

The Organizer's Handbook

For

Neighborhood Group Coordinators



October 2015

The Organizer's Handbook for Neighborhood Group Coordinators

Provided by the Neighborhood Resource Organization (NRO)

Coordinating the organization of a neighborhood group (association or watch) can first appear daunting. Where do you start? And once you've begun, how do you keep your neighbors interested?

Creating your neighborhood group will take some time, but the benefits are worth the effort. When communities organize, individuals face challenges and barriers together. They no longer stand alone. Their united front gives them the credibility to bring the right partners to the table to assist them in creating a better community.

The Neighborhood Resource Organization (NRO) is ready to help you begin your journey. You'll find a number of resources on and can contact us through the NRO website at <http://www.nroerie.org/>. A copy of this handbook can be found on the website's resources page. Subscribe to the NRO email list for community news and updated information.

This handbook will help beginner and experienced neighborhood group coordinators create and maintain viable neighborhood organizations that make a difference in their communities. The book is divided into three basic sections for three different stages:

Section I: Creating Your Neighborhood Group Made Easy

Section II: Maintaining Momentum

Section III: Tips for the Experts

Identify where you are on your organizational timeline and begin reading the appropriate section. Good luck. You are on your way to a better community.

Dave Deter
Executive Director

Don't underestimate the power of your vision to change the world.

- Leroy Hood

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Section I: Creating Your Neighborhood Group Made Easy

Getting started

Creating a neighborhood organization will take patience, and the process begins with basic initial steps. This section will help you determine what those steps are, so you aren't wandering aimlessly through the process.

1. Create a steering committee. – Your first task is to create a steering committee. This committee will “steer” or give direction to your organization.

Invite a few energetic and enthusiastic neighbors to your house or a central, public location to discuss the possibility of creating a neighborhood group. Consider including representatives from area churches, non-profits, schools, or businesses that have a vested interest in your neighborhood. Choose carefully, and do not invite too many. This will more than likely be your core group of decision makers.

To begin discussion, ask questions such as:

How could our neighborhood benefit from a neighborhood group?
What are the best assets of our neighborhood?
What issues are we having?
What partners should we bring to the table?
Where do you feel our neighborhood boundaries are?
Do you have suggestions for a name?

Take notes on their responses, or find a willing volunteer to keep minutes for this initial meeting and future meetings.

2. Determine your neighborhood boundaries. - Bring three or four copies of a map of your area to the meeting. You can request maps from your local or county planning office or easily print a basic area map at <https://www.google.com/maps>. Contact neighborhood groups near you and bring a map of their boundaries if available.

Ask attendees to agree upon a tentative boundary for your neighborhood and highlight that area on your map. You can use this as the basis for full discussion at the first meeting of your general membership.

Boundary Tips:

- *Don't overlap bordering neighborhood group boundaries.*
- *Consider using natural boundaries as an edge (railroads, streams, etc.).*
- *Select appropriate size; large boundaries increase your neighborhood's negotiating power but limit close-knit/personal feeling.*

3. Design/Distribute a one-page invitation. – Decide upon a date, time and place for the first general meeting. Ask someone artistic in the group to design the invitation. In addition to stating the purpose of the meeting, it must be engaging. Spend time discussing text. Will a neighborhood crime statistic grab attention?

Then discuss the distribution method. The core group will be responsible for distributing initial invitations. Ask the following questions:

- What medium works best for them? Flyers? Digital copies?
- How many do they need?
- Who do they feel comfortable contacting? Residents? Individuals from local clubs, businesses, or organizations?

Invitation distribution tips:

- Ask local merchants to display in windows.
- Ask religious congregations to add to bulletins.
- Request neighborhood school principals send flyers home with students.
- Request residents tweet, Facebook, or blog about past and upcoming meetings.
- Pass out invitations at local recreational/sporting events.

Do your best to invite everyone, but do not belabor the task. Open-ended invitations can be extended to residents and to individuals working at local institutions as your organization grows.

Stakeholders

1. Attract the right people. – A neighborhood coordinator must practice neutrality. Showing favoritism can isolate individuals and dissuade them from participating. The coordinator must create a comfortable, positive atmosphere where diversity is welcomed.

Connecting with local law enforcement and social service providers is going to be important. But connecting with individuals in your neighborhood is paramount. They will be your workers and your source of creativity. Attracting individuals from all walks of life will be valuable, and finding individuals who are members of a number of different groups may help you build valuable partnerships outside your neighborhood.

An organization, no matter how well designed, is only as good as the people who live and work in it. –Dee Hock

2. Entice other stakeholders. – A coordinator should always be thinking about possible connections and relationships—with all stakeholders. Your non-resident stakeholders may not be as easy to identify but are equally as important. Stakeholders are people who have an interest or stake in your neighborhood—not just your residents. It can be due to interest, perspective, knowledge of an issue, or mere location.

Stakeholders include:

- Beneficiaries and constituents most affected by any neighborhood problem(s)
- Others who live among the beneficiaries and deal with them
- The business community most directly related to any problem(s)
- Local government agencies whose mandates cover the problem(s)
- Political leaders in your neighborhood/community
- News media
- Cultural and religious groups

These stakeholders, together, will help you solve your problems.

3. Contact neighboring stakeholders. - Don't reinvent the wheel. Other neighborhood groups in your area can help. Contact the coordinator of a bordering neighborhood group, and ask for a copy of their invitation, meeting agenda, mission statement or by-laws. This will save you time developing your own.

Visit other stakeholders' resources on the internet such as your local Neighborhood Resource Association (NRO) website at <http://www.nroerie.org/>.

Asset mapping

How individuals perceive their neighborhood can influence the way they act.

Asset mapping is identifying the positive characteristics of your neighborhood, so you can celebrate the good in your community. It concentrates on what you have rather than what you don't have. It can include public, private, and community assets.

Look to find the assets in the following:

- Individuals
- Associations
- Institutions
- Land

1. Identify your assets. - How you perceive your neighborhood will be positively altered by identifying your assets rather than concentrating on your deficits. If you want to sell your neighborhood to the outside world and possibly garner partnerships that will help you expand and grow, then you must first convince your own residents that your neighborhood is a good place to live.

Consider designating a positive, out-going person to be in charge of exploring your neighborhood assets. Make sure they are a good communicator and task them with gathering notes about assets in your neighborhood. They should consider the asset groups listed above.

Individuals – Individual residents have skills, talents, gifts, and passions. By passing out a questionnaire or simply speaking with neighbors, you can track people who are willing to share their gifts with others. A past Eagle Scout may be willing to organize a Boy Scout troop. A retired teacher may volunteer to organize tutoring at a neighborhood nonprofit. An accountant may offer to be your treasurer. Maintain a list of individuals and the talents they've offered to share.

A country's assets reside in the tinkerers, hobbyists and risk takers. – Nassim Nickolas Taleb

Associations – Make a list of the names of residents who belong to associations and clubs. Gardening club members may be willing to plant flowers in a community park. Soccer club members may be willing to recruit and coach a neighborhood youth team. Landlord association members may be able to provide literature or a workshop on home maintenance.

Institutions – Track members of institutions or seek individuals who work at institutions located in your area. Institutions include businesses, local governments, nonprofits, schools, hospitals, libraries, etc. A fireman may be willing to speak to children or families about a home fire escape plan. A local restaurant owner may be willing to provide food or drinks for a summer neighborhood picnic. A nonprofit agency or local church may donate space for general meetings.

One of the greatest responsibilities I have is to manage my assets wisely, so that they create value. – Alice Whalton

Land – You are probably familiar with the negative land issues in your neighborhood. With asset mapping, you will identify good land qualities or potentially good land qualities. City or school parks, neighborhood baseball fields or playgrounds, green space, vacant lots, boulevards, etc. should be identified and listed.

Devise an asset list for your neighborhood. (See **Appendix Sample Asset Gathering List.**) Distribute this to members and ask for their input. Begin tracking your assets.

2. Create a neighborhood asset map. - It is important to remember that collecting this data is only the beginning. If the list sits on a table or in the computer, it is worthless. Continually update your list and use it, not only to advertise your good qualities but to make connections. At your meetings, discuss if your asset list's appeal will help attract important partners. Once you feel your list accurately portrays your community assets, it's time to create your map.

*Connecting asset tips:
Can members of a neighborhood book club volunteer to help children read at an after-school nonprofit? That is how the magic begins.*

Recruit a volunteer (high school students may be proficient at this) to design an attractive community asset map from your list. It can be a word document, diagram, graph, chart, etc. Encourage creativity. (Try googling "asset maps" for examples. A good example can be found at <http://tammycebullla.efoliomn.com/Uploads/AssetMapping.pdf>.) Then use your map to advertise the great qualities of your neighborhood not only to your residents but to the entire world.

Meetings

The way you conduct your general neighborhood meeting can have more influence on your organization than you expect. If meetings are too short, people may feel they aren't worth the effort. Too long, and they may never return.

Attending a successful, well-established neighborhood group meeting in your vicinity will help you understand the dynamics of conducting a good meeting. Ask the experienced coordinators of those association or watch groups what they've learned over the years regarding their meetings.

Here are a few tips to help keep attendees coming back:

1. Have an agenda. - Every meeting should have an agenda. Spend some time deciding which issues you'll address. Then, when listing agenda items, schedule small but necessary issues at the beginning and more emotional, time-consuming topics toward the end. Do not overload the agenda, and consider allowing time for refreshments or mingling at the end.

The secret of your success is determined by your daily agenda. – John C. Maxwell

Agendas should at least have the following items:

- I.** Call to order/introductions
- II.** Approval of last meeting's minutes
- III.** Committee reports
- IV.** Old business
- V.** New business
- VI.** Announcements
- VII.** Notice of next meeting
- VIII.** Adjournment

Be sure someone is taking minutes so information is not lost. If you do not have a volunteer for a permanent secretary, rotate the task each meeting. Read the minutes at the next meeting (see II above) and ask members to vote to approve those minutes.

2. Set a time limit. – Start the meeting on time. Don't penalize those who arrived on time, and don't reinforce late arrivals by delaying the start or rearranging your agenda. The meeting should begin as planned and never exceed ninety minutes.

Although Roberts Rules of Order can help manage your meeting time, it is often too formal. If you feel these rules will intimidate your neighborhood group, as an alternative, use your agenda to guide you through the meeting. Set time limits on individual agenda items that may be timely.

3. Deal with difficult people. – Eventually you will encounter attendees who are hard to get along with or talk too long. Here are some tips to keep the meeting moving forward:

- When a point is discussed too long, summarize or table the topic for a later time.
- When two members are in a heated discussion, summarize points made by each, invite both to stay after the meeting to discuss, then move to the next item.
- When one person monopolizes the meeting, interrupt with a statement giving the speaker credit for their contribution. Politely ask others to join in. (Example: "You've brought up excellent points that will keep us busy for a long time. Would anyone else like to comment on one of these points?")
- When conversation drifts from the subject, interrupt, politely explain that they are departing from the main point, and offer to place the issue on a future agenda.

*Meeting tip:
Regularly and politely
reminding attendees of
your time schedule at
different intervals
throughout the meeting
will help move the
meeting along.*

4. Wrap up your meeting. – Each guest should leave with the following:

- Something to do
- Some form of written information

The task could be as easy as informing neighbors about future meetings, introducing themselves to people on their block, or contacting a business in their vicinity. Written information could be as simple as the name, address, and telephone number of the coordinator, along with a brief description of the organization's proposed purpose.

Delegating

No one can do it all. A good coordinator knows how to delegate. Yet assigning time-sensitive, important tasks to others can be frightening.

1. Be clear about the task. - For the volunteer, meeting a deadline is only possible if he or she understands what is expected of them. Too often, a willing volunteer leaves a meeting with good intentions but no instructions.

Below are some reasons volunteers do not accomplish their tasks:

- No clear timeline or deadline.
- Unsure of the specific task being delegated.
- Lack of proper training.
- Fear of criticism.

Coordinators should work hard to avoid these delegation pitfalls:

- Expecting perfection.
- Being too critical.
- Assigning a task and yet relaying a lack of confidence in the volunteer's capabilities.
- Refusing to delegate preferred tasks.
- Fearing volunteers will perform better.
- Allowing a strong desire to be liked by workers or your team to influence delegation.
- Failing to follow-up with a volunteer.

2. Know your volunteers. - Managing volunteers can require commitment and thought. You must have a detailed knowledge of the individual, their experience, background, skills, and abilities. Keeping the lines of communication open, remaining positive, and concerning yourself with the two key elements—the task and the volunteer—will help ensure the job gets done.

Mission and goals

Where are you going? Where do you want to be?

Creating a mission statement and goals will help your organization stay focused. Consider creating a planning committee to develop these tools. Ask for volunteers from your steering committee and general membership. Task them with developing the following:

Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction. – John F. Kennedy

1. Create a mission statement. – A mission statement describes your organization's purpose. It should be short yet inspiring. (See [Appendix Sample Mission Statement](#).)

Jot down short phrases to answer the following questions:

- What will we do?
- How will we do it?
- Whom will we do it for?
- What value will we bring?

Chose a few of the most inspiring phrases that best portray your intended purpose, then craft your statement by threading them together. It doesn't have to look like all of the other mission statements. Your vision is unique. However, this bears repeating, it must be clear and concise.

2. Devise neighborhood goals. – Initially taking on too many goals can exhaust and destroy a group before it gets started.

Begin with a few solid goals that everyone seems to agree upon. These goals should be relatively easy to accomplish. You may construct a second list of future goals that you will tackle later.

The most important part of selecting goals is to keep your mission statement in mind. Once you have a mission statement, goals, an asset map, group meetings, and interested stakeholders, you will be well on your way to building a better community for your neighborhood's residents.

Don't forget, the NRO is here to help you with any of your unanswered questions. You may contact staff through the NRO website contact page at <http://www.nroerie.org/contact/> or email.

Every successful individual knows that his or her achievement depends on a community of persons working together. – Paul Ryan

Section II: Maintaining Momentum

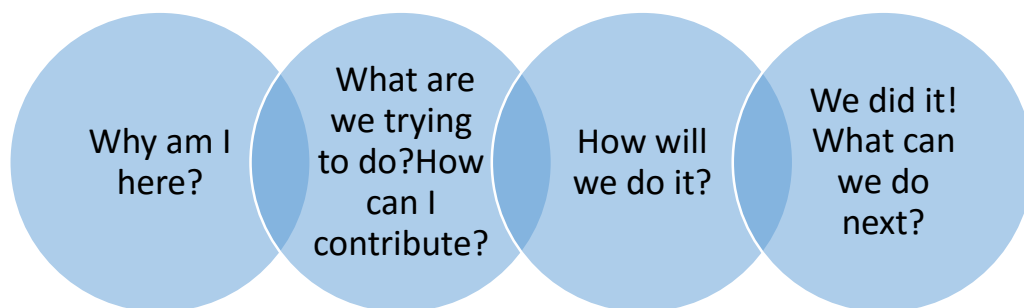
Now that your group is up and running, how do you keep your members coming back?

Your organization must keep moving forward. People value their time. If they feel nothing is being accomplished, they will spend their time elsewhere. Occasionally assessing whether your group is continuing to be productive will help maintain your momentum.

Assessing your organization and leadership

Assess both your organization and your leadership. Feedback from residents and other stakeholders is essential. Developing a “How are we doing?” survey may warn you about potential problems. (See [Appendix Sample Stakeholder Survey](#).) Obtain their input and ask yourself:

1. Is your organization accomplishing anything? - Your individuals are the most important asset in your organization. They are your workforce. Without them, you can accomplish very little. As the coordinator, it is your job to inspire these individuals to accomplish tasks that better the entire organization. Encourage them to ask themselves:



These questions will help your group continue to tackle the many challenges that face your neighborhood. Progress and growth are never ending. There will always be ways in which you can improve your community. Refer to this diagram to remain focused on your short-term goals then advance to the harder ones.

Another way to assess your progress is to discuss your organization’s accomplishments honestly at the steering committee meeting. Ask for their feedback. Do they feel your group is effective? Remind them of the qualities of an effective organization.

An effective organization:

- Solves community problems through planned actions. It continually improves the overall quality of life in the neighborhood by repeatedly asking what’s next.

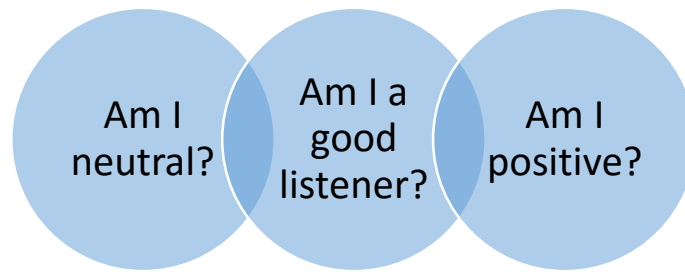
- Has a democratic structure and enables its members to have control over the decisions in their lives.
- Has credibility. Both its constituency and the outside community have witnessed their problem-solving ability.
- Is economically stable. It has a plan for continued existence through strategic and financial planning.
- Has good leaders.

2. Are your leaders effective? - A good leader will go out into a neighborhood and begin connecting with individuals and groups. He or she must ensure that all sectors of the neighborhood will be represented in the organization. Neighbors come from various backgrounds, cultures, and have a variety of experiences. Yet while they have many differences, they do have a common goal: each of them wants to feel valued and make a contribution to their community.

It is the coordinator's job to ensure these individuals are given an opportunity to make that contribution. Members must be encouraged to continue participating and evolving along with the organization. They will face challenges and progress through different learning stages that may discourage them. The coordinator must know which strategies and skills to use to help them work through those stages:

1. The initial **gathering stage** is one of hope, anticipation, excitement and yet uncertainty. *Leadership strategies:* Be welcoming, informative, provide structure and invite questions. Give everyone a chance to be heard.
2. The **chaotic stage** occurs when there is a high level of stress, pressure, and passions conflict. The group may be dominated by one person or a small group. *Leadership strategies:* Be an active listener, clarify the purpose of the group, and build a common ground for them to stand on. Reflect upon the group's similarities, skills, talents, and continually work to draw them together.
3. The **unity stage** occurs when the group begins to feel like a team. They work together showing trust and respect for each other and have a sense of belonging. *Leadership strategies:* Allow them to focus on the task, provide encouragement and direction, and share evaluations and implementation plans.
4. The **performance stage** occurs when the group is functioning as a team. *Leadership strategies:* Act as a coach, pass on wisdom, and celebrate future challenges.

Additionally, a good leader will ask the following questions:



These three qualities are essential regardless of the group's stage. A good leader must remain neutral and stay positive, so that all members feel comfortable contributing. The use of positive encouragement, along with reflecting what the member is saying or paraphrasing, will help convey that you are actively listening.

Good leaders are appreciative listeners. They pay attention to more than content. They watch for body language. Can the person look them in the eye? If not, they could be painfully shy and not yet comfortable with the group. Are they crossing their arms? They could be angry. Not all messages are verbal.

A good leader is also not consumed with power. Traditional leaders communicate from the top down. In contrast, a different type of leader—a servant leader—has no such communication hierarchy. He or she is there to serve their members—a web of interconnected people. Under this type of leadership, the coordinator makes a conscious choice to first serve then lead his group. It is no longer “I” but “we”.

Leadership tip:

- *Great skills for a leader are appreciative listening and reflective listening.*
- *With appreciative listening or active listening, the leader, through body language and encouraging words, lets the other person know that they are genuinely interested in what they are saying.*
- *With reflective listening, the leader makes sure he understands what the person is saying and then offers the idea back to the person in his or her own words.*

Servant leadership is:

- Understanding the complexity and importance of working with people and relationships.
- Knowing you are there to serve your group.
- Remaining neutral and encouraging your group to work through their issues together.
- Allowing them to play a meaningful role in something larger than themselves.
- Guiding rather than helping or fixing. (Helping is based on inequality; it is not a relationship between equals. Fixing is a form of judging.)

- Being patient and understanding that, in order for the group to be effective, it will take time for them to garner trust toward each other (gathering stage).
- Being flexible but knowing how to jump in if the group gets stuck in a stage.
- Knowing that listening is different from hearing.

Practicing servant leadership encourages your group to develop their own vision and priorities. You are simply walking behind them, providing assistance and guidance, and allowing them to make their dreams a reality.

Once you have evaluated your organization and leaders and feel confident in their effectiveness, it will be time to turn your interest toward elevating your meetings and giving further direction to your group by developing bylaws, committees and a board of directors.

Making your meetings matter

It may be a chore keeping those first few meetings to ninety minutes; people become passionate about issues close to home. But once those initial “emotional” issues have been resolved and your meetings are running like clockwork, you may find yourself searching for new business monthly.

1. Be aware that your meetings can get old. - You’ll know when it happens. People will doodle, fidget with cell phones or—even worse—doze off in the back of the room. You’ll know you’re losing them, but you won’t know why.

There are several ways to refresh your meetings. One philosophy is to remind yourself to center your meeting design around the 3Rs—relationships, resources and results. This requires coordinators ask themselves questions about each of the 3Rs:

Relationships - How will the people I invite relate to me, each other, and the result?

Resources - What do people have and what can they bring to help get the results?

Results - What do people want the results to be? What do they want to accomplish?

Notice the common ground? Everything revolves around results. If your group stops producing or people feel they are no longer contributing to the accomplishments, they will lose interest or stop coming all together.

2. Refocus your meetings. - Ask attendees to write down what they would most like to see the group accomplish. Revisit your initial goals and add new ones. Select a high profile goal or one that will likely generate the most neighborhood interest for your next project.

The most glorious moments in your life are not the so-called days of success, but rather those days when out of dejection and despair you feel rise in you a challenge to life, and the promise of future accomplishments. – Gustave Flaubert

Garnering interest in a new goal (or potential result) will help the substance of your meetings.

Here are a few other tips that may help the atmosphere of your meetings:

- Take your meetings outside in nicer weather to a local park.
- Plan a picnic after the meeting.
- Go door-to-door and recruit new members with new ideas.
- Recruit a meeting host to welcome attendees and make them feel like they belong.
- Ask local businesses to sponsor a meeting by providing food.
- Invite a speaker.

3. Reinvent your content. - A charismatic speaker usually draws a crowd. Neighborhood Coordinator John Villa has over 20 years of experience conducting neighborhood association meetings. He said past speakers that have drawn the biggest crowds are political leaders, code enforcement officers and the chief of police. Other speakers may also draw a crowd if you ask them to gear their topics toward your member's interests, such as:

Law enforcement officers (Is your neighborhood safe?)

Fire inspectors (Do you have a fire escape plan for your children?)

Landlord association representatives (What are your rights as a tenant? As a landlord?)

Real estate appraisers (How much is your home worth?)

Redevelopment Authority representatives (Is your home safe from lead?)

Social Security representatives (Can I afford to stay in my home?)

Health Department officials (Is there mold in my home?)

Local attorneys (Ask an attorney anything for free night.)

Find out who your members would like to hear speak. Pass out a "what topics interest you?" questionnaire. What is important to you may not be important to them.

Some bland discussions are unavoidable. However moving some topics to a committee meeting can be helpful. Tasks such as discussing finances, creating bylaws, or assembling a board of directors can be completed by a committee and voted upon by the general membership.

Board of Directors, committees and bylaws

Once your meetings are running well and you feel your group's foundation is taking form, expanding your organization could help cement that foundation. Selecting a board of directors, creating committees, and developing bylaws will further your direction and your credibility.

1. Assemble your board of directors. - You may feel creating a board of directors is a lofty goal. If you have no intention of creating a 501(c)(3), is it even necessary?

Although some funding sources may not require your organization have a 501(c)(3) designation to apply for funding, they may still require you submit bylaws and a list of board members. So it may behoove you to create a board—when you are ready.

From your organization’s standpoint, there are other reasons a board is beneficial. It’s a good structure to have in place to avoid or resolve disagreements. Your board will set policy through your bylaws. Bylaws state what rights members have within your organization. When disputes arise, solutions will be governed by those bylaws. Any changes to those bylaws must first be approved by your board.

Besides policy setting, your board may also be responsible for fund raising, voting on major issues, and representing the organization to the community. So it is important to consider what skills potential candidates will need.

When recruiting board members, consider these questions:

- Do they have adequate professional experience to provide policy guidance?
- Do they come, as a whole, from diversified backgrounds?
- Are they trustworthy, open-minded, and neutral?
- Do they have the time to dedicate to the organization?
- Are they independent? (Not under the direct influence of the coordinator or steering/nominating committee.)
- Do they have the experience and skills needed to guide your organization?

Finding the right board members is crucial and selecting a good chairman is critical to your organization’s success. Often members of one board of directors serve on another. Recruiting experienced board members will make the creation of your board easier.

The chairman of the board should:

- *Have a clear understanding of what is expected of him or her.*
- *Know the time commitment involved.*
- *Have previous board experience.*
- *Be skilled at team dynamics.*
- *Be active and well-connected in the community.*
- *Have a good working relationship with other board members and the coordinator.*

Most boards are comprised of the following members:

- The **chairman** who works closely with the coordinator and leads the board.
- The **vice chairman** who serves as the chairman in his or her absence.
- The **committee chairmen** who serve on or oversee committees.
- The **treasurer** who is responsible for overseeing the group’s finances.
- The **secretary** who records the board minutes.
- Board **members** who attend meetings and perform tasks as asked.

The selection or nomination of the board chairman and members should be in accordance with the organization's bylaws or policies.

The size of the board should be determined according to your needs. Boards can average 10 to 20 people or be as small as 5 or 6 members. A small board may be more flexible and focused, however a large board may be more democratic and more accurately represent your diverse stakeholders. Steering committee members and nominating committee (if created) members should discuss and decide upon the appropriate number for their organization.

Keep in mind, the board members you select must have the capacity to serve as committee chairmen when asked. Ask potential candidates if they have prior experience serving as chairmen on other boards. If so, they are more likely to have the skills needed to oversee committee members and conduct committee meetings.

*Board member selection tip:
Some organizations will seek input from their local funding institutions regarding suggestions for board members.*

2. Create committees. - Committees should be established when issues are too complex or numerous for your general membership or your board of directors. Look at them as opportunities to engage members who want to help. A good coordinator who is familiar with his or her members will tap their interests and invite members to serve on the right committees.

There are several types of committees you can create. Two general categories are standing and ad hoc committees. ***Standing committees*** are permanent and should be included in your bylaws. ***Ad hoc committees*** are temporary and usually created for short-term activities.

The types of committees you elect to create should be geared toward the activities you'll need to accomplish your goals. Create committees sparingly. Like long, drawn-out meetings, adopting too many committees can overwhelm your members. They require much manpower. Set too many, and you'll find yourself repeatedly begging for volunteers. (Neighbors will be crossing the street when they see you coming.)

So view the following sample list of committees with caution. Select a few you know you'll need and add other ones along the way only after careful consideration.

Standing Committees	Exist year round. The purpose for creating:
Executive/Steering	Oversee operations of board. (Board chair and officers are members.)
Finance	Oversee budget and finances. Ensure accurate fiscal tracking and accountability. Review grants. (Often led by board treasurer.)
Fundraising	Oversee fundraising activities of the group.
Public Relations	Promote the organization in the community. Coordinate events.
Membership	Oversee the on-going recruiting of members.

Ad Hoc Committees	Exist to accomplish a goal then cease to exist. The purpose for creating:
Nominating	Suggest potential board members and skills needed.

By-laws	Draft the organization's bylaws.
Specific Grant	Prepare for and complete specific grant applications.
Specific Projects	Plan and complete specific projects.
Ethics	Develop ethics/conflict of interest guidelines and/or settle disputes.

3. Devise bylaws. - Bylaws provide overall guidance and day-to-day general rules of operation for organizations. Sample bylaws are attached for your perusal. (See **Appendix Sample Bylaws.**)

Bylaws are divided into subject matter by articles and sections. Typically, they include categories listing information as follows:

General information lists organization's name, boundaries, fiscal year, etc.

Purpose of organization lists the organization's primary focus and who will be served.

General/board meeting lists chair person, quorum, and voting requirements.

Officers lists officer positions, selection or election, term length, and responsibilities.

Committees lists permanent committees, how ad hoc (temporary) committees are formed, committee membership, responsibility, and power.

Records and reports lists the records or reports that will be maintained and filed, the responsible officer or member, and where they will be kept and tracked.

Contracts, checks, deposits, and funds lists fiscal and contract execution procedures.

Changes to bylaws lists the procedures to amend the bylaws.

Networking, collaborating and partnering

A good coordinator knows the value of engaging the proper people to sit on the board of directors, chair committees and volunteer for projects. A great coordinator knows the value of networking, collaborating and partnering with the right people inside and outside of the neighborhood.

Understanding the power that your organization will glean through your partnerships is essential. Knowing who the players are in both your neighborhood and your community will not only allow you to tap their knowledge and expertise but will open doors to possible funding opportunities. Your neighborhood revitalization depends upon it.

Networking can begin with a hand shake or an email. Being visible in your neighborhood and community will help you build the relationships you'll need for collaborating and partnering. And now, with social media, the door has been opened for you to network with individuals or groups across the country that you may never meet face-to-face. With Facebook, Twitter, and email, connecting with them is literally at your fingertips.

Networking helps you build a clearinghouse of information. Through communication and dialogue, you'll learn how other individuals or groups have tackled problems similar to your own. Usually low-key and informal, it often opens the door for future, formal collaborations.

Collaborating usually occurs when groups have a common interest or goal. Together, their voices may be stronger than a single group. Their collaboration can also eliminate duplicate efforts and provide man-power that might not be available within one organization. Collaborating can lead to a more formal partnership between two or more individuals, groups, or associations who find they have some common, long-term goals.

Partnering serves to accomplish a common, over-arching mission. It is more formal and requires individuals discuss and meet regularly. Partnering with other groups that can help your cause will require autonomous leadership, group decision making, and clear communication. It is important for partnerships to clearly define roles and responsibilities in order to avoid conflict.

Partnering can happen naturally or intentionally. Evaluate potential partners you currently have and seek partnerships with organizations and individuals who will further your cause. Garnering the right mix of partners can make or break a cause.

Consider the following NRO template detailing a good mix of potential partnerships for community disorganization:

Definitions:

- *Networking is the exchange of information between individuals or groups.*
- *Collaborating is the act of working jointly on an activity to create or produce an objective.*
- *Partnering is an on-going working relationship between two or more people, groups, or associations.*



Now list the potential partners you feel important for your mission and goals.

Partnering with others will help your organization become self-sufficient. It will provide additional resources that you did not have as you stood alone facing your challenges. Take time to identify the barriers and tools to self-sufficiency. Sometimes, merely listing those barriers and tools will remind you that they exist and influence the collaborations and partnerships you should strive to create.

Identifying barriers to self-sufficiency

Barriers to self-sufficiency will hold your organization back. Often, it is hard to identify all of your barriers. They aren't always clear. Barriers develop when people do not have the tools they need to be self-sufficient. They can include:

1. **Unavailable resources** - Employment, transportation, or capital are examples of resources that may not be available to your constituents. These missing tools can be fairly clear and easily noted. There may not be enough jobs in the neighborhood, no bus routes, or limited funds for housing maintenance offered.
2. **Inaccessibility of resources** - Some resources that are available may be inaccessible due to cost, poor design, location, or lack of publicity. Low-interest home improvement loans or a recreational facility without wheelchair accessibility are only available to some.
3. **Society's regard for a group** - Disadvantaged groups may be unappreciated or devalued. Non-English speaking residents may be disregarded. Impoverished teenage boys in your neighborhood may be stereotyped. Negative media may surface regarding housing for challenged populations.
4. **Government practices** - Institutionalized responses to the plight of certain groups may be inadequate. Too few programs may exist in your neighborhood. Funding may be concentrated elsewhere.
5. **Business practices** - Local businesses may consistently hire outside your neighborhood. Large corporations may ignore your group further limiting employment opportunities.
6. **Certain conditions of your organization** - Your group's characteristics or features may make it hard to access tools. Cultural differences and limited education or language may prevent people from understand what is available to them.

Identifying these barriers and discussing them at your meetings may generate plans to eliminate disparities. Approach institutions in a united voice. Advertise your assets to corporations. Identify the number of people that work at a facility across town to warrant additional bus routes. Introduce local businesses to high school students who volunteer in your neighborhood to eliminate stereotyping. Approach funding sources and sell them your ideas.

Once you know your barriers, there are a myriad of ways in which you can work toward breaking them down.

Identifying tools for self-sufficiency

Several resources or tools are needed for your organization and its members to become self-sufficient. Encourage, foster, and fight for these tools for your members:

1. **Autonomy** or non-dependence - Autonomy occurs when a person or group is permitted and encouraged to develop according to their principles, ideas, and capacity.
2. **Incentive** - People receive incentive through support and encouragement.
3. **Decision-making capabilities** - Members must be afforded the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their livelihood and well-being.
4. **Self-respect** - To grow toward self-sufficiency, people need the personal and emotional energy that comes with self-respect.
5. **Community support** - People in like situations need each other to form a base of support for creating, using, and maintaining the self-sufficiency tools.
6. **Health** - Healthy lifestyles are vital to self-sufficiency. Poor health drains energy, and full use of tools is limited.
7. **Education** - Education, at all levels, boosts self-sufficiency.
8. **Information** - The group must be aware of the tools and understand the opportunities that are available to them.
9. **Employment** - The group's efforts in seeking career-development and employment opportunities is crucial in potentially providing safe and meaningful work.
10. **Capital** - While capital is obviously needed to be self-sufficient, certain groups have limited access to capital preventing some people or smaller institutions from further development. A united front can influence capital investment in a neighborhood.
11. **Responsive supportive systems** - These include safety, transportation, food and clothing, social services, recreation, and aesthetic opportunities. A strong advocacy group can influence these outside support systems.

Our greatest happiness does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed us, but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits. – Thomas Jefferson

Identifying projects

A common theme you may have recognized throughout this guide is that working to accomplish a goal helps maintain a viable organization. Individuals want to see the efforts of their organization. They want to witness results, and they want to have contributed to those results. That's what keeps them coming back—their own personal sense of accomplishment.

1. Identify on-going projects. - This is imperative. Remember, begin with a few goals you know your organization can accomplish and then progress to the tougher and more time-

consuming projects. There is no shortfall when it comes to potential projects. Here are a few projects that past organizations have tackled:

- Create a spring clean-up day.
- Plan a summer neighborhood picnic in a local park.
- Hold a “meet a police officer” day.
- Create a community garden in a vacant lot.
- Sell baked goods for a local charity at a local sporting event.
- Create thanksgiving baskets for local unemployed families.
- Provide yard clean-up days for neighborhood senior citizens.
- Implement a neighborhood park beautification project.
- Solicit funding for playground equipment or to install security lights.
- Create a strategic plan.

You have many projects to choose from. They can be as simple as holding a winter coat drive or as complex as creating a strategic plan. So where do you begin?

2. Ask questions. – Your group members should have input on selecting projects to revitalize their neighborhood. Talking about projects at membership meetings will identify the most important issues to your constituents. Consider asking your members the following questions:

- What’s bothering people in the neighborhood right now?
- What changes do you want to see in the neighborhood?
- Have there been any changes since the group organized and if so were they good or bad?
- What are your hopes for the neighborhood?
- What are your hopes for your family? Your job? Your property?
- What are your worst fears for your neighborhood’s future?
- Who is addressing those fears or issues right now?
- Who is not doing what they should?
- Who is benefiting the most by the way things are going?
- Who is being hurt by these actions or inactions?

Responses to these questions will give you a good sense of your group’s wants and needs, so you can begin to set a plan in motion.

3. Devise a strategic plan. - Once you have an idea of your stakeholder’s wants, a strategic plan will point your organization in the direction of its dreams. It will define your future.

Creating a plan may be time consuming, but experienced coordinators know a plan is extremely valuable. SNOOPS Elm Street Manager Sue Moyer says it should be one of your first tasks.

“Project identification is easy if you have a strategic plan,” she said. “A plan prioritizes goals and objectives and identifies the steps necessary to reach those goals.”

Moyer, who has over fourteen years of experience working with grass-root organizations, also said a strategic plan enables you to act quickly when opportunities for funding arise because you already have projects identified.

She encourages coordinators to make the planning process as inclusive as possible. “Schedule meetings at different days and times to accommodate participants’ schedules.”

Research strategic planning at your local library or google *best rated strategic planning books* online to find resources that will help prepare you for that first planning meeting. (Amazon.com offers slightly- used and reasonably- priced books, and look for future publications on strategic planning from the NRO at <http://www.nroerie.org/>.) To begin discussions, ask attendees the following questions:

Strategies and goals defined:

- *Strategies are overall, general methods you’ll use to accomplish your group’s mission or vision.*
- *Goals break down those strategies into individual, specific tasks you’ll need to accomplish.*

1. What is our mission statement? Always keep this in mind when selecting strategies and goals.
2. Where is our group now? Evaluate your neighborhood as it is right now. Be honest.
3. Where does our group want to be in the future? Spend time discussing what their visions and dreams are for the neighborhood.
4. How will you get there? Begin devising strategies and short-term and long-term goals to get from where you are today to where you want your neighborhood to be in the future.

Once your strategic planning process is completed, you will be able to select more focused projects. If safety is a major strategy, you may elect to hold an event that will connect your community with local police officers, or you may create a group to solicit funding for neighborhood security cameras. If improving infrastructure is a major strategy, spring clean-up drives, mini-grant façade projects, or securing funding for sidewalks may be some of the projects you select. But remember, begin with a few attainable goals.

“Projects that cost nothing or very little but make a big impact—like neighborhood cleanups, beautification or painting projects—are good ways for new organizations to experience early success and raise visibility,” Moyer said. “Over the years, I’ve learned that not everyone is interested in the same thing, so it is important to offer a variety of ways to participate and to have a variety of projects to choose from. Overall citizen participation will grow as a result.”

Moyer believes neighborhood projects have value beyond the actual outcome. “They build relationships between neighbors and build community,” she said. “They bind people together.”

Maintaining your momentum will require much work, but planning, leading, evaluating, and identifying worthwhile projects will help. Then allowing and encouraging members to participate in those projects will give them a sense of community and keep them coming back for more.

*One way to keep momentum going is to have constantly greater goals. -
Michael Korda*

Section III: Tips for the Experts

What is a CDC?

A Community Development Corporation (CDC) is an organization that is designed to improve the quality of life of a specific geographic location. It encompasses the development of all facets of the community including but not limited to housing, economic development, employment, health, and safety.

Becoming a CDC involves the legal process of incorporation. Interested neighborhood associations must be in a position and able to apply for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.

CDC activities can include:

- Providing affordable housing such as purchasing or renovating properties.
- Completing economic development projects such as developing real estate, attracting businesses, performing job training, or creating summer work programs.
- Providing social services such as shelters, substance abuse programs, or case work.
- Building capacity and organizing an area to attract the attention of funding institutions.
- Completing area projects such as cleanup or beautification projects, demolishing abandoned buildings, or adding public art to an area.
- Branding a neighborhood with new logos, signature events, etc.

While your organization may already be completing some of these activities, you should consult stakeholders and conduct meetings or forums to discuss obtaining CDC status for larger projects. It is a lengthy procedure and, after careful consideration, neighborhood organizations often find partnering with an established 501(c)(3) to be a better fit.

If you feel becoming a CDC is the next step for your organization, you should contact a local attorney for legal advice.

To read more about incorporating as a nonprofit, google <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Application-Process> about the application process and [http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements-Section-501\(c\)\(3\)-Organizations](http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements-Section-501(c)(3)-Organizations) for information on exemption requirements.

What is a CBDO?

A Community Based Development Organization (CBDO) is similar to a CDC. It is a corporation organized under state or local law to engage in community development activities. It represents

an identified geographical area, and its primary purpose is addressing critical problems in the area on an on-going basis. It improves the physical, economic, and social environment of the area giving particular attention to low-and-moderate income individuals or families. CBDOs are governed by a community-based board and typically operate in distressed areas that have limited capital.

The steps to create a CBDO are similar to those required to create a CDC or a neighborhood organization:

1. Identify and focus on a specific area of concern.
2. Assemble a core group of individuals knowledgeable about that concern.
3. Market your group to the community.
4. Identify all of the stakeholders.
5. Conduct a general meeting and invite others to join your group.
6. Create working committees to employ the general skills of your members.
7. Learn how to work together.
8. Have the core group develop an organization plan.
9. Present that plan to the general membership.
10. Organize formally and legally.

Like the CDC, creating a CBDO requires much thought and research. While your neighborhood organization may have completed many of the steps listed above, you may not be in a position to complete step number ten, apply for incorporation. Additionally, you may not have the capacity to take on the risky development projects that CBDOs do. If not, you can look to partner with a CBDO or other 501(c)(3) which completes similar projects.

Some CBDOs are eligible for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program for neighborhood revitalization or community development projects. However funding is competitive and many requirements must be met in order for the CBDO to be eligible. You can read more about this benefit in the HUD Code of Federal Regulations at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2002-title24-vol3/xml/CFR-2002-title24-vol3-sec570-204.xml>.

Neighborhood groups that are interested in becoming a CBDO should also consult an attorney for legal advice. To read more about incorporating as a nonprofit, google <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Application-Process> about the application process and [http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements-Section-501\(c\)\(3\)-Organizations](http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exemption-Requirements-Section-501(c)(3)-Organizations) for information on exemption requirements.

Applying for grants

Once established, your group may find it necessary to seek funding from outside sources for certain projects. There are various grant opportunities with various levels of competition that will be available to you. Applying for these grants could be time consuming.

The complexity of the grant application may help determine if you should apply or not. Some applications will take a few hours to complete, and some will take months. If you have funding available to you, hiring a grant writer to tackle the complicated, competitive grants might be worth the money. However grant writers can be expensive, and most neighborhood groups do not have the resources to pay for them. So partnering with an agency whose employees have experience grant writing may be your best option for those large grants.

Smaller, less competitive grants may be more appealing to you. Yet even with these grants, it is wise to seek help from someone who has experience. Ask your constituents if they have grant writing experience and would be willing to help. Or, when you become aware of a potential grant, contact the funding source and ask them if a sample of a past awarded grant is available. If none is available, ask for a contact name of a past recipient who they feel may share information with you.

Other community neighborhood associations may also be willing to share their information. However be aware that most grants are competitive. Some agencies or groups may not be so willing to share a copy of an awarded grant.

*Grant-writing tip:
Grant writing is tough business. Don't be discouraged if you do not receive an award. Use it as a learning experience. Ask the funding source for a debriefing. A debriefing will give you detailed information on why you did not receive the grant. It is valuable information for future grant applications.*

The NRO has devised a *Grant Writer's Handbook* for your perusal. The publication contains general tips and guidelines and will help you with your grant writing experience. You can find a copy of the handbook at <http://www.nroerie.org/website/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Grant-Writers-Handbook-w-NRO-Letterhead-1-1.28.15.pdf>.

Other tips

1. Marketing your group. – Marketing is telling your neighborhood's story to your neighbors and the broader community.

There are many marketing mediums available today. Finding the most effective one for your organization is important. Posting messages on Facebook won't reach some people, and distributing newsletters won't reach others. You will have to use various marketing methods to reach all stakeholders and community members.

Be versatile. Pass out flyers and tweet messages regarding upcoming events. Investigate what works best. Ask your members how they communicate with others. Some may have the skills you'll need to market your neighborhood through different mediums. Are they writers? Bloggers?

Graphic designers? Do they tweet often? Have a WordPress website? Post daily on Facebook? Or do they prefer communicating strictly face-to-face?

Consider the interest of the group as a whole, and then cash in on their individual passions through your marketing plan. Consider:

- Creating a neighborhood newsletter.
- Printing flyers for upcoming events.
- Creating a Facebook account and posting regularly.
- Blogging on a reputable forum.
- Creating a Twitter account for quick notices.
- Developing a neighborhood website through WordPress or other platforms
- Creating an email contact list for sending messages.
- Soliciting funds or resources from neighboring businesses to host community events.
- Creating a telephone list for texting emergency messages.
- Building relationships with local media for press releases.

Match your members' skills with one of these tasks, and your marketing efforts have begun. Further your efforts by tasking one of your current committees with additional marketing or, if warranted, create a committee entirely dedicated to selling your organization.

2. Gaining credibility for new coordinators. – One of the first challenges a new coordinator may have to overcome is their own credibility.

“The biggest obstacle for me as a paid employee was to gain the trust of residents. In the beginning, they saw me as an outsider coming into their neighborhood telling them what to do and how to do it,” SNOOPS Elm Street Manager Sue Moyer said. “It takes about two years to build good relationships with residents and to be accepted as someone there to help.”

Moyer advises coordinators to listen, be non-judgmental, and treat everyone the same. She says don't make promises you can't keep, let your group know you are not afraid of hard work or getting your hands dirty, and always thank people.

“Publically acknowledge them for their work and effort,” she said. “I write a lot of thank-you notes. They aren't elaborate or long—just a quick acknowledgment expressing appreciation.”

Jeremy Bloeser, executive director of Erie's Bayfront East Side Taskforce (BEST), agreed credibility can be an initial obstacle. Bloeser has four years of neighborhood revitalization experience.

“Since I am not a resident of the neighborhood, I believe making myself credible and on the side of the residents was at first a challenge,” he said. “I had to allow my actions to speak louder than

my words. Over time, I have grown to become accepted and allowed to represent the residents and act in their best interest.”

3. Other miscellaneous tips for beginning your journey. – Below are additional tips from Erie area neighborhood association and watch representatives:

- **Start small.** Make sure those initial projects are successful. *Jeremy Bloeser*
- **If it’s not broke, don’t fix it.** Don’t over analyze. If meetings are running smoothly and your organization is progressing nicely, maintain your current format. *John Villa*
- **Celebrate victories.** Break out the champagne when a property that has been blighted for ten years finally comes down. *Sue Moyer*
- **Keep your paperwork in order.** Funding demands accountability. Keep your funders informed. *Sue Moyer*
- **Follow through on all projects regardless of size.** You can't change your neighborhood overnight, but if you can show you are effective and follow through, more success will be had in the future. *Jeremy Bloeser*
- **Persevere.** Never give up; just keep moving forward. *John Villa*

Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible. – St Francis of Assisi

Resources:

<http://www.brainyquote.com>
<http://www.richmondgov.com/PlanningAndDevelopmentReview/documents/RichmondsGuideNeighborhoodOrganization.pdf>
<http://www.inrc.org/files/file/inrc-book-2012update-web.pdf>
http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/How_To_Start_Association
http://www.planningtoolexchange.org/sites/default/files/sources/asset_mapping_handbook.pdf
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/patrickhull/2013/01/10/answer-4-questions-to-get-a-great-mission-statement/>
<http://managementhelp.org/boards/index.htm>
<http://managementhelp.org/boards/committees.htm>
<http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startingacommittee/SelectingaCommitteeChair/tabid/263/Default.aspx>
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/strategic-planning-kit-for-dummies-cheat-sheet.html>
<http://www.merriam-webster.com>
<http://www.useful-community-development.org/start-a-community-development-corporation.html>

Neighborhood Organizing Workshops Participant's Manual by Lorraine Anderson, Marjorie Ryan, John Wallace, and Chris Weiss

Safe Home Safe Neighborhoods Stopping Crime Where You Live by Stephanie Mann with M. C. Blake

Ways to a Safer World: Everyday Actions You Can Take to Prevent Violence in Neighborhoods, Schools and Communities by Patricia Occhiuzzo Giggans and Barrie Levy

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement by John M. Bryson

Appendices

Sample Asset Gathering List – Page 32

Sample Mission Statement – Page 33

Sample Stakeholder’s Survey – Page 34

Sample Bylaws – Page 36

Asset Gathering List
List Your Neighborhood Assets Below

Associations

Community Organizations (list associations)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Social and Civic Clubs

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Institutions

Faith-based Organizations and Schools

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Other Institutions (businesses, hospitals, non-profits, governments)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Land

(Parks, vacant lots, gardens, parking lots, other open spaces)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

MISSION STATEMENT

The XXXXXXXX Neighborhood Watch/ Group/Association has been organized to promote the education of residents and businesses in the areas of crime prevention and quality of life and to assist in the safeguarding of the community, its residents, and their properties through voluntary activities including public information, problem solutions, and addressing community problems and concerns.

**Community Stakeholder's Survey
Organization and Leadership**

Organization Name: _____

1. Do you feel your organization has made your neighborhood a better place to live?

- a) Yes
- b) Somewhat
- c) No, not at all

2. Do you feel your organization has accomplished some of their stated goals?

- a) Yes
- b) Somewhat
- c) No, not at all

3. Do you feel welcome in this organization and comfortable at meetings?

- a) Yes always
- b) Sometimes
- c) No, not at all

4. Are meetings productive?

- a) Yes always
- b) Sometimes
- c) No, not at all

5. Have you been invited to participate or volunteer for special projects?

- a) Yes
- b) A few times
- c) Never

6. Do you feel you are contributing to the organization in any manner?

- a) Yes
- b) Somewhat
- c) No, not at all

7. Would you recommend this organization to your neighbors?

- a) Yes
- b) Somewhat
- c) No, not at all

8. How could this organization better serve the neighborhood? _____

9. Would you be interested in volunteering your skills to this organization and, if so, in what manner? _____

Leader name: _____

1. Is your leader successfully communicating the ideas he or she wants to incorporate?

- a) Yes always
- b) Frequently
- c) Sometimes
- d) No, not at all

2. What do you like the most about your leader?

- a) Promptness
- b) Quick decision making
- c) Helping others
- d) Sincerity
- e) Motivational qualities
- f) All of the above

3. Is your leader open to feedback to improve his/her interaction with the team members?

- a) Yes always
- b) Frequently
- c) Sometimes
- d) Not at all

4. Is your leader a good listener, fair and impartial?

- a) Yes always
- b) Frequently
- c) Sometimes
- d) Not at all

6. Is your leader positive and does he or she make you feel welcome?

- a) Yes always
- b) Frequently
- c) Sometimes
- d) Not at all

If you would like to be contacted to volunteer your services, please leave your name and a telephone number where you can be reached.

Thank you for your feedback. Your opinion is valuable to our organization and our leaders.

BYLAWS
OF
NAME OF GROUP/ASSOCIATION
Erie PA

ARTICLE I

SECTION 1. PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The location of the XXXXXXXXXXXX Neighborhood Watch /Association/Group shall be fixed by the group's membership. The secretary of this group shall keep the original or a copy of these bylaws, as amended to date, at the principal executive office of the group.

ARTICLE II; NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

SECTION 1. PLACE OF MEETINGS

All meetings of the group shall be held at XXXXXXXXXXXX or at such other place as may be determined by the group.

SECTION 2. ANNUAL MEETINGS

At least an annual meeting of the group shall be held each year in January at which time the group shall elect a President, Secretary and Financial Officer and transact any other proper business.

SECTION 3. SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings of the group may be called by the Officers of the group

SECTION 4. NOTICES OF MEETINGS

Notices of meetings, annual or monthly, shall be given in writing, personally, first class mail or other means of written communication to the neighborhood residents.

Such notice shall state the place, date, and hour of the meeting and (1) in the case of a special meeting, the general nature of the business to be transacted, and that no other business may be transacted, or (2) in the case of an annual meeting, those matters which the President at the time of the mailing of the notice, intends to present for action by the group.

SECTION 5: SPEICAL NOTICE AND WAIVER OF NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

Except as provided below, any group approval at a meeting, with respect to the following proposals, shall be valid only if the general nature of the proposal so approved was stated in the meeting agenda:

- (a) Approval of a contract
- (b) Amendment of the Bylaws.
- (c) Approval of the principal terms of a reorganization;
- (d) Election to voluntarily wind up and dissolve the corporation;
- (e) Approval of a plan of distribution of shares as part of the winding up of the corporation.

Approval of the above proposals at a meeting shall be valid with or without such notice, if it is by the unanimous approval of those entitled to vote at the meeting.

Proposed action has been filed with the secretary of the corporation, but may not be revoked thereafter. Such revocation is effective upon its receipt by the secretary of the corporation.

SECTION 6: QUORUM AND SHAREHOLDER ACTION

A majority of the elected officials, represented in person or by proxy, shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the group. If a quorum is present, the affirmative vote of the majority of officers represented at the meeting and entitled to vote on any matter.

Every officer entitled to vote shall be entitled to one vote.

At each election of officers the group shall not be entitled to cumulate votes unless the candidates' names have been placed in nomination before the commencement of the voting and the group has given notice at the meeting and before the voting has begun, of his or her intention to cumulate votes. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected.

ARTICLE III: DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. NUMBER

The authorized number of officers shall be 3.

SECTION 2. ELECTION AND TENURE OF OFFICE

The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the group and hold office until the next annual meeting and until their successors have been elected and qualified.

SECTION 3. VACANCIES

A vacancy of the officers shall exist in the case of death, resignation, or removal of any officer. The officers may declare vacant the office of an officer who has been declared of unsound mind by an order of court or who has been convicted of a felony.

Except for a vacancy created by the removal of a director, vacancies on the board of directors may be filled by approval of the group. Vacancies occurring by reason of the removal of officers may be filled only by approval of the group.

Any officer may resign effective upon giving written notice to the President. If the resignation is effective at a later time, a successor may be elected to take office when the resignation becomes effective

SECTION 4. REMOVAL

Any or all of the officers may be removed without cause if such removal is approved by a majority of the attending group entitled to vote

SECTION 5. PLACE OF MEETINGS

Meetings of the officers shall be held at any place, within or without the state, which has been designated in the notice of the meeting or, if not stated in the notice or if there is no notice, at the principal executive office of the group or as may be designated from time to time by resolution of the officers. Meetings of the board may be held through use of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, as long as all officers participating in the meeting can hear one another.

SECTION 6. QUORUM AND BOARD ACTION

A quorum for all meetings of the board of directors shall consist of 2 of the authorized number of officers until changed by amendment to this article of these bylaws.

Every act or decision done or made by a majority of the officers present at a meeting duly held at which a quorum is present is the act of the board, subject to the provisions of the groups code. A meeting at which a quorum is initially present may continue to transact business notwithstanding the withdrawal of officers, if any action taken is approved by at least a majority of the required quorum for such meeting. A majority of the directors present at a meeting may adjourn any meeting to another time and place, whether or not a quorum is present at the meeting.

SECTION 7: ACTION WITHOUT MEETING

Any action required or permitted to be taken by the officers may be taken without a meeting, if all members of the board shall individually or collectively consent in writing to such action. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the board. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote of the directors.

SECTION 8: COMPENSATION

No salary shall be paid to the officers.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

SECTION 1. OFFICERS

The officers of the group shall be a president, a secretary, and a treasurer who shall be the chief financial officer of the group.

SECTION 2. ELECTION

All officers of the group shall be chosen by, and serve at the pleasure of the group.

SECTION 3. REMOVAL AND RESIGNATION

An officer may be removed at any time, either with or without cause, by the group. An officer may resign at any time upon written notice to the any such resignation shall take effect at the date of receipt of such notice or at any other time specified therein. The removal or resignation of an officer shall be without prejudice to the rights, if any, of the officer or the group under any contract of employment to which the officer is a party.

SECTION 4. PRESIDENT

The president shall be the chief executive officer and general manager of the group and shall, subject to the direction and control of the group, have general supervision, direction, and control of the business and affairs of the group. He or she shall preside at all meetings of the group and officers and be an exofficio member of all the standing committees, including the executive committee, if any, and shall have the general powers and duties of management usually vested in the office of president of a group and shall have such other powers and duties as may from time to time be prescribed by these bylaws.

SECTION 5. SECRETARY

The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal executive office of the group, a book of minutes of all meetings. The minutes shall state the time and place of holding of all meetings; whether

regular or special, and if special, how called or authorized; the notice thereof given or the waivers of notice received; the names of those present at officials meetings; the number of residents present at meetings; and an account of the proceedings thereof.

The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal executive office of the group showing the names of the members and their addresses.

The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal executive office of the corporation, the original or a copy of the bylaws of the corporation, as amended or otherwise altered to date, certified by him or her.

The secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the group and officers required to be given by law or by the provisions of these bylaws.

In the absence or disability of the secretary, any member of the group may take meeting minutes.

SECTION 6. TREASURER

The treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the group and shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct books and records of accounts of the group and business transactions of the group.

The treasurer shall deposit monies in the name and to the credit of the group with such depositories as may be designated by the officers. He or she shall disburse the funds of the group in payment of the just demands against the group as authorized by the officers; shall render to the president and all officers, whenever they request it, an account of all his or her transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the group; and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the bylaws.

In the absence or disability of the treasurer, the Secretary, shall perform all the duties of the treasurer and, when so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the treasurer

SECTION 7: COMPENSATION

The officers of this corporation shall receive no compensation for their services.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

SECTION 1

The officers may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the authorized number of officers, designate one or more committees. Any such committee, to the extent provided in the resolution of the board, shall have all the authority of the board, except with respect to:

- (a) The approval of any action for which the approval of the group.
- (b) The filling of vacancies of the officers or in any committee.
- (c) The amendment or repeal of bylaws or the adoption of new bylaws.
- (d) The amendment or repeal of any resolution of the officers which by its express terms is not so amendable or repealable.
- (e) The appointment of other committees of the board or members thereof.

ARTICLE VI: GROUP RECORDS AND REPORTS

SECTION 1. INSPECTION BY THE GROUP

The share register shall be open to inspection and copying by any group members at any time during usual meeting hours upon written demand on the group, the accounting books and records of the group and the minutes of proceedings of the group and the officers and committees of the board shall be open to inspection.

SECTION 2. INSPECTION BY OFFICERS

Every officer shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect and copy all books, records, and documents of every kind and to inspect the physical properties of the group. Such inspection by an officer may be made in person or by agent or attorney. The right of inspection includes the right to copy and make extracts.

SECTION 3. RIGHT TO INSPECT WRITTEN RECORDS

If any record subject to inspection pursuant to this chapter is not maintained in written form, a request for inspection is not complied with unless and until the officers at its expense makes such record available in written form.

SECTION 4. CONTRACTS, ETC.

The officers, except as otherwise provided by the bylaws, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name and on behalf of the group. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized by the officers, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the corporation by any contract, or to pledge its credit, or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

ARTICLE VII: INDEMNIFICATION AND INSURANCE OF CORPORATE AGENTS

SECTION 1. INDEMNIFICATION

The officers of the group shall be indemnified by the group to the fullest extent not prohibited by the group's code.

SECTION 2. INSURANCE

The officers shall have the power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any agent (as defined in the corporations code against any liability asserted against or incurred by the agent in such capacity or arising out of the agent's status as such, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify the agent against such liability under the provisions of the corporations code.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

SECTION 1. SHAREHOLDERS

Bylaws may be adopted, amended or repealed by the affirmative vote or by the written consent of holders of a majority of the group entitled to vote. However, a bylaw amendment which reduces the fixed number of directors to a number less than three shall not be effective if the votes cast against the amendment or the shares not consenting to its adoption are equal to more than 16 2/3 percent of the outstanding shares entitled to vote.

SECTION 2. DIRECTORS

Subject to the right of the group to adopt, amend or repeal bylaws, the officers may adopt, amend or repeal any bylaw, except that a bylaw amendment changing the authorized number of officers may be adopted by the officers only if prior to the issuance of rules.

CERTIFICATE:

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Bylaws of the corporation named in the title thereto and that such Bylaws were duly adopted by the board of directors of the corporation on the date set forth below.

Date: [DATE]

President: _____

Secretary: _____

Treasure: _____