then take the lead and do it. If leadership isn't your desire, at least make sure someone in your household attends local neighborhood association meetings. You'll be kept better informed of the issues facing the neighborhood and how you can help and, perhaps more importantly, you'll have the chance to shape, guide, and participate in the future of your neighborhood.

Finally, *don't stop at 12 tasks*: Do whatever else you can to make your neighborhood a safe and enjoyable place to live, work, go to school, and raise a family. Remember: living in a good neighborhood isn't a right; it's a responsibility.



Neighborhood Association Quick Guide



Why Organize YOUR Neighborhood?

- Neighborhood Associations build community through cooperative action
- The City of Edina recognizes Neighborhood Associations to provide direct, effective communication
- Recognized Neighborhood Associations receive many benefits from the City of Edina
- Neighborhood Associations make Edina a better place to live, learn, raise a family, and do business!

Background

- The City of Edina adopted the **Neighborhood Association Policy** in 2013.
- The Neighborhood Association Policy identifies the purpose, expectations, bylaw requirements, recognition process, support, benefits, and other information for Edina's Neighborhood Associations.
- The City of Edina adopted **Neighborhood Association Map** that outlines the geographic area of each neighborhood. Every property in the city resides in only one neighborhood association area.

Organizing Checklist

- ✓ *Establish organizing team*
- ✓ *Postcard sent to all residents in neighborhood*
- ✓ *Neighborhood-wide Informational Meeting*
- ✓ *Neighborhood Association Incorporation Meeting*
- ✓ *Submit recognized neighborhood association application including approved bylaws and meeting minutes*
- ✓ *Edina City Manager Reviews & Approves Neighborhood Association's application*

Steps to Organize



Available Assistance from the City

- Sample bylaws
- Organizing strategies and tips
- Meeting planning resources and information
- Annual Neighborhood workshop with topical information and resources
- Meeting Space
- City experts to speak at community events
- Annual copying services

Communication Information

- Free services provided to Neighborhood Association by the City of Edina:
 - Initial Mailing
 - Available on a **one-time basis** for initial neighborhood notification of association meeting
 - Includes printing and mailing of postcard to every household in neighborhood
 - **Content MUST be provided to City's Communication and Technology Services Department 21 days in advance of meeting**
 - Copying
 - Available **once per calendar year**
 - Total number of copies equals neighborhood est. population
 - Double-sided, 8.5" by 11"
 - Submit Content to City's Communication and Technology Services Department and expect 2-3 day turnaround
 - Maximize service by using half sheets
 - Website
 - Each Association will have a designated "landing page" under City's Neighborhood Association main webpage
 - Information on designated webpage includes:
 - **Name**
 - **Boundaries**
 - **Notable features**
 - **Bylaws**
 - **Regular meeting place and time**
 - **Association contact info**
 - **Links to association website or other online resources**
 - About Town Listing
 - City will recognize Neighborhood Associations and contact info
 - **Occurs annually**

Staff Contacts:

MJ Lamon, Neighborhood Liaison

mlamon@EdinaMN.gov

952-826-0360



Neighborhood Association SAMPLE Bylaws

There are certain requirements that bylaws must meet in order for a neighborhood association to be recognized by the City of Edina. This sample meets those requirements and can be edited to meet the neighborhood's needs.

*The text under **red section headers** requires a decision from the neighborhood association or the general principle is required by the City for recognition.*

*The text under **blue section headers** may be edited, altered or removed by your association. These sections are for consideration but are not a requirement for recognition.*

For more information on neighborhood associations, bylaws or the recognition process, contact MJ Lamon, Neighborhood Liaison, at neighborhoods@edinamn.gov or 952-826-0360.



SAMPLE: [Name] Neighborhood Association Bylaws

NAME

This section may be edited, altered or removed by your association. This is only a suggestion not a requirement for recognition.

- The name of the Association is the [Name] Neighborhood Association (abbreviation here).
-

PURPOSE

This section may be edited, altered or removed by your association. These are only suggestions not requirements for recognition.

The Neighborhood Association is organized to:

- Enhance the livability of the neighborhood and Edina by establishing and maintaining an open line of communication and liaison among the neighborhood, government agencies and other neighborhoods.
 - Provide an open process by which all members of the neighborhood may involve themselves in the affairs of the neighborhood.
 - Perform such other objectives as are approved by Leadership or membership.
-

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY

Neighborhood Associations seeking recognition are required to comply with the outline of Neighborhood boundaries as defined by the City's approved neighborhood map. The map can be located on the Edina Neighborhoods website (www.edinamn.gov/neighborhoods) or contact the Neighborhoods Liaison.

- The boundaries of the [Name] Neighborhood Association are as follows: (insert description)
-

MEMBERSHIP

All of these requirements are required for City Recognition. Additional non-conflicting requirements may be made.

- Membership in the Association is open to all neighbors. Neighbors are defined as residents or other legal entities that own or occupy property within a neighborhood. Residents are defined as anyone who lives in the boundaries of the city.
 - Membership in the Association is strictly voluntary. No neighbor will be required to participate.
 - Membership fees, when established by the bylaws of a neighborhood organization, shall be voluntary and shall not bar any neighbor from Association membership or voting privileges.
-

VOTING & QUORUM

All of these requirements are required for City Recognition. Additional non-conflicting requirements may be made.

Voting

- A Voting Member shall be an 18 year old Neighbor in attendance at an association meeting.
- Each resident will be entitled to one vote.
- Any legal entity that owns or rents a parcel is entitled to one vote.

Leadership Quorum

- A quorum consists of ____ or more Leadership members (must be a fixed number or number that can be calculated from a clear formula).

Membership Quorum

- The majority of members present at the meeting, there is no minimum quorum.

LEADERSHIP

Neighborhood Associations are required to provide procedures for election and removal of leadership. Leadership is a broad term and may be met with a multitude of organizational options (for example an executive board or steering committee). Below is designed with a steering committee and executive offices. You are not required to keep this leadership structure but must have a leadership section of your bylaws. You are required to describe how leadership will be nominated, leadership's terms, and removal of a leadership member.

Steering Committee

- Members of [Name] Neighborhood Association will form a Steering Committee of no fewer than ____ (insert number) members.
- All members of the Steering Committee must be xxx Neighborhood resident (owning or renting), property or business owner within the neighborhood boundaries.
- In the case of a Steering Committee vacancy, the remaining members of the Steering Committee are authorized to recruit and replace the committee member.

Executive Officers

- The officers of the association including Chair or Co-Chairs, Treasurer, and/or Secretary will be appointed by the Steering Committee Members and will be members of the Steering Committee.

Nomination

- Election of Leadership shall be held at the annual neighborhood meeting on the same day as the nominations.
- All members of the neighborhood will be notified of the annual meeting.
- The term of office shall begin at the close of the Annual Meeting or upon appointment.
- In the case of a Steering Committee vacancy occurring during the term of any Officer can be filled by appointment by the remaining members of the Steering Committee.

Term

- The Leadership of the Association shall serve for a term of one (1) year or until successors are elected.

Removal

- Any Leadership member can be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote of the Voting Members present at a meeting.
-

COMMITTEES

This section may be edited, altered or removed by your association. These are only suggestions not requirements for recognition.

- Leadership shall have the power to appoint committees.
 - Committees will be formed on the basis of the neighborhood interest and volunteer action.
-

MEETINGS

Neighborhood Associations are required to hold an annual meeting with notice to all addresses within the geographic boundaries. Regular and Special Meetings may be edited.

Regular and Special

- Steering committee meetings will be held as needed.
- Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by the Executive Officers.
- Members will be notified of special meetings and the annual meeting.

Annual Meeting of Membership

- An annual meeting shall be held during the month of _____ at a time and place designated by the Leadership.
 - The first priority item of business at the annual meeting is the annual election of the steering committee.
 - A copy of the annual meeting minutes and if amended, bylaws will be forwarded to the City of Edina Neighborhoods Liaison.
-

AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Neighborhood Associations are required to provide changes or amendments to bylaws to the Neighborhood Relations Staff Liaison.

- These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote by the neighbors present at the annual meeting, general neighborhood meeting, or a meeting called for that purpose.
-

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Neighborhood Associations seeking recognition are required to include a non-discrimination clause in their bylaws.

- The [Name] Neighborhood Association shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, citizenship, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, or physical or mental handicap.