

# Neighborhood Organization Handbook



**Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission**

**2009**

# Neighborhood Organization Handbook

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This document is provided by the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission to assist in the creation and development of neighborhood organizations. It is available free of charge from the MPC Library, located on the fourth floor of the City County Building at 400 Main Street, or online at [www.knoxmpc.org](http://www.knoxmpc.org).

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**Acknowledgements**

Neighborhood Resource Guide 2004 - Center for Neighborhood Development

City of Knoxville Office of Neighborhoods

Knox County Office of Neighborhoods and Codes Enforcement

**Photos courtesy of**

David Ratledge, Island Home Park Neighborhood Association

Rob Howard, Fourth and Gill Neighborhood Association

Jon Gustin, Knox County

# What is a Neighborhood Organization and why do we need one?

A neighborhood organization is a group of neighborhood residents who come together to maintain or improve the standard of living in their community. These organizations form because residents share a common vision about situations in their neighborhood, and they feel some kind of organized effort is required to realize that vision. Their concerns can be as basic as keeping the neighborhood clean, or as complex as developing new housing opportunities. The purpose of the organization is decided by the members and can continually evolve into whatever they wish it to be.

There is usually some particular reason that neighborhood residents first create a new organization. Often, a neighborhood organization will form around one or more of the following concepts:

- Protection of Investments
- Protection of Social Values
- Interaction with Government
- Interaction with Business
- Promotion of Social Activities

These concepts all have distinct purposes, but they are also often very much interrelated.

## Protection of Investments

Residents, businesses and government all have a role to play in the well-being of a neighborhood. Each has made investments in the community, and to thrive and do well, the neighborhood needs each to be an active community participant.

Purchasing a home is one of the largest investments most people will ever make. Most homeowners try to protect that investment by maintaining their home and property. When a neighborhood starts to decline, however, many homeowners realize that the value of their own home will also decline. Many people become active in neighborhood organizations to address problems that lower neighborhood property values and to encourage other residents to keep their own properties in good condition.

Government also invests tax dollars in neighborhoods in the form of streets, sidewalks, parks, community centers, and other facilities used by residents. These things are beneficial assets to a community, and neighborhood groups can work with government to help maintain them. Some community groups even work with government to create new public investment in their neighborhoods.



*The Fourth and Gill Neighborhood Association's persistence has resulted in the restoration of the majority of the neighborhood's homes and in substantial increases in property values.*

Private commercial investments are another aspect of a stable, healthy neighborhood. Businesses provide jobs for residents and make shopping more convenient. Neighborhoods can work with merchants, other business owners, and banks to encourage current business to stay in the neighborhood, and to persuade new business to move into the area. For neighborhoods that do not currently have convenient access to businesses such as grocery stores or other retail establishments, active community groups can be especially beneficial.

Residents, businesses and government all make investments in neighborhoods, and neighborhood resident groups can be very effective in keeping these investments strong to maintain a vibrant, livable community.

### **Protection of Social Values**

The social values of a neighborhood are the backbone of its ability to survive. When neighbors have a similar interest in protecting the quality of life in their neighborhood, they can work together to make their community a place where residents feel comfortable and safe.

Difficulties often arise when some residents choose to behave in ways that are harmful to the well-being of the neighborhood. This might be when safety issues arise, or when some residents do not understand the benefit of keeping their property clean and in good repair. When faced with



Photo courtesy of David Rattledge

*Island Home Park  
Neighborhood Association  
hosts an Easter egg hunt for  
neighborhood children.*

situations like these, other neighborhood residents can choose one of two courses of action. Either they can ignore the problem and deal with the consequences, or they can address the situation and make an effort to take control of it.

If residents choose to ignore the situation, serious decline in the community could occur and cause many residents simply to give up and move away to other areas. Those residents who are unable to move away are then left behind to face worsening difficulties and have fewer resources to turn things around. As a result, ignoring neighborhood problems can cause serious decline and increase the amount of work necessary to restabilize the area at some later time.

The alternative is for neighborhood residents to organize and try to reach out to those who are causing the troubles. By educating residents on the benefits of maintaining or improving the current quality of life and helping one another to pursue that goal, neighborhood organizations can help change their community for the better.

In addition, an active neighborhood group can work with residents and local government to enforce the laws relating to conditions in the neighborhood. For example, to discourage criminal activity in the area, a neighborhood group can work with the police department to increase law enforcement and police presence. The neighborhood may also form a crime watch and conduct safety patrols, or work with local codes enforcement officials to encourage absentee landlords to keep houses in good repair.

Neighborhood organizations can have the positive benefit of defining what they want their neighborhood to be like and then working together to achieve that vision. The result is a safer, cleaner neighborhood which is more likely to thrive and continue to improve.

### **Interaction with Government**

Neighborhoods interact with government all the time, even when it is not in an organized way. Federal, state and local governments all provide services for neighborhoods, and everything from collecting trash to running schools to building new roads can affect a neighborhood's relationship with government.



*Old North Knoxville, Inc. has worked to clean and restore First Creek.*

Many community organizations form when government does or plans to do something that residents oppose. Realizing that government is more likely to listen to an organized group than to a solitary individual, concerned residents come together to share their feelings and develop a response to the intended government action.

Alternatively, other neighborhood organizations are created because residents want to encourage government to do something for their neighborhood. For instance, a group of residents may decide that they want a park or community center in their neighborhood. If a single resident on his or her own tried to convince government officials to take on a new project of this size, he or she would probably have a very limited success. When a neighborhood group forms to develop and propose a new idea, however, government is usually more responsive, because the plan is often better prepared, and because government officials can see that there is broad neighborhood support for the concept.

Neighborhood organizations can work with government agencies to develop their ideas, or they can contact their member of City Council or County Commission to discuss options and plans.

Through the power of numbers, neighborhood groups can be a very effective way for residents to either encourage or oppose government activities that affect their community.



*Lonsdale United for Change helped pioneer the infill housing zoning overlay. They felt that new homes in the neighborhood should complement Lonsdale's bungalows and Victorian cottages. The neighborhood collaborated with MPC and the City's Community Development Department and the East Tennessee Design Center staff in adopting Infill Housing Guidelines. Neighbors often tour Lonsdale to make sure that developers are following the guidelines.*

## Interaction with Business

Communities are greatly affected by businesses located in or near the neighborhood. Businesses can provide needed jobs and services to neighborhoods and their residents. As mentioned earlier, neighborhood groups can work with merchants, business owners, and banks to encourage current business to stay in the neighborhood and persuade new business to move into the area.

Neighborhood groups sometimes form when businesses disrupt life in the community. When a business causes problems such as pollution, traffic congestion, or noise, neighborhood groups can meet with business owners and with government to develop solutions to those problems. Some neighborhood groups even send representatives to local merchant association meetings so neighborhood concerns will be heard and understood by business leaders.

A strong neighborhood organization provides a good means to work with businesses in the community to meet the needs of both the residents and the businesses.

## Promotion of Social Activities

Some residents form neighborhood organizations as a way to meet their neighbors and enjoy social activities. The first step to having a strong neighborhood is to know your neighbors, so these types of organizations are very valuable. These groups will often plan activities for all ages and host events such as potluck suppers, community picnics and holiday parties.



*The Fourth and Gill Neighborhood Association's Halloween party gives neighbors a chance to socialize and get to know each other better.*

Community social groups sometimes evolve into active neighborhood organizations. As neighbors become friends, they speak openly about their concerns for the community, and they organize around their ideas for neighborhood improvements.



Photos courtesy of Rob Howard

For whichever reason a neighborhood organization may form, the initial neighborhood gathering will often cause residents to realize that they have in common many additional hopes and concerns about other neighborhood issues, and the group will continue to work together even after the first project is completed. Whether a neighborhood group is formed for the serious business of attacking problems in the neighborhood or simply as a means of getting neighbors together for some fun, the positive benefits can lead to a stronger, more vibrant and livable community.

## **How do we start a neighborhood organization?**

To form an effective neighborhood organization, it is a good idea to create a specific, organized structure that will help the group focus its efforts. While it is possible for a neighborhood organization to operate in a very formal way, many groups have found it useful to set up a small, business-like arrangement to guide members in their efforts for their neighborhood.

Once a group of residents decides that something needs to be done in their neighborhood, they begin meeting together to set priorities and objectives and how to meet them. If they decide to turn the group into an ongoing organization, the original group will usually begin functioning as a steering committee.

A steering committee is the core group which sets the agenda or establishes a direction for a company or organization. The steering committee builds a foundation for the new neighborhood group, recruits new members and assists them in deciding what they want to achieve. The steering committee should specify the boundaries of the neighborhood to be served, clearly establish the purpose of the neighborhood organization, and define the rules for how the group's activities will be carried out. They can do this by applying for a charter and by creating bylaws describing how the group will function.

### **Setting Boundaries**

One of the first things a neighborhood organization should do is define the boundaries of their neighborhood. The specific area to be included will affect the organization and mission of the neighborhood group. The residents creating the organization may decide to represent only a portion of a large area, or they may include a neighborhood as a whole. Often, boundaries can be set by examining the natural borders of an area. Major streets, ridges, rivers or other landmarks might be used to define boundaries. These boundaries will then make it easier for people to recognize what area the organization represents.

Another factor that should be considered when setting boundaries is the size and population of the area to be represented. If the area selected is too large, the organization may not be able to serve the needs of all the residents. When defining the neighborhood, the steering committee should also determine if there are any other active groups within the zone that they intend to represent. If there are, the committee should work with the other organization to decide if they should combine their efforts, or if a new organization is needed. A new organization should avoid overlapping too closely with the efforts of another group in order to avoid causing conflict by competing for members and resources.

### **Charters**

After a steering committee has been formed and geographical boundaries have been identified, many organizations choose to apply for Articles of Incorporation, or a Charter. A Charter is an official State document that identifies an organization as a corporation. Neighborhood organizations that come together for a singular issue may not need to have a Charter. However, larger organizations that collect dues may need one.

There are financial and legal reasons for obtaining a charter. If an organization is a chartered corporation, individual members of the group cannot be held financially responsible for legal claims against the corporation unless those claims stem from gross negligence or fraud by members. This allows members of a neighborhood group to do the honest work of a not-for-profit organization without the fear of being personally subject to lawsuit related to the operation of the organization.

A copy of a State of Tennessee Charter for a nonprofit corporation is available in Appendix A. This is Form 4418 from the Secretary of State, with whom the charter must be filed. There is a \$100.00 filing fee to register a charter and a \$20.00 yearly fee to maintain a charter. For more information, call the office of the Secretary of State at 615-741-2286 or go online at [www.state.tn.us/sos/](http://www.state.tn.us/sos/) and look under Business Services, Corporations. Further instructions for Form 4418 are also provided in Appendix A.

If your neighborhood organization collects donations outside of dues from residents, your organization may need to register with the Division of Charitable Solicitations and Gaming as a charitable organization. Contact them at 615-741-2555 or online at [www.tn.gov/sos/charity](http://www.tn.gov/sos/charity).

## **Bylaws**

In addition to a charter, neighborhood organizations should establish a set of bylaws, which are the specific rules by which the organization will run. They cover such things as membership in the organization, elections, duties of officers, how meetings will be held, and how the organization's money will be handled.

Implementing a set of bylaws is the best way to avoid confusion about how an organization will be run. Since these rules will be established and agreed upon by the members, they can help prevent internal disputes. The bylaws should be made available to all members, so they will know which procedures are appropriate in situations that may arise.

Many groups use an existing organization's bylaws as an example of how to set up their own rules, adapting them to fit their own specific needs and circumstances. Sample sets of bylaws are provided in Appendix B and C.

## **Membership**

Every organization will have its own rules about who is eligible for membership. Some groups will restrict membership to those living in their neighborhood. Others will encourage businesses and community leaders to join their neighborhood organization. The group's stated purpose will probably help to determine who should be eligible for membership.

The organization must also decide if and when annual dues will be required. Many groups require members to pay dues before they can vote on neighborhood issues. Some groups will limit the time during which residents can become voting members. Other groups allow members to join at any time.

All of the requirements the group decides upon should be written down and included in the bylaws. This will make them known to the membership, avoid confusion and allow quick and easy resolution to disputes.

## **Nominations and Elections**

The procedure for holding the organization's nominations and election of officers should also be clearly defined. Everyone should understand and follow these procedures to avoid any irregularities that could become a point of contention and reduce the organization's effectiveness. After the group agrees on the nomination and election procedures, they should include them in the bylaws so all members will have access to them.

## **Officers**

There are different possibilities for the structure of the administration of a community group, with different numbers of officers, and different duties for each. Organizations usually have officers such as president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. One possible arrangement of officers, with suggested duties listed for each, is included as part of the Sample Bylaws, which appear in Appendix C. There are many different possible leadership structures, and each organization should determine which one works best for its own membership and purpose. Some groups may have more positions than are suggested here, while others will have fewer. The type of leadership structure employed should be included in the organization's bylaws so all members will be aware of it.

The officers of a neighborhood group will usually form an Executive Committee, which serves to organize the group and its work, prepare an annual budget, and plan its meetings and agendas.

In addition to having officers, if an organization is large enough, various tasks and projects can be assigned to committees. In this way, a larger group can break up into smaller sections, enabling the whole organization to work toward several goals at the same time. Typically, the chairpersons of the different committees will also serve on the executive committee along with the organization's officers. This allows the projects of each to be coordinated with the tasks and goals of the whole group. Other duties of a chairperson will usually include calling and presiding over committee meetings; appointing a member to keep minutes; preparing a written plan to accomplish the specific goals of the committee; presenting the plan orally to the whole organization and submitting the written version to the secretary for filing; presenting periodic progress reports at organizational meetings; and carrying out the committee's charged duties.

## **Communications**

A plan for communicating with current and potential members is vitally important for any organization. If members do not know what the group is doing and when it is being done, they will quickly become frustrated and lose interest. If, however, members are kept informed, they will feel connected to the group and are more likely to participate in the activities. Good communication also lets potential members know when community events will take place, because those events might encourage a resident to join the neighborhood organization.

The appropriate methods to communicate with group members and neighborhood residents will depend on the needs and abilities of the organization. Here are a few examples of communication tools used by neighborhood organizations:

**Newsletter** – This can be an effective way to distribute a great deal of information to many people. Newsletters can be as simple or sophisticated as a group wants, and can either be hand-delivered or mailed.

**Block Captains** – This method uses a resident from each block in the neighborhood to distribute information. The block captain can either go door-to-door or call other residents from the block.

**Phone Tree** – This method is both simple and efficient. The person designated to head the phone tree calls the residents on his or her predetermined list, and those people call the residents on their lists. The phone tree can be as large or small as needed to reach everyone in the group.

**Community Bulletin Board** – A bulletin board can be placed indoors and outdoors, but it should be located in a place where many residents will see it. These boards are an excellent way to announce meetings or community events.

**The Internet** – The newest and possibly most effective resource for neighborhood groups to communicate with their members, the neighborhood and even the general public is the Internet. Web pages can be an economical way to announce community news, display neighborhood history and publish newsletters among many other uses.

DiscoverET.org is a non-profit community network that can help neighborhood organizations by hosting web pages and assisting with web page design. They can also help with email services and email lists. Some examples of Knoxville neighborhood organization web sites include:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <a href="http://www.citypeople.org">www.citypeople.org</a>                 | <a href="http://www.ihpna.net">www.ihpna.net</a>                       |
| <a href="http://www.fourthandgill.org">www.fourthandgill.org</a>           | <a href="http://www.discoveret.org/olpna">www.discoveret.org/olpna</a> |
| <a href="http://www.parkridgecommunity.org">www.parkridgecommunity.org</a> | <a href="http://www.lonasdrive.org">www.lonasdrive.org</a>             |
| <a href="http://www.northhillsneighbor.org">www.northhillsneighbor.org</a> |  |

Email is another quick, easy and cost efficient way to communicate with lots of people at once, especially when using an electronic mailing list, such as Yahoo! Group. These lists are an automated way to quickly and easily send messages to list members.

However, the Internet and email should not be your organizations only means of communication since some people still do not have easy access to the Internet.

**News Release** - If your organization is hosting an event or has other news they would like to announce through the media, a news release is an effective tool. Instead of just calling media



*The Fourth & Gill neighborhood produces a quarterly newsletter.*

sources with an idea, a news release provides written information and specific contacts to help them spread your message. A sample news release is included in Appendix G.

Use communications to your advantage. Develop a consistent strategy to keep members and neighborhood residents abreast of your group's activities and you will be well on your way to having a successful neighborhood organization.

## **Record Keeping**

Many neighborhood organizations work with limited resources. For them, a simple bookkeeping system to keep track of money spent and received works well. Organizations that plan to apply for non-profit status (such as 501(c) (3) status), or who plan projects of significant financial impact should consider consulting an accountant when setting up their bookkeeping system.

For an organization of any size, accurate record keeping is vitally important. Any member has the right to request information about how the organization's money is being spent. Always be detailed and specific when recording what money is being spent and for what purpose. At the time, this information may seem clear to those authorizing money to be spent, but when looking over records at a later date, it may not seem so obvious where the money went, if proper detail is not kept in the records. Good record keeping ensures that over time, all funds can be accounted for. This is a protection for the organization, the treasurer, and all those who have contributed funds to the organization. Following are some basic tips for good record keeping:

- Always write out a receipt with a duplicate copy for your records to account for all incoming money, even if it arrives in the mail, comes in the form of a check, or if the person making the contribution indicates that they have no need for a receipt;
- Always obtain a receipt for money spent by the organization;
- Develop a consistent filing system for financial records;
- Have all bank accounts require two signatures for the release of funds – this helps to avoid real or perceived inappropriate handling of money;
- Maintain an accurate check register including numbers of checks written, and the date, payee, amount and purpose of the expenditure;
- Balance the organization's bank statement every month; and
- Present a Treasurer's Report at every group meeting.

A sample Treasurer's Report is included in Appendix F.

## Solving Neighborhood Problems

When a community organization faces some sort of concern or problem, where to go for help to resolve issues can be a difficult question. This section includes general approaches to problem solving, as well as a description of various types of resources and assistance available through city or county government and other organizations whose primary focus is on neighborhoods. Knox County Neighborhoods 101 available through the Knox County Office of Neighborhoods or online at [www.knoxcounty.org](http://www.knoxcounty.org) lists some common issues that neighborhoods face, along with the phone numbers of resource agencies that can help with those issues.

### Problem Solving Approaches

**Define the problem.** Be specific. For instance, is there a need for more jobs or a need for a day care center, so that parents are able to take the jobs that are already available? Is the whole neighborhood in disarray, or does one lot need to be cleaned up and mowed? The more precisely you define the problem, the more likely you are to find an appropriate, workable solution.

If there is a problem with a definite location – an abandoned house or car, or a neglected park, for instance – determine the exact address, name and location. A major step in solving many neighborhood problems is determining the owner or responsible agency for a particular problem. An accurate description of the problem area will assist you in obtaining this information.

**Explore possible solutions.** Get a group together to brainstorm about how to fix the problem. Agree to list all possible solutions, no matter how far-fetched, and wait until the list is complete before discussing the practicality of each idea. Once all the suggestions have been listed, the group can carefully consider the feasibility of each and determine which suggestions are the most possible to achieve while still adequately solving the problem. For instance, resurfacing all the streets in your neighborhood might be what the group would like to see happen, but filling the one big pothole at a busy corner might be an acceptable solution.

**Look for help.** Knox County Neighborhoods 101 discusses general types of problems, along with the proper agency or department to call. Check to see if this publication includes a problem that is similar to the issue facing your neighborhood and call the department listed. You may end up calling several different departments or agencies, but this is a good way to start finding the help your neighborhood needs. For neighborhoods inside Knoxville, the city's web site, [www.cityofknoxville.org](http://www.cityofknoxville.org), may also provide some useful suggestions.

**Be concise.** When you speak with the person who handles such problems, he or she will want all the appropriate details. Keep in mind, however, that you may have to talk to several people



*Volunteers with Old North Knoxville, Inc. coordinated the installation of Mutt Mitt stations at the park to encourage residents to pick up after their pets.*

before you reach the person who is best able to help you. Describe your concern as briefly as possible until you have reached the person who will actually need all the details in order to help you. This will save time for everyone involved, especially you!

**Be prepared.** Once you have reached the person who can best assist you, be sure you have all the details right in front of you. The more organized and businesslike you can be the more seriously you will be taken. Explain what you wish to have done and ask for their opinion. They may have alternative solutions or information that your problem-solving group may not have considered. Find out what procedures are necessary to solve the problem. Ask how long this process should take, or when you should expect to see some action designed to solve the problem. Also, ask if there is anything else you should do, such as fill out a form, write a letter or go to a meeting. Offering assistance and support will demonstrate your desire to see the problem solved, and that you are willing to work cooperatively to achieve that solution.



Photo courtesy of Jon Gustin

*Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale and other elected officials talk one-on-one with citizens during Neighborhood Nights.*

Take notes on what you have discussed, and be sure to take down the name and phone number of the person you are speaking to. This will prepare you to follow up at a later date, if necessary, and will enable you to remind the person of any forgotten details of the previous conversation.

**Be polite.** Remember that the person on the other end of the line is most likely not the cause of your neighborhood's problem. He or she could, however, be the key to the solution. Most people want to help and are much more likely to do so for someone who is courteous and polite.

# **City of Knoxville Office of Neighborhoods**

The city of Knoxville's Office of Neighborhoods – operating within the Community Development Department – works with established neighborhood groups and with new or emerging organizations to help strengthen and improve neighborhoods that lie partly or entirely within city limits.

Their mission is to improve communication and foster accountability between and among neighborhoods and city departments; ensure timely and well-coordinated interdepartmental responses to neighborhood needs; and collaborate with neighborhoods to identify, understand and address issues of shared concern.

They help neighborhoods engage in citizen-led improvement initiatives based on assets and needs identified by the residents in each neighborhood. They also provide groups with leadership training and other organization tools to be more effective builders of livable communities.

## **Neighborhood Registration**

Neighborhood organizations in Knoxville including homeowner groups and neighborhood watches are encouraged to register with the Office of Neighborhoods.

Registering your organization ensures that your group will receive regular communications from the Office of Neighborhoods. Notices include a wide range of topics, such as zoning questions, the neighborhood small grants program, classes and seminars offered by the Office of Neighborhoods and invitations to city-wide meetings of neighborhood representatives.

Organizations can register by submitting a registration form. This form can be downloaded as a PDF from the office's website or a hard-copy version can be mailed to you by calling the office.

## **Contact Information**

David D. Massey, Neighborhood Coordinator  
Office of Neighborhoods  
Room, 528, City County Building  
865-215-3232 (voice)  
865-215-2886 (fax)  
[neighborhoods@cityofknoxville.org](mailto:neighborhoods@cityofknoxville.org)  
[www.cityofknoxville.org/development/neighborhoods](http://www.cityofknoxville.org/development/neighborhoods)

## **Mailing Address:**

c/o Community Development Department  
P.O. Box 1651  
Knoxville, TN 37901



# **Knox County Office of Neighborhoods and Codes Enforcement**

- A conduit for constituents and neighborhood groups to get answers and find solutions to problems
- A resource for technical assistance to neighborhood groups to empower citizens
- A way for government to reach out to its citizens through meaningful public process

## **Codes and Zoning Enforcement**

The Office of Neighborhoods is charged with enforcing the Knox County Zoning, Inoperable Vehicle and Dirty Lot Ordinances. These are directly related to the health, safety and sustainability of neighborhoods throughout Knox County.

## **215-HELP**

The Neighborhood Help Line operates Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This line takes all requests for information, referral and services related to government. The line also serves as a means of tracking requests throughout Knox County to ensure more proactive approaches to dealing with concerns.

## **Neighborhood Nights – Meet your County Government**

The Knox County Office of Neighborhoods hosts a “Neighborhood Night” each month in a county commission district to better serve citizens in the community,

The Knox County Mayor and other elected officials along with representatives from Knox County Engineering and Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Public Library, Finance and more are on hand to answer questions and talk one on one with citizens

Neighborhood Nights are generally held one night a month at a Knox County Branch Library. Those wanting to meet with the mayor simply have to sign up upon arrival. The mayor will meet constituents on a first-come basis.

## **Contact Information**

Grant Rosenberg, Director  
Knox County Office of Neighborhoods and Codes Enforcement  
Room 345, City County Building  
865-215-4751 (voice)  
865-215-3997 (fax)  
865-215-HELP (helpline)  
neighborhoods@knoxcounty.org  
www.knoxcounty.org/oon

## **Mailing Address:**

Knox County Office of Neighborhoods and Codes Enforcement  
400 Main Street, Suite 345  
Knoxville, TN 37902



## **Appendix A: Instructions for Form 4418**

1. Write the name of the organization in the space provided
2. Check the appropriate box as to whether your organization is a public benefit or mutual benefit corporation. “Public benefit corporation” means your group will operate as a non-profit corporation. “Mutual benefit corporation” means your group will be operating for profit.
3. Fill in the name and address of the corporation’s registered agent and office. The address must be a street address, not a post office box number, in the state of Tennessee.
4. List the names and complete addresses of the individuals that are coming together to start up your group.
5. Include the complete address of the corporation’s principal office. This may be the home address of the leader of the group.
6. No information needs to be completed here. If your organization will be operating as a for-profit corporation you must complete Form 4417 instead.
7. If you do not want your organization incorporated upon filing by the Secretary of State, please fill in the date you would like for your organization to be incorporated. This can not exceed 90 days of the date of filing.
8. In this section include a general statement similar to the following: *In the event of dissolution of this entity, the residual assets of the organization will be donated to another non-profit organization.*

State of Tennessee



Department of State  
Corporate Filings  
312 Eighth Avenue North  
6th Floor, William R. Snodgrass Tower  
Nashville, TN 37243

CHARTER  
(Nonprofit Corporation)

For Office Use Only

The undersigned acting as incorporator(s) of a nonprofit corporation under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act adopts the following Articles of Incorporation.

1. The name of the corporation is: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please complete all of the following sentences by checking one of the two boxes in each sentence:

This corporation is a  public benefit corporation /  mutual benefit corporation.

This corporation is  a religious corporation /  not a religious corporation.

This corporation will  have members /  not have members.

3. The name and complete address of the corporation's initial registered agent and office in Tennessee is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Street Address City State, Zip Code County

4. List the name and complete address of each incorporator:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Include Street Address, City, State, and Zip Code)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Include Street Address, City, State, and Zip Code)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Include Street Address, City, State, and Zip Code)

5. The complete address of the corporation's principal office is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City State/Country Zip Code

6. The corporation is not for profit.

7. If the document is not to be effective upon filing by the Secretary of State, the delayed effective date and time are:

Date \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Time \_\_\_\_\_ (Not to exceed 90 days.)

8. Insert here the provisions regarding the distribution of assets upon dissolution:

9. Other provisions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Incorporator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Incorporator's Name (typed or printed)

# Appendix B: Sample Bylaws

## ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of the organization is *[Name of organization]*. The board of directors shall have the power to designate other names for specific activities and programs it deems appropriate.

## ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVES

The organization's purpose shall be *[state purpose of organization]*.

## ARTICLE 3: MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1. Eligibility** *[Describe the requirements for membership, such as residence, dues, etc].*

**Section 2. Admission of Membership.** Any person who is eligible for membership in the organization may be a member by *[Making a request of the organization, filling out an application form, paying dues, etc]*.

**Section 3. Resignation and Termination.** Any member may resign from membership by *[filing a written resignation with the secretary or board of directors, making a statement at a regular meeting, etc.]*. Any member may be terminated from membership for *[state reasons for possible termination of membership]*. The process for terminating a member is *[state process to be followed when terminating a member]*. Dues *[if any]* will not be refunded.

**Section 4. Membership List.** The secretary of the *[name of organization]* shall keep an accurate list of the names of current members, including current addresses, telephone numbers and membership designation. The Directors shall provide that the membership list be closed each year thirty (30) days prior to the date of the annual meeting for the purpose of determining which members will be eligible to vote at that annual meeting. A list of members as of that date, certified by the secretary, shall be open for inspection at the annual meeting and shall determine who shall be eligible to vote at such meeting.

**Section 5. Membership Meetings.** Meetings of the *[name of organization]* shall take place as follows:

- (a) An annual meeting of the members shall be held during *[month]* at a time and place specified by the Board of Directors.
- (b) The Board of Directors may by resolution set the times and places for more regular meetings of the members of *[name of organization]*.

[or]

- (b) Regular monthly meetings of [name of organization] will be held on [day of month, i.e., the second Wednesday of each month] at an hour and place to be designated by the Board of Directors.
- (c) Special meetings of the members may be called by the president, by the Board of Directors, or by [number of percent] of the voting members of [name of organization].
- (d) The Board of Directors may designate a place within Knox County as the place of the annual or regular meetings. Any special meetings of the members shall be held at such location as designated by the person or persons calling the special meeting.

**Section 6. Notification.** Written notice of the annual meeting shall be given to each voting member not less than [number] days or more than [number] days prior to the date of annual meeting. Such notice shall state the day, time, place and agenda of the meeting. Such notice shall be deemed given when placed in the United States Mail with sufficient postage thereon and addressed to each member at the member's address as it appears in [name of organization]'s membership list. A certificate by the secretary of [name of organization] stating that such notification was mailed shall be conclusive. Written notice of special meetings shall be delivered in the same manner as notice of the annual meeting. Notice of a special meeting shall also give the names of the person or persons calling such meeting.

**Section 7. Quorum.** No business of the [name of organization] shall be transacted unless at least [number of percent] of the members entitled to vote are present at a meeting [*The State of Tennessee requires a minimum of 10%*].

**Section 8. Voting.** There shall be one vote per member. A majority vote (that is, one half plus one person) of those voting members present shall be required to carry any motion or to elect any director, except as provided elsewhere in these bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE 4: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Section 1. Election.** Candidates for the Board of Directors shall be selected from among those nominated by the Nominating Committee, which shall consist of three persons appointed by the president. Candidates may also be nominated by members presented at the meeting. Directors shall be elected by a majority vote of those members present.

**Section 2. Composition of the Board of Directors.** The number of board members shall be at least three and not more than [insert maximum number of directors]. Members shall be [insert requirements, such as residence, membership, etc].

**Section 3. Term of office.** Each director shall serve for a term of [insert number of years], or until a successor is selected. [*Note: It is a good idea to stagger the terms of office for members of the board of directors. This allows some members to remain on the board while others are up for replacement or renewal. This way there will always be some experienced members on the Board of Directors. Such bylaws might read: "Initially, one-third of the directors shall serve three year*

*terms; one-third shall serve two year terms; one-third shall serve one year terms. Upon renewal of the terms of each third of the directors, subsequent terms shall all be three years. Terms shall thus be established so that one-third of the directors may be elected each year.”]*

**Section 4. Duties.** Directors shall set policy, recommend changes in bylaws as needed, set the agenda for membership meetings, authorize activities and expenditures of the [name of organization], supervise all phases of the organization’s work, and manage and direct the affairs of [name of organization].

**Section 5. Removal from the Board.** Any or all directors may be removed with or without cause by majority vote of the members present at a meeting in which a quorum is present. Any Director missing [number] consecutive meetings of the Board which have been called by virtue of Section 6 of this Article shall automatically be removed from office unless the president or secretary is informed before the meetings of the absences, and the reasons for such absences have been previously approved by resolution of the Board as reasons which absence is excusable.

#### **Section 6. Meetings of the Board**

- (a) The Board of Directors shall meet regularly and at least [number of times per year] at such hour and place as designated by the Board.
- (b) Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the president or any [number] directors.

**Section 7. Notification.** Notice of regular and special meetings of the Board shall be given by mailing written notice or by personal notice given [number of days] in advance. Such notice shall include time, place and proposed agenda.

**Section 8. Quorum.** At least [number of percent] of the Board must be present at a Board of Directors meeting before any vote may be held on any resolution, election, etc., or before any reports may be read.

**Section 9. Voting.** Each member of the Board shall have one vote. A majority vote (one half plus one) of the Directors shall be required to carry any motion, to elect any officers, etc.

**Section 10. Vacancies.** Vacancies occurring on the Board for any reason other than expiration of a term of office may be filled by a majority vote of the Directors then in office, provided, however that any vacancies existing in the Board by reason of removal of a Director shall be filled immediately by majority vote of the members at the next meeting of the organization’s members properly called under the bylaws.

**Section 11. Resignation.** Any member of the Board of Directors may resign by giving written notice to [designate person to be notified].

## **ARTICLE 5. OFFICERS**

**Section 1. Election of Officers.** The officers of [*name of organization*] shall be elected annually at a regularly scheduled meeting and shall serve a term of [*number of years*]. Nominations for the officer positions shall be made at the last regularly scheduled meeting held prior to the meeting in which elections are to be held.

Officers shall be elected by a plurality of votes; the nominee for a particular office who receives the most votes in an election shall be elected into that office. In the event of a tie for receiving the most votes, any nominee who shall not have received enough votes to be a part of the tie shall be eliminated from consideration, and there shall immediately be a subsequent vote to determine the winner. This process shall repeat until a single nominee receives a plurality of votes. The titles and duties of the officers of [*name of organization*] are enumerated in the following sections of these bylaws [*these are suggestions of what the officer titles and duties might be; each organization should assign officers and duties that make sense for their particular purpose and needs*].

**Section 2. President.** The president shall be the chief officer of [*name of organization*]. The duties of the office shall include the following:

Make necessary arrangements for meetings – place, seating, refreshments, etc.

Preside at all meetings – being and end on time

Provide and follow agendas for all meetings

Determine whether or not a quorum is present at meetings

Represent the organization at public functions

Call special meetings

Sign checks for the organization

Oversee the drafting of all organizational documents

Oversee the establishment of all committees and the assigning of committee chairpersons

Act in an emergency when there is not enough time to call a meeting

See that decisions of the organization are carried out in a timely way

Encourage participation of all members.

**Section 3. Vice President.** The duties of vice president are as follows:

Carry out the duties of the president in his or her absence

Assist the president in all duties

Serve as program chair (optional)

Serve as project coordinator

Succeed the president in office for the remainder of any term of office not completed by the president for whatever reason.

**Section 4. Treasurer.** The duties of the treasurer are as follows:

Give financial report at all meetings as called on by the president

Have authority to sign [*or co-sign*] checks

Prepare all tax reports as required

Make arrangements for audits, record-keeping services, loans and other financial services

Acknowledge all gifts and donations in writing and prepare donor statements

Act in an emergency situation when there is not enough time for a called meeting

Perform all duties as required of the treasurer in Articles 7 and 8 of these bylaws.

**Section 5. Secretary.** The duties of the secretary shall be as follows:

Record, distribute and maintain accurate records of all regular and called meetings of [*name of organization*]

Maintain and provide a list of all current members

Maintain records of all committee meetings as submitted by committee chairpersons

Post or mail notices of all regular or called meetings

Call special meetings of [*name of organization*]

Maintain files of all organizations documents – charter, bylaws, etc.

Facilitate all organizational correspondence

Perform all duties as required of the secretary in Article 7 of these bylaws.

## ARTICLE 6. COMMITTEES

**Section 1. Executive Committee.** There shall be an Executive Committee of the [*name of organization*] consisting of the organization's directors and officers. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to plan the agendas for all meetings, to develop and recommend programs for the organization, and to carry out any other duties delegated to it by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee, however, shall not have the authority to change the bylaws or to fill any vacancies in the Board or in any committee without the approval of a majority of the Board of Directors.

**Section 2. Standing Committees.** [*Some organizations may have permanent committees, such as a finance committee. These permanent committees are called Standing Committees and should be described in this section*]

**Section 3. Other Committees.** *The board of Directors may designate an appoint one or more committees consisting of directors or members or both, and shall describe the duties and authority of each such committee.*

**Section 4. Reports.** *All committees shall report their activities and recommendations to the Board and file reports with the secretary [state how often committees are to report, such as monthly, annually, as requested, etc.].*

## ARTICLE 7. BOOKS AND RECORDS

**Section 1. Records.** The secretary of [*name of organization*] or other such person appointed by the Board of Directors shall keep accurate, permanent minutes of the proceedings of the members, the Board of Directors, and the reports of the committees, if any. Such person(s) shall also keep an accurate record of the members of the organization, including each member's name, address and membership designation. These records are to be turned over to the new secretary by the outgoing secretary within [*specify number of days after the election of a new secretary*].

**Section 2. Financial Records.** The treasurer of the [*name of organization*] or such other person as may be appointed by the Board of Directors shall keep a correct and complete set of books and records of accounts of the organization. Such person(s) shall be required to account to the Board of Directors for all expenditures at the annual meeting of the members, and whenever the Board of Directors shall require. [*Some organizations include the following statement: "Each year the financial records of the organization shall be audited by a respectable certified public accountant who shall be designated by the Board."*]

## ARTICLE 8. FUNDS

**Section 1. Deposits and Withdrawals.** The treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining and accounting for all of the funds of the organization. The treasurer shall establish a checking or savings account with a federally insured local bank or savings and loan association when funds

of more than [*specify amount of dollars*] in cash are accumulated. The account shall be in the name of [*name of organization*] and shall bear the signatures of [*specify who is to be authorized to sign checks. Note: It is wise to make it a requirement that more than one person must sign each check, and to provide more than two people who can sign checks so that checks may be written during vacations, illnesses, etc.*]. As outgoing authorized account signatories are replaced by new authorized signatures, the treasurer will ensure that the correct signatures are on record with the account(s) at the bank or savings and loan association. Withdrawals from the account shall be made only after a resolution or motion has been passed by the Board of Directors of the Membership authorizing the withdrawal.

**Section 2. Loan or Guarantees.** The [*name of organization*] shall not make, directly or indirectly, any loan of money or organization property to, or guarantee or secure any debt of, any director or officer of the organization.

## **ARTICLE 9. AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1. Charter Amendments.** Amendments to the charter may be made in the following manner:

- (a) The Board of Directors shall adopt a resolution setting forth the proposed amendment and directing that it be submitted to a vote at a meeting of the members of [*name of organization*], which may be an annual, regular or special meeting; or [*state number or percentage*] of the members of the organization entitled to vote thereon may propose an amendment by delivering such proposed amendment to the Board or any officer of the organization.
- (b) Written notice of the meeting at which such proposed amendment is to be submitted shall include a copy of the proposed amendment and a summary thereof.
- (c) Such amendment shall be approved upon receiving the affirmative votes of two-thirds of the members of the organization present at such meeting, provided a quorum is in attendance.

**Section 2. Amendments to the Bylaws.** Bylaws may be adopted, amended or repealed by a [*specify amount, i.e. one-half, two-thirds, etc.*] vote of the voting membership. Bylaws may also be adopted, amended or repealed by the Board of Directors upon a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors present and voting. However, any bylaws adopted by the Board of Directors may be amended or repealed by the members. The bylaws may not contain any provision for the regulation and management of business or affairs of the organization which is inconsistent with law or the Charter. Notice shall be given at least [*specify length of time in days*] before any meeting at which a proposed amendment will be considered, and the text of the proposed amendment shall be sent out with the meeting notice.

## **Appendix C: Sample Bylaws II**

### **BY-LAWS [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]**

#### **Article I Name**

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be *[name of organization]*, hereafter called the Association.

#### **Article II Objectives**

Section 1. Furnish new homeowners in *[name of organization]* with a packet of information including the existing “Declaration of Restrictions” and the by-laws of *[name of organization]*.

Section 2. To serve as a forum to keep *[name of neighborhood]* residents informed on community activity, which directly or indirectly affects our subdivision: eg. Rezoning activities, new construction and other areas of mutual interest.

Section 3. To seek mutual cooperation among residents to remedy circumstances considered “eyesores” or “nuisances” which degrade the attractiveness of the subdivision, or activities which residents may engage in that may be degrading to the appearance of the neighborhood or create a nuisance to other nearby residents.

#### **Article III Officers**

Section 1. The officers of the Association shall be as follows: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2. The term of the office shall be for one (1) year or until their successors shall have been elected. An officer shall not serve in the same capacity for more than three (3) years in succession.

Section 3. A nominating committee shall be appointed by the President and announced in the newsletter. The committee shall submit at least one candidate for each office and only one candidate per household. Election of officers shall occur at the last meeting with duties commencing in January. The committee shall have the names of each candidate ready for the newsletter announcing the last meeting.

Section 4. The foregoing shall not prohibit the continuation of a term of office, of an officer, for whom a replacement has not been elected.

**Article IV**  
Duties of Officers

Section 1. The President of the Association shall preside over all meetings and serve as the official representative of the Association.

Section 2. The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the event of his or her absence.

Section 3. The Secretary shall record the minutes of all regular business meetings, present minutes of the previous meeting, mail out newsletter and prepare and distribute informational packets to the new homeowners.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall maintain custody of all funds of the Association and keep an accurate record of all receipts and expenditures and shall disburse funds in accordance with the approved budget or upon authorization of the Association at a normal business meeting. The Treasurer shall be responsible for collection of Association dues and maintain a list of homeowners who are not current. The Treasurer shall submit an annual report of income and expenses at the end of the term of office for audit.

**Article V**  
Meetings

Section 1. There shall be at least three (3) meetings of the members of the Association at a date and time specified by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the President or by any five (5) members presenting a petition to the President.

Section 3. Written notification of meetings shall be delivered by U.S. Mail to each residence not less than one (1) week prior to each regularly scheduled business meeting.

Section 4. Ten (10) individual households shall constitute a legal quorum.

**Article VI**  
Committees

Section 1. Committees shall be appointed as required by the President. The President shall appoint the Chairperson of each committee. All committees shall serve for one (1) year or until their successors are appointed.

**Article VII**  
Dues and Voting Rights

Section 1. The dues of the Association shall be determined by the Association members at the last meeting of the year.

Section 2. Homeowners who become delinquent in payment of dues shall lose voting rights until dues are fully paid.

Section 3. Homeowners who are delinquent in payment of dues may not be a candidate for office.

Section 4. Each household shall constitute one (1) vote at regular business meetings of the Association.

**Article VIII**  
Amendments

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended by a 2/3 approval vote of those present at any meeting of the members of the Association, providing at least five (5) days notice of the intent to amend, repeal or alter the by-laws has been given.

**Article IX**  
Membership

Section 1. Two classes of membership shall exist, full and associate. Full members are the registered property owners and have all rights and privileges with the condition that each household shall constitute one (1) vote as defined in Section 4 of Article VII. Associate members are considered to be persons who maintain a household in *[name of neighborhood]* but are not the registered property owners. Associate members have all rights and privileges with the exception of being able to vote on business matters of the Association or hold an elected office.

**Article X**  
Board of Directors

Section 1. A Board of Directors shall be established which, shall, in conjunction with the elected officers, conduct the routine business of the Association. The Board of Directors will consist of three (3) persons elected from among the full members. The term of office shall be three (3) years except that initially an interim Board shall be elected for terms of 3, 2 and 1 year. In the event that a replacement is not elected in November, a board member may continue to serve beyond his or her regular term if so requested by the President and until a suitable replacement is elected.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall meet at least once per quarter, the date to be set by the President.

Section 3. The discretionary spending of the Board of Directors shall not exceed \$500.00

**Article XI**  
Dissolution of Funds

Section 1. Upon dissolution, all outstanding liabilities of the *[name of organization]* shall first be paid; remaining funds shall then be distributed equally among each household membership in good standing.

## **Appendix D: Sample Agenda**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Quorum call
- III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
- IV. Treasurer's Report [*may also include reports from other officers here if desired*]
- V. Committee Reports [*permanent or standing committees first, then special or ad hoc committees*]
- VI. Special Orders [*important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting*]
- VII. Old Business [*left over from previous meetings*]
- VIII. New Business [*members or officers may bring up any new subjects or proposals for consideration by the group*]
- IX. Announcements
- X. Adjournment

## Appendix E: Sample Minutes

Neighborhood Meeting Minutes  
[Date]

Members Present: [List names of members present]

[The Presiding Officer] called the meeting to order and presented the agenda.

The minutes from the last meeting were read and approved.

The Treasurer's Report was presented and approved.

The refreshments committee chairman reported that refreshments would be sold by the neighborhood group at the community fair on [date]. He/She gave background information on [group's] participation in the program and asked for volunteers to assist. [The Chairperson] then asked for authorization to purchase refreshments to sell at the fair. [Member] moved that [the chairperson] be permitted to use [organization] funds for purchasing refreshments to sell. The motion was seconded by [member 2]. Discussion followed about the specific items to be purchased, and it was decided that \$50 would be sufficient for purchasing the needed refreshments. A vote was called and the vote was passed unanimously.

[Member] gave a report on the progress of the [name] committee. Discussion followed and the committee was charged with completing its work before the next meeting. A vote will be taken on the committee's recommendation at the next meeting.

[The Presiding Officer] called for any new business or announcements.

The meeting was adjourned.

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Secretary's Signature

## Appendix F: Sample Treasurer's Report

*[The sample financial report on this page is acceptable for the large as well as the small organization, for the sophisticated as well as the simple bookkeeping system. Some organizations use a similar report that includes a column for amounts received and spent so far in the budget year, as well as the other amounts received and spent since the last financial report.]*

Treasurer's Report

*[Name of Organization]*

Statement of Income and Disbursements

*[Date of Report]*

DATE	PAYEE/DESCRIPTION	CK#	PAID	RECEIVED	BALANCE
	Beginning Balance				\$5,000.00
10/20/08	<i>[Name of Grocery]</i>	500	\$47.22		\$4952.00
10/21/08	<i>[Membership]</i>			\$10.00	\$4962.78
10/25/08	<i>[Name of Store]</i>	501	\$345.83		\$4616.95
	Ending Balance				\$4616.95

*[Signature of Treasurer]*

## **Appendix G: Sample Media Release**

For immediate Release

[*or*]

For release on [*give date*]

For more information please contact

[*Name, address and telephone number of contact person*]

[*Headline*]

The first paragraph should include what is happening, when and where it is happening, who is doing it (*i.e.*, the name of your organization), and for what purpose.

The following paragraphs should expand on the information included in the first paragraph. This is the place to give details about the event and include, if possible, names of people involved. Be sure to include all the information you would want if you were reading someone else's media release.

In general, media releases should be typed and double spaced. Use short, simple sentences. Check to be sure all names are spelled correctly, and that all dates and times are correct. If possible, give newspapers, radio and television news organizations some extra lead time, so they can fit the story in with the other news.

If the media release continues onto more than one page, the word "MORE" in all capital letters should be typed on a separate line at the bottom of each page. On the last page, type the word "END" on a separate line at the bottom of the release. This is the standard in the news business, so following that pattern will make it much easier to get your event into the news.

## Appendix H: Project Ideas

### Neighborhood Garage Sale

Organizing a garage sale in your neighborhood is a lot of work, but the rewards can be well worth it. It is a good way to make money from items that you and your neighbors may not have any use for. Or, your neighborhood could decide to donate all or a portion of the proceeds to charity.

Plan a meeting to discuss having the garage sale. During the meeting, discuss tasks to be accomplished and assign each one. Your neighborhood may want to hang signs a few days before the sale. Make the day fun by having a contest to see who can sell their items faster or who can sell more items. Encourage the entire family to get involved by letting the kids set up a refreshment booth where drinks such as lemonade or bottled water and snacks such as homemade cookies can be sold.

### Neighborhood Guide

A neighborhood guide is a good consciousness-raiser for residents because it presents interesting, often little known, biographical, architectural and historical facts about an area. A guide can also include a walking, driving, or jogging map of the neighborhood. Guides are very effective, and they do not need to be expensive to produce.

In a similar vein, a group can prepare a guide to city services that includes such categories as property, water problems, trash collection and zoning. Such guides are an invaluable resource, especially for new residents.

### Cleanup Days

A cleanup day is an important way to boost community spirit. To organize one, a group can assign block captains to inform residents, post signs at local store and hand out flyers around

the neighborhood. Volunteers can be enlisted to help older residents clear their yards, driveways or curb areas of debris. Arrangements can also be made with the city for a special trash pickup for the day.



### Green-up days

A green-up day can get residents into the spring spirit by providing them with flowers and plants for yards, curbing strips and window ledges. The neighborhood group can organize committees to locate a nursery that will provide plants in quantity at market price (or below) and publicize the project and obtain prepaid orders from interested residents. Another committee can be responsible for finding a central delivery point where residents can pick up their orders and make home deliveries to senior citizens and others. The group might also plan to hold a cleanup day in advance of this event.



### Potluck Suppers

Potluck suppers are festive neighborhood events and can be modified to suit any occasion. For example, a group could sponsor a holiday potluck supper preceded by a songfest or caroling in the neighborhood. A group could also ask residents to bring community specialties or dishes that begin with the initials of their last names. In addition to bringing neighbors together, potluck suppers can also be used to attract new members or thank volunteers.

## Awards Program

To recognize residents' contributions, a neighborhood group could develop awards for individuals and organizations and for the most improved block or area. One home each month could be recognized as the "Yard of the Month" with a movable placard to announce the winner.

## Adopt-A-House

Elderly and handicapped residents often have trouble keeping their homes as neat as they want them to be. The group can help them and the neighborhood by organizing an adopt-a-house campaign. After identifying the residents needing this service, the group can publicize the campaign and solicit donations of needed materials – paint, brushes, rollers, brooms and other equipment. Next, volunteers can be mobilized to paint; sweep steps, drives and curb areas; trim shrubs; and perform other chores that help spruce up the neighborhood.

## Restoration Celebration

By bringing do-it-yourselfers together for a social hour or a potluck supper, a neighborhood group can reinforce home improvement momentum and boost residents' spirits. These gatherings could be held on a regular basis, perhaps in newly renovated homes, so that guests can discuss mutual repair problems and exchange ideas on how to fix up older houses.



## Block Party

A block party is a sure-fire way to bring people out and get them together at a pancake breakfast, cocktail party, street festival or similar celebration on the block (or a combination of blocks). The block party encourages residents to get to know each other and to spread the word about current or planned neighborhood



activities. It is useful to have neighborhood newsletters, brochures and membership forms displayed at the party.

## Tours for City Officials

Briefing local officials on neighborhood problems and accomplishments is important for building rapport between city and county government and the neighborhood organization. A walking or driving tour of one or more neighborhoods is a good way to show elected officials, department heads and members of the city council or county commission what the organization has accomplished and what government actions are helping or hindering the neighborhood. The tour can be concluded with a luncheon or refreshments served at a resident's house.

## Neighborhood Fair

A group can organize a neighborhood fair featuring food, games, music and entertainment. A nearby park can be reserved or a permit obtained to close a street. Committees for publicity, decorations, food, games and entertainment should be organized well in advance. The fair can be held to celebrate a holiday, it can be organized around a theme, such as Victorian Days, or it can just be a gathering to bring neighbors together.

## Chalk-In

Teams of school children can compete for prizes or school honor by drawing sidewalk chalk murals depicting a neighborhood landmark or scene. Teams within a school can compete against each other, or a school-against-school chalk-off can be organized.