

Neighborhood Organizing Guide



BENTONVILLE
Great
NEIGHBORHOODS
Friendly • Safe • Attractive • Engaged



www.bentonvillear.com/1048/Great-Neighborhoods-Partnership
neighborhoods@bentonvillear.com

TOC

Neighborhood Organizing Guide

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Sources:

Quick Start Neighborhood Organizing Guide - Lima, OH

Neighborhood Association How To's - Lincoln, NE

Success Through Neighborhood Organization - Springfield, MO

Ono Understanding Neighborhood Associations

A neighborhood association is a voluntary group of neighbors who organize themselves to get together, share ideas, work cooperatively, organize activities and advocate for their neighborhood to make it a better place to live. Participation and dues are voluntary.

Many Bentonville subdivisions already have a formal organization established by the developer, called either a property owner's association (POA) or home owner's association (HOA). They are established to enforce the covenants and often require mandatory dues to fund the maintenance of common areas. While the original purpose of these organizations is different than that of neighborhood associations, they provide an organizational framework that can be used to achieve similar goals of neighborhood associations.

Both neighborhood associations and POAs/HOAs can participate in the Great Neighborhoods Partnership.

Please Note:

The City of Bentonville enforces city ordinances only. Private covenants or deed restrictions are not city ordinances, therefore, the city does not have authority to enforce private regulations.

What are the benefits of neighborhood associations?

- Develop a cleaner, safer, healthier neighborhood and improve the quality of life for residents.
- Empower residents to have a voice, work toward and achieve common neighborhood goals.
- Create open communication with government officials, businesses, and other groups.
- Work toward a safer neighborhood by reducing and preventing crime through crime prevention programs.
- Promote friendship, reduce conflict, and foster a sense of concern and caring among neighborhood residents.
- Provide a means of communicating with neighbors.
- Organize neighborhood improvement projects and assist those unable to maintain property by themselves.
- Solve problems that exist or arise within the neighborhood.
- Serve as a tool in preventing neighborhood decline.

TWO Bentonville's Great Neighborhoods Partnership

Bentonville's Great Neighborhoods Partnership connects the Mayor's core goals of transparency and improved communication with residents to the Community Plan's goal of stronger neighborhoods to establish Bentonville as a "great place to plant roots." The program is designed to help residents organize themselves into a neighborhood association and support existing neighborhood organizations.

Great communities are a collection of great neighborhoods. Great neighborhoods have these four characteristics: *friendly, safe, attractive, and engaged.*

Great Neighborhoods Contact

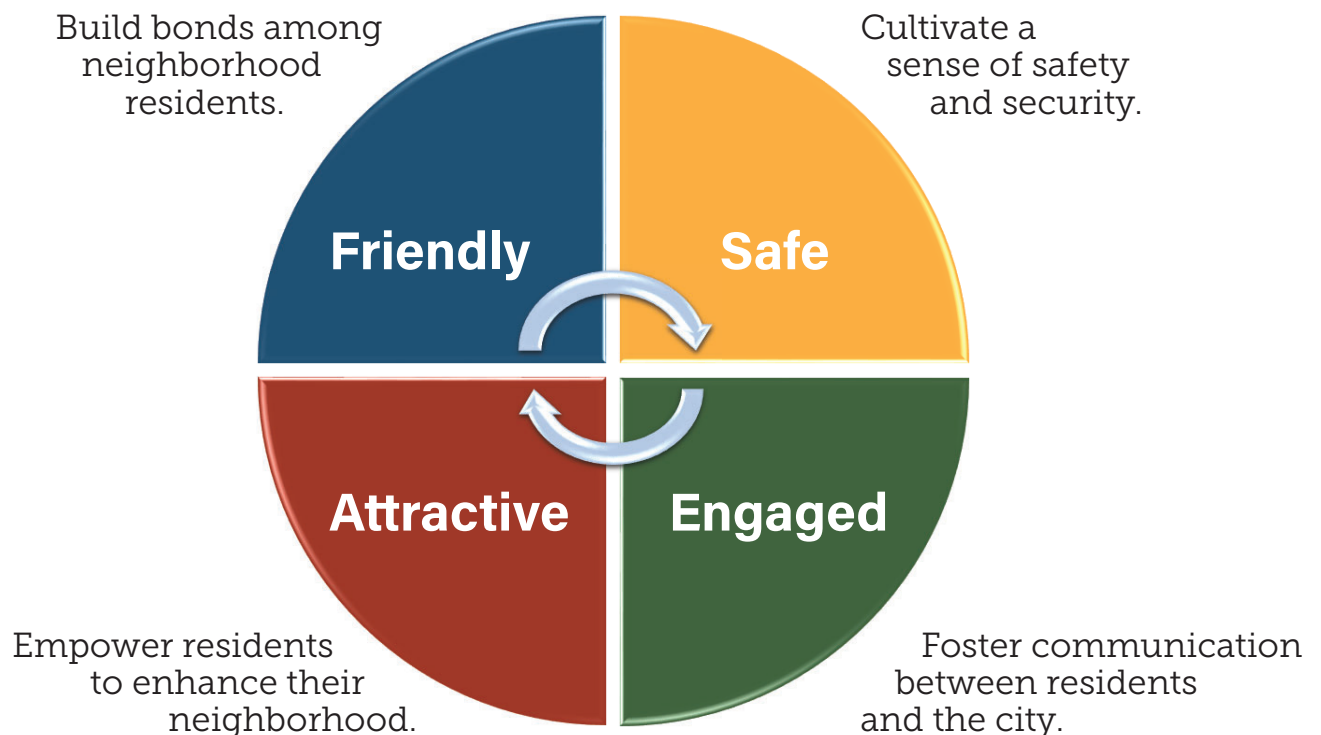
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Great-Neighborhoods-Partnership](http://www.bentonvillear.com/1048/Great-Neighborhoods-Partnership)

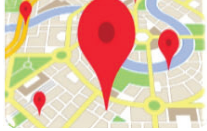
Mission

The mission of this partnership is to strengthen Bentonville by supporting and encouraging great neighborhoods by:





Partnership Components



Planning & Support

Comprehensive Planning staff with the City of Bentonville provides assistance and support to neighborhoods looking to organize and prioritize goals. For assistance, email neighborhoods@bentonvillear.com or call (479)271-3122.

- *Neighborhood Organizing*: Assistance in establishing a neighborhood association and geographical boundaries.
- *Planning and Goal Setting*: Assistance in prioritizing goals.
- *Support Materials*: Preparation of neighborhood maps, data, and demographics.
- *Resources*: A repository of neighborhood-related information, ideas, and resources.



Neighborhood Partners

Neighborhood Partners are neighborhoods actively participating in the Great Neighborhoods Partnership. Neighborhoods can register to participate at two levels: (1) Activating - neighborhoods just beginning to organize and (2) Active - existing neighborhood associations or POA/HOA's. The program benefits vary based on the activation level. All participating neighborhoods must meet these four principles:

- resident-led
- long-term commitment
- inclusive
- engaging activities

See page 14 for more details on becoming a Neighborhood Partner.



Neighborhood Programs

Neighborhood Programs are the services the city provides to participating Great Neighborhoods. They are established to help meet the Great Neighborhoods goals of friendly, safe, attractive and engaged. Programs include neighborhood cleanups, block parties, and crime prevention. Program details are available on the city website: www.bentonvillear.com/1048/Great-Neighborhoods-Partnership



Neighborhood Advisory Committee

The Neighborhood Advisory Committee has been established to facilitate communication between city council, city staff and participating neighborhoods. Members provide feedback to the city and collaborate to develop solutions on issues pertinent to neighborhoods. It consists of one representative and one alternate from all participating Great Neighborhoods. Active Level neighborhoods are voting members. Activating Level neighborhoods are non-voting members until they reach the Active Level status.

Getting Started

Steps for Organizing

1

Check if there is already a neighborhood association in your area. Check the city website on the Neighborhood Partners tab to find out if residents have already started an organization in your neighborhood. Or, contact Comprehensive Planning at 479-271-3122 or neighborhoods@bentonvillear.com. If a neighborhood association is already in your area, consider joining. New members with an active interest are greatly appreciated! If the neighborhood association is not currently focused on your concern, raise the subject and get discussion rolling. Listen to other concerns, get involved in neighborhood activities, and get your neighbors involved. The result will be a stronger neighborhood association.

2

No existing neighborhood organization? Start by talking with your neighbors. See if there is an interest in starting a neighborhood association. Share the benefits (see page 1). You may be surprised at the number of people that share your desire to have a safe and attractive neighborhood. Ask what issues they see in the neighborhood. If someone is not interested, simply thank them and move to the next neighbor.

3

Organize a core group. Many associations begin with a few people and grow over time. Find those few people who have expressed an interest and begin by organizing with this core group. The size of the group depends on the size of the neighborhood, but five to ten committed individuals is a good place to start.

Set up the first meeting in a comfortable place, such as someone's home. Establish an agenda and provide to participants a few days ahead of time. Find a time that works for everyone, establish a time limit and stick to it. See page 8 for tips on holding meetings.

Core Group Meeting Goals

- Discuss what the proposed neighborhood boundaries should be. (Contact staff for a printed map). Staff can also show you how to use the GIS site where you can get more information regarding neighborhood boundaries.
- Identify issues and concerns and prioritize based on the most pressing or the most easily resolved.
- Discuss what a structured association might look like. See page 6 for structuring options.
- Discuss ideas on how to get more people involved.
- Establish a line of communication with the core group. This may be through a newsletter, Facebook group, email, or Nextdoor.com.
- Make sure every participant has an assigned task before the next meeting.
- Set the next meeting date and agenda.

Four

Setting Goals

Setting goals helps establish meaning and keeps members engaged. It also sets the stage to plan projects to meet those goals. The first step to setting goals is to adopt a vision for the neighborhood and a mission for the association.

Adopt a vision

Develop a vision of how you see your neighborhood. What do you picture as the perfect neighborhood? What does it look like, feel like?

Establish a mission statement

The mission then becomes the purpose for the organization in reaching the established vision. A mission statement is a road map to setting goals and achieving those goals. It should answer the question: What is the association trying to achieve?



Set goals that align with the vision and mission

Once you have established the mission, set goals based on what your association wants to do to meet the mission. Keep in mind when creating goals that they need to be manageable and that your association has the ability to accomplish said goals. Goals set the framework to planning projects for the association.

For example, if the mission of your organization is to increase safety, a goal for the association could be to plan a project that would increase the safety in your neighborhood. Some projects to complete that goal could be: establish a neighborhood block watch or patrol, implement safety training for neighborhood residents, or start

a neighborhood phone tree to inform neighbors of suspicious situations.

Having a mission statement with established goals helps to create a sense of purpose for the organization and gives the core group leverage when inviting new members into the association. Many questions neighbors have when asked to join an association are:

- Why should I join?
- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How will this benefit me?

The mission statement and goals help group members answer these questions and encourage neighbors to join.

Sample Mission Statements

- **Enhance the quality of our neighborhood.**
- **Encourage communication, cooperation and friendliness among residents.**
- **Maintain and increase the spirit of awareness, security, and beauty in our community.**
- **Express the interest and opinions of all to our local government.**

Five Structuring the Association

Organizational Options

There's a spectrum of possibilities for how your neighborhood association can be organized. The structure that will work best will depend on the purpose of the group and the resources available. There are three basic organizational models to choose from:

It's also worth remembering that the organizational structure that works for your neighborhood now may change in the future. Over time, neighborhood organizations can change as they respond to the needs and desires of their members.

Charitable

This is the simplest and least structured model that offers a range of possibilities. For example, a charitable organization can choose to have bylaws to help with continuity and process, even though bylaws aren't required.

NonProfit Incorporated

This option involves more structure and paperwork, but that may be necessary if your neighborhood association will need to be recognized as a legal entity which can sign contracts or own property.

Tax Exempt

This is the most structured organizational model. If your neighborhood association expects to have significant earnings that may be taxable or if you want donations to be tax exempt, this is how you should organize.

Bylaws

Establishing bylaws for neighborhood associations helps to determine how the organization will be structured and function. Bylaws should be as short and concise as possible, but take into consideration how unplanned events and issues will be handled. Bylaws should include:

See sample bylaws in the Appendix

To be an Active Level Great Neighborhoods Partner, an updated set of bylaws must be on file with the Great Neighborhoods Partnership.

- Organization purpose and objective (mission statement).
- Boundaries as agreed on by the City of Bentonville.
- Criteria to be a member.
- How the board is chosen and elected.
- Criteria for residents and/or members to vote for officers.
- Officer's terms and responsibilities.
- Meeting procedures.
- How amendments are made to the bylaws.
- Method of determining a quorum and taking and recording votes.
- Procedures for:
 - replacing officers (specifically the President);
 - disbursement of funds in case of dissolution;
 - resolving conflict;
 - collecting dues; and
 - recording meeting minutes.

Leadership

The key to a successful association is the selection of the officers and board members. The officers may be members of the core group who initiated efforts for beginning the association, or other members of the neighborhood. Officers are typically board members, but your board should include at-large members, too.

It is important for your neighborhood association to remain as inclusive as possible. Therefore, any person who is a resident or property owner within

the neighborhood association boundaries, or who meets the criteria as set forth in your association's bylaws, is a prospective member and will be able to participate in your association.

The job descriptions outline the responsibilities of the board and other individual officer positions. The number of board members may vary. Other roles and descriptions may be added based on the needs of your neighborhood.

President: Oversees the schedule of meetings and activities, coordinates the activities of officers, leaders, and committees, appoints committees as needed, represents the association in a public capacity, and delegates activities.

Secretary: Keeps complete and accurate minutes of all meetings, reads letters of information or any other correspondence to the group, writes letters for the association, maintains current and comprehensive membership records, and contacts members who have missed several meetings and extends an invitation for them to attend the next meeting.

Vice President: Assists the President, presides at meetings and performs other duties in the absence of the President, and is responsible for introducing new members and guests at meetings.

Treasurer: Keeps accurate records of all receipts and expenditures of association funds, plans a budget and presents to the association for approval, pays bills as approved by the association in a timely and accurate manner, gives a financial report at each meeting, prepares financial report for the year and presents it to the association, and provides written and financial reports for the Secretary to include with the minutes.

Committees

Some neighborhood associations work well when divided into committees. The core group should be responsible for determining what those committees are, how many are needed, and the goals of each. Committees have specific focus areas and provide opportunities for residents to get involved in areas they are interested in participating.

Example of Committees & Duties

Bylaws Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine how the association will conduct meetings and vote.• Make decisions to resolve disagreements.
Safety Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the police department to educate residents on crime prevention.• Organize block watch programs.
Enhancement Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize neighborhood clean-ups.• Organize tree planting projects.

Six Holding Meetings

Several meetings are needed to get a neighborhood association up and running. And, a well-run meeting is the beginning of a successful neighborhood association.

- Plan a strategy for getting people to come to the first meeting.
- Plan how to present the issues as the core group sees them.
- Explain why you see the need to organize the neighborhood.
- Explain what you hope the association will accomplish.



Steps to Prepare for a Meeting

1

Find a place to hold the meeting.

Try to estimate the number of people you expect at your first general meeting and then look for a meeting space to fit that number. Keep the meeting place as neutral as possible for all of the attendees expected. Possible sites include: schools, public and private, places of worship, private homes, and community centers.

When arranging for a meeting space, ask if there is a cost associated with the use of the facility. Schools and colleges often charge a fee and/or require a permit. You can arrange for usage of the facility through the school's administrator or principal. Be sure that your meeting space can accommodate people with disabilities.

2

Publicize your meeting.

The way to get people to attend your meeting is to publicize. Remember to include all pertinent information in your publicity. Answer the questions of what, when, where and why. If possible, include a phone number for people who have questions about the meeting or are interested in future meetings but cannot make the first meeting. Some ways to get the word out are, flyers, press releases to local media, signage throughout the neighborhood, and social media.

See page 12 for ways to promote the meeting by staying connected.

3

Stage your meeting.

The first meeting will be one of the most important meetings for your new group. Create a checklist to ensure that you have the meeting "tools":

- Sign in sheet to collect the names, addresses and contact information of those in attendance
- Copies of the agenda
- Handouts
- Area map
- Contact information of core group

We recommend having no less than two (2) and no more than four (4) general neighborhood meetings per year.

Checklist for Meeting Minutes

- Name of organization
- Date and place of meeting
- Nature of meeting
- Name of person presiding
- Results of roll call or a list of attendees and absentees
- Approval of minutes, along with any changes approved
- Treasurer's report
- Names of officers who gave reports
- Name of any presenter and title of their presentation
- All motions as stated by the chair, the motion maker's names, and the results of the motion
- Motion to adjourn and adjournment time
- Signature of the recording secretary

5 Key Elements for Successful Meetings

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

- 1. An atmosphere of hospitality:** A little preparation helps communicate that this neighborhood association is an inviting place and has a clear purpose to build community and make a difference for the neighborhood. Have good signage to help locate the meeting. Have a "greeter" to welcome people to the meeting. Have a resource table with basic information (nametags, meeting agenda, sign-in sheets, comment cards, and informational fliers). Refreshments help create a welcoming atmosphere (coffee, tea, water, cookies, etc.).
- 2. Clear communication and facilitation:** Meetings succeed when there is good facilitation. A good facilitator will make sure everyone has a chance to participate and feels comfortable.
- 3. A featured program or presentation:** Having a presentation is a great way to provide current information about a topic of neighborhood interest. Some examples might include: neighborhood safety, neighborhood improvement projects, pedestrian safety, emergency preparedness, or a guest speaker.
- 4. Time for resident input:** Neighborhood meetings should always provide time to receive input from those who attend. This can happen in a variety of ways, including time for Q&A, facilitated large group discussions, table discussions, and comment cards.
- 5. Clarity on next steps:** Meetings should end with answering the question, "What's next?" If there are specific issues raised, develop an action plan. This may include a speaker or program, or referring the issue to a smaller group to research and report back.

Seven

Recruiting Members

Okay, your neighborhood association has worked out some goals and objectives. As activities begin, one of your neighborhood association's most valuable resources is its membership. How many members does a neighborhood association really need? Neighborhood associations don't need 100% of the area's population to be members.

Member Types

Most groups have learned from experience that members will fall into four categories:

Workers contribute their time and energy in addition to paying their dues. Not everyone needs to be a worker, but the number of workers will shape your planned activities.

Supporters pay their dues and maybe contribute a little more, but they may not normally attend meetings or contribute their time. They may occasionally help with an activity that interests them.

Beneficiaries don't pay dues and don't get involved. However, they do reap the benefits of the association's good works. Remember, it's possible for them to become involved in the future.

Detractors don't like the neighborhood group. Sometimes they will actively oppose neighborhood activities. Unfortunately, every volunteer group has a few of these.



Tips for Recruiting

Recruiting new members to the group can be a challenge, but it is only half the battle. The other half is keeping them involved in your organization. For every member who is active in the association, there are probably two who would be involved if they were properly motivated or enticed. Keeping the interest and involvement of neighbors in their association is a continual challenge faced by every neighborhood group.

Have a purpose. Have clear goals and objectives or a cause of immediate interest to potential members. Knowing what tasks or projects are planned helps new volunteers know exactly what is expected of them. Initially, the purpose could even be a survey of the neighborhood to identify needs.

Be visible. Have a website, Facebook page, blog, and/or newsletter. Publically brag about neighborhood association accomplishments and recognize volunteers. Write press releases or develop a good relationship with a reporter. Develop a group identity that helps your efforts be recognized. Whatever means you use to gain

visibility, try to provide: the name of the organization, its basic mission, its boundaries, membership requirements or dues, meeting schedule and location, contact information, list of activities and/or committees, and your source of funds.

Make it easy to become a member. Have membership information available on an up-to-date neighborhood association website or Facebook page, and at community events — fairs and festivals, parades and picnics, local church events, garage sales, and school events. Distribute or mail a membership brochure to all neighborhood residents. Provide membership forms and information in your newsletter. Keep membership dues low.

Help new members find a place in the association. Not everyone is a self-starter. Many will offer to help but have no idea where to begin. Develop a list of volunteer activities that includes a job description and approximate time commitment per task.

Always welcome new people and attempt to make them feel at ease with the group. Watch for new faces at each meeting and welcome them enthusiastically. Each new or potential member should be introduced to someone who lives near them or shares a similar interest. Designate an official “greeter” at every meeting.

Avoid the appearance of cliques. New members who see the same people running every project will feel excluded and may not return. Appoint people who are not part of the core group to positions of leadership. Sensitivity to this issue is central to creating a sense of belonging among group members.

Encourage new ideas and input in all levels of the organization. This is often most difficult for people who long have been involved in the association or neighborhood and are more knowledgeable on the area than newcomers. People coming into a situation for the first time, however, are able to see things in a new light and can offer new solutions to old problems. They just might have the answer that you have been seeking. New perspectives can assist the whole group in problem solving.

Be personal. Make personal contact with residents through block captains or recruitment committee members. Have a person that new recruits can easily contact, someone easy to talk to. Your own enthusiasm and pride will help convey the advantages of joining. When new people move in, welcome them and give them information about the neighborhood association, other neighborhood activities, and perhaps even coupons to local businesses.

Build on connections. Build working relationships with other neighborhood area groups such as Neighborhood Crime Watch, a local business group, or the local parent teacher organization.

Listen. There really are people who want to be part of a team, serve their community, or use talents not otherwise expressed. Few people will come right out and say, “I’d feel really fulfilled if I could do ____.” Try to listen between the lines and hear what triggers their enthusiasm. When your neighborhood association can offer something that is in sync with what an individual needs, everyone benefits.

Enjoy yourself and have fun. The work of the neighborhood association should not be boring drudgery. Sponsor parties and celebrations to get to know your neighbors better. Have events that appeal to all, including children. This will foster a strong sense of community spirit among your neighbors. Be enthusiastic about what you’re doing. Have interesting and lively meetings. Socialize and have snacks after meetings. Do hands-on projects and invite nonmembers to participate. Have a good-natured contest to see who can recruit the most new members.

Eight

Staying Connected

Communication is very important to the success of your association. Sharing information is a great way to build a sense of community in your neighborhood, get new people to join your association and enlist support for your events. Having a committee dedicated to communications and promotions can ease the burden of sharing information.

Getting the Word Out

Social Media

- Facebook Group
- Instagram
- Twitter
- www.nextdoor.com

Fliers

Distribute fliers door to door. Ask local businesses to place fliers or posters in their businesses. Contact staff for assistance with printing.

Letters/Emails

Send letters or emails to all within the neighborhood boundary.

Newspapers

Announce your meetings and events in weekly area newspapers, in schools, churches, civic groups, and club newsletters.

Website

Establish a neighborhood association website. Several no-cost providers are available: Wordpress, Neighborhood Link www.neighborhoodlink.com.

- Welcome page
- Community news
- Rules and regulations
- Governing documents
- Bylaws
- Meeting announcements
- Amenities information (i.e. pool hours)
- Trash removal schedule
- Calendar of events
- Board member information
- Board meeting minutes
- FAQs
- Emergency numbers

Newsletter

Publish a quarterly or monthly neighborhood newsletter. Collaborate with other neighborhood associations to share the cost and assist in design. Short, informative articles that are of interest to the entire neighborhood will keep neighbors up-to-date. Newsletters can be paid for through association dues or by advertising dollars and can be produced fairly inexpensively. A good newsletter might contain:

- Notices of meeting dates and group events
- Information about city services
- Recent accomplishments of your group
- Notification of special events
- Recognition of volunteers
- Information about the schools in the neighborhood
- Profiles of neighbors
- Crime/safety information
- Birth/death announcements
- Graduation announcements
- Anniversaries
- Welcome to new neighbors
- Articles of community interest


Connect with the City

- Establish a committee to monitor city activities.
- Sign up to receive City Council and Planning Commission agendas (www.bentonvillear.com/list.aspx).
- Invite city staff as guest speakers at meetings.

Nino

Planning Projects & Events

Neighborhood projects are a great way to keep residents engaged and involved. Completing projects gives members a sense of accomplishment and can help retain membership. Neighborhood projects are also a way to get the word out about the association to residents in the neighborhood and act as a recruitment tool. Working together to plan and execute a project can grow the connection between members.



Tips for organizing projects & events

See project ideas on back page.

Identify projects with visible results. In developing your neighborhood projects, focus on a specific issue that will demonstrate action and results and that will be visible.

Plan projects and events in moderation. Do not suffocate your members with more projects than time will allow. Choose a pace and stay consistent. Slow progress is often better than no progress at all, but keep in mind that one large gap in activity could cost you the participation of a large majority of your membership.

Work through project details. Project planning and coordination can be the key to a successful project.

Make job assignments. Keep people involved in all levels and give people specific jobs and time frames. Everyone is willing to contribute a little bit of time. Do not give too much responsibility to one person; instead delegate to several.

Promote projects. Get the whole community behind the project by promoting as much as possible. This will provide lots of participation for you to establish a large membership base. If you are successful in achieving your goals or effecting change on a single issue, it demonstrates that your association is an effective group. This establishes the credibility and worthiness of your association.

Have the next project identified. Unfortunately, one problem with concentrating on a single issue is that when that problem is solved, everyone leaves. Therefore, it is important to introduce other issues at the same time and get people to work on them in addition to the main issue. As each issue is resolved, focus on new, short- and long-term projects.

Evaluate the project. Evaluate the association's progress to recognize successes, detect problems and suggest improvements. Keep momentum with a list of projects and activities that will maintain participation and interest.

Celebrate accomplishment and appreciate volunteers. Finally, celebrate your accomplishments! Thank your volunteers and express appreciation. Thank people for whatever they contribute – time, funds, or materials. Being appreciated will keep people involved and active. A personal thank you – a heart-felt hand shake or a hand written note – is probably the most effective form of appreciation. Public acknowledgement – at the annual meeting, in the newsletter, on the website – is also good. Other options include arranging for discounts at local stores or handing out freebies (group t-shirts, mugs, pens).

T e n Becoming a Great Neighborhood Partner

Once you've started to organize your neighborhood, we recommend submitting an application form to become a Great Neighborhoods Partner. Neighborhood Partners are neighborhood associations, property owner's associations and home owner's associations that have agreed to participate in the Bentonville Great Neighborhoods Partnership. Participation is voluntary but strongly encouraged.

All partners must follow the four principles of participation below.

Four Principles of Participation

- Resident-led** Neighborhood residents must lead the process. The city provides assistance and specific programs, but does not organize neighborhoods.
- Long-term commitment** Neighborhood residents must have a commitment to the association to ensure its resiliency over time.
- Inclusive** Neighborhood events and programs must be inclusive of all residents, businesses and organizations that wish to participate.
- Engaging activities** Events, meetings and activities open to the entire neighborhood must be held on a regular basis.

Organizational Levels

Neighborhoods can become a partner at one of two levels:

1. **Activating** - for neighborhoods are just beginning to organize or
2. **Active** - for existing active neighborhood associations (or POA/HOA's).

The program benefits vary based on the activation level.

Partnership Component (see pg. 3)	Activating	Active
Planning & Support	Full	Full
Neighborhood Partnership	Activating Level	Active Level
Neighborhood Advisory Committee	Non-voting representation	Voting representation
Neighborhood Programs	Limited*	Full

** Each program has specific eligibility requirements.*

Steps to Register as a Great Neighborhoods Partner

1

Check the eligibility criteria below and gather supporting documents.

2

Go to the Great Neighborhoods Partnership web page at www.bentonvillear.com/1048/Great-Neighborhoods-Partnership and click on the "Neighborhood Partner" tab.

3

Under Resources, click on the "Neighborhood Partner Registration Form" which will take you to an online form to complete and upload supporting documents.

Eligibility Criteria

Criteria	New Neighborhood Associations	Existing Active POA/HOA	Organization Level Requirement	
			Activating	Active
Approved neighborhood boundaries	The geographical area should be logical, with major roads, trails, or natural terrain serving as boundaries. Area should be of a reasonable size that is easy to organize. Staff can assist in defining boundaries.	The boundaries of the subdivision are acceptable.	●	●
Adopted neighborhood name	Contact staff to ensure the neighborhood name selected is not already in use by another organization or conflicts with the name of a subdivision.	The subdivision name listed on the covenants are acceptable.	●	●
At least 2 meetings per year	This can include the initial core group meeting and one other meeting. To register, copies of minutes from two meetings will be required. For tips, see "Holding Meetings" on page 8.	POA meetings are acceptable. Minutes must be submitted with registration	●	●
Adopted bylaws	Bylaws should include the requirements for membership, election of officers, etc. See page 6 and the appendix for information on bylaws.	The POA adopted bylaws are acceptable and must be submitted with registration.		●
Elected officers	The bylaws should set forth the process for electing officers, which should include a transparent, democratic process.	The elected officers of the POA are acceptable. A list of officers must be submitted with registration.		●
At least one neighborhood event per year	This may include any number of events, activities or projects, as long as they are open to all residents/property owners in the neighborhood boundaries. See "Planning Projects & Events" on page 13.	Documentation of at least one neighborhood event must be submitted with registration. See "Planning Projects & Events" on page 13.		●

Appendix

Sample Bylaws

Articles of Organization of [State name of Neighborhood Association].

Article I. Name.

The name of this organization shall be the [Name of Neighborhood Association].

Article II. Area of Operation.

This neighborhood organization shall limit its activities to the area within these boundaries: [describe boundaries]

Article III. Purpose.

The general purpose shall be to _____ [State whatever purpose that is agreed upon, see some examples below.]

- Make the area a better community in which to live and raise a family
- Encourage the residential character of the neighborhood and quality of life through compatible land use and housing preservation.
- Achieve better facilities and services to meet the needs of the residents of the area.
- Maintain a pleasing aesthetic character for the neighborhood.
- Develop local leadership and resources effectively to deal with neighborhood issues.
- Promote an increased awareness of the benefits and problems of living in the neighborhood.
- Inform the residents of the neighborhood of events concerning this area.
- Meet community needs so that all who live in the area will feel a part of the community.
- Provide a vehicle through which group unity may be directed when needed.

Article IV. Membership

Membership is open to anyone interested in the organization. Special efforts will be made to see that all segments of the community are included in the membership of the group. Each adult member (19 years or above) with dues current will be allowed to vote [or state whatever membership policy is agreed upon].

Article V. Dues

Annual dues will be \$2 per regular membership. Senior citizen memberships will be \$1. Dues shall be paid on or before the date of each annual meeting [or whatever is agreed upon].

Article VI. Meetings

The annual meeting of the organization will be held during the month of _____. Special general meetings can be called by a quorum of the Board. The membership shall be notified at least two weeks before scheduled meetings and when possible before special meetings. Procedures at general meetings shall follow "Robert's Rules of Order" [or whatever is agreed upon].

Article VII. Board

Functions of this organization shall be administered by a twelve (12) member board which the general membership will elect. Board members will be elected for a three-year tenure. Four (4) board members will be elected annually (except the first election at which four three-year members, four two-year members and four one year members are elected). Members may be reelected. The Board will meet once a month or as often as necessary. The Board meetings will be open to the public. As much as possible, the Board shall represent all areas of the neighborhood. The Board will select among themselves the presiding officers of the Board. If a vacancy occurs, a replacement shall be appointed by the Board to fill out the remainder of the term. The Board shall appoint committees as needed. Chairs of the committees can attend Board meetings. Any issues involving financial resources or capital improvements shall be brought before a meeting of the general membership. [Or state whatever definition is agreed upon.]

Article VIII. Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed. A majority of members present may adopt New Bylaws at either an annual meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose. [Or state whatever wording is agreed upon.]

Appendix

Parliamentary Procedures

For a complete description of parliamentary procedures, you can refer to a copy of Robert's Rules of Order. It is available at libraries, bookstores, or via the Internet. A summary is available at www.robertsrules.org. The following summary covers three of the most commonly used procedures – main motions, basic rules for debate, and voting.

Basic Process for a Main Motion or Resolution:

- A member secures the floor. Member rises, addresses the chair, (gives name in large assembly) and is recognized by the chair.
- A member introduces business. Member makes a motion ("I move"), another member seconds the motion, and the chair (presiding officer) states the motion, which opens the question presented to discussion.
- The chair puts the question. Chair takes the affirmative vote and the negative vote, and must announce the result (carried or lost).

Basic Rules of Debate:

- Each member is entitled to speak once to a question, sometimes twice or more often, if there is no objection.
- Members indulge no personalities, avoid reference by name.
- Members always make inquiries through the chair.
- Maker of motion has privilege of opening and closing debate.
- Chair must remain strictly neutral and must leave the chair (calling the vice president to preside) to debate and does not return to the chair until the pending question is voted upon.

Voting – Types:

- Majority – a number greater than half the votes cast.
- Plurality – in a contest of more than two alternatives, the number of votes cast for the winning alternative if it is not a simple majority.
- 2/3 Vote – 2/3 of the votes cast. To determine a 2/3 vote quickly, double the negative vote cast, and if equal to or less the affirmative vote cast, a 2/3 vote has been cast.
- Tie Vote – same number for and against, motion is lost.

Voting – Methods:

- Voice Vote: "Aye and No" – for majority vote.
- Show of Hands: "Affirmative and Negative" for small groups.
- Rising Vote: "Affirmative and Negative" for 2/3 vote.
- Roll Call – checks attendance as well as vote.
- Ballot – assures each voter's secrecy.
- Secretary to cast on ballot – only if authorized in bylaws.
- By Mail or Proxy – only if authorized in bylaws.
- By General Consent – for routine decisions, for example, the Chair states, "If there is no objection, we will . . . , etc."



Project Ideas

- Neighborhood clean up
- Community garden, tree planting, flower planting
- Back-to-school party and school supply drive
- Neighborhood scrapbook or video
- Crime watch program
- Scholarship exchange (example: Ex-boxer in the neighborhood sets up an afternoon boxing program for neighborhood kids and the kids mow and care for his yard.)
- Block party or festival
- Neighborhood entrance signs
- Security lighting
- Tool lending libraries
- Tutoring program for students
- Neighborhood cook-out, picnic, or pot luck
- Holiday celebrations
- Neighborhood t-shirts
- Yard of the month award
- Neighborhood newsletter, website, directory or telephone/email tree
- Paint/fix up projects
- Speakers on topics of interest to the neighborhood
- Philanthropic projects, such as adopting a family who needs help with Christmas dinner



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