



CREATING HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHOICE IN OSHKOSH

A Guide to Creating and Managing Neighborhood Associations in Oshkosh

Sponsored by:



OSHKOSH HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE



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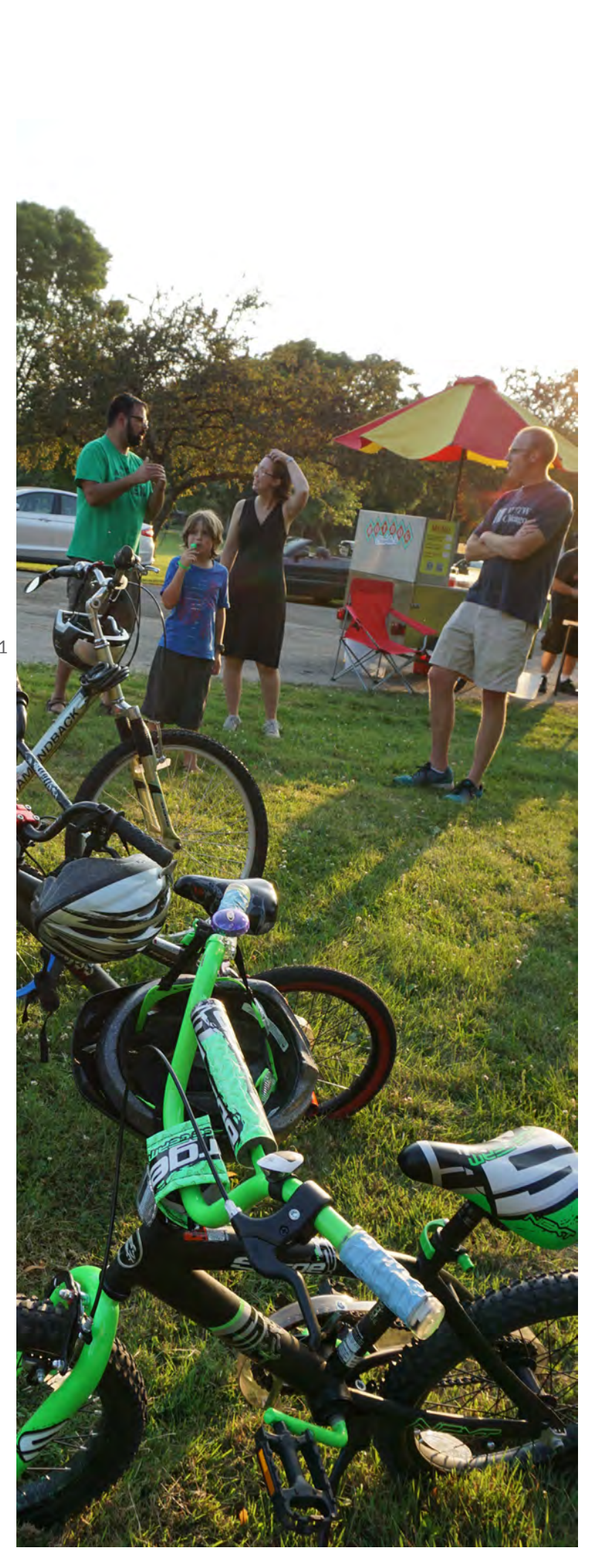
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INTRODUCTION

Our Oshkosh neighborhoods are vitally important community assets. They are where we live, work, play, and raise our families. Strong neighborhoods promote a sense of well-being and community connectedness that is good for our health, safety, and our children.

The Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhood Alliance is a committee of GO-HNI, comprised of resident leaders from Oshkosh neighborhood associations that are committed to maintaining or improving the quality of life in our community. Working in partnership with the City of Oshkosh, the goals of the Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhood Alliance are simple:

1. To provide assistance to residents in developing City of Oshkosh recognized neighborhood associations
2. To provide a forum for discussing neighborhood issues and devising solutions that positively impact our community

3. To represent the interests of neighborhoods in the development and implementation of strategies that affect quality of life issues; and promote neighborhoods that are clean, safe, friendly, and informed.

This guide was written for all residents who are interested in organizing a new neighborhood association, or becoming more involved in an existing association. There are many ways to organize an association and each neighborhood is unique. This guide should be viewed as a resource, but in no way interpreted as a one-size-fits-all approach to neighborhood development.

This guide was edited and updated in 2018 to reflect changes and retain its relevancy. Additional revisions and reprinting will occur as necessary.

Thank you!

THE HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS PHILOSOPHY

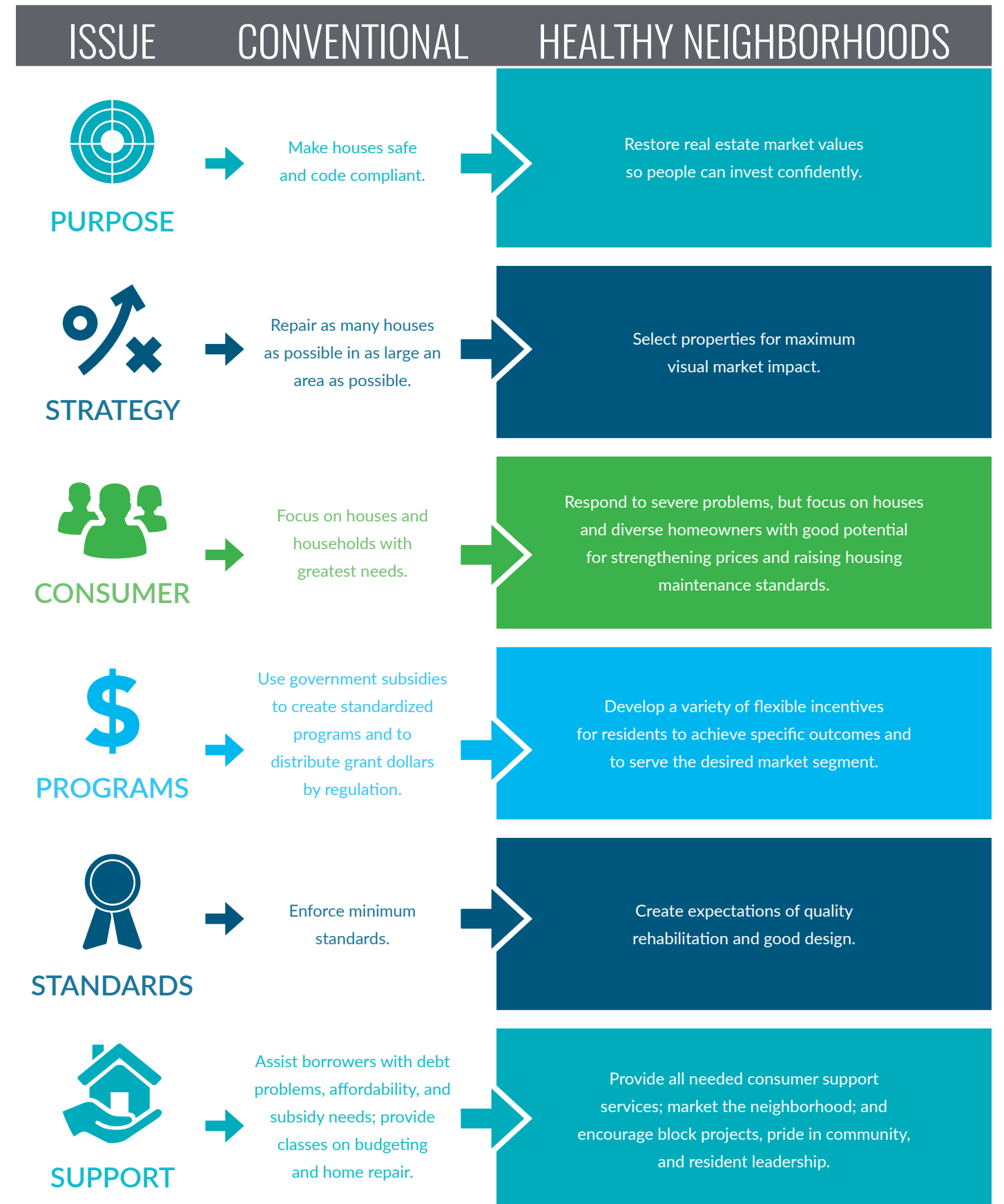
ONE Oshkosh is an initiative that is meant to unify all those working toward improving and revitalizing Oshkosh neighborhoods. Our strategies are organized around a specific theory of neighborhood change known as the Healthy Neighborhoods approach. This theory is also referred to as the market approach to neighborhood revitalization, or a process to create “Neighborhoods of Choice.” There are a few key principles to this approach:

1. A Healthy Neighborhood is defined as a place where it makes economic sense for people to invest time, money, and energy and where neighbors successfully manage day-to-day issues.
2. In this approach, the focus is on helping people to participate in the real estate market rather than just protecting them from it.
3. Particularly in soft markets, the strategies are mostly about cultivating demand for homes and rental units in a neighborhood. A key value is to create a place that is attractive and affordable to a variety of income groups. In hot markets, strategies may be more focused on creating supply.

4. Production of affordable housing, when applied to place-based revitalization, is used as a tool for revitalization rather than an outcome unto itself.
5. Progress is measured by tracking quality of life indicators and neighborhood confidence rather than units produced and people served: outcomes rather than outputs.
6. This approach values the residential real estate market as a key barometer of neighborhood health, and believes that home value represents the capitalization of all neighborhood assets.
7. This approach values intensive, meaningful, and ongoing discussion and relationship building with neighbors. It supports the idea of neighbors defining outcomes while practitioners offer insight into strategies and tools to get there. It makes the work of an organization about achieving the outcomes desired by neighbors rather than delivering programs on behalf of funders.



Neighborhood Revitalization: Conventional vs. Healthy Neighborhoods



Healthy Neighborhoods Outcome Areas

Image:

- Residents are confident about the future of the neighborhood
- Outsiders view the neighborhood as a good place live, work, and play

Market:

- Demand in the market exceeds supply
- Housing values are maintained
- Housing prices increase at rates better than the regional median
- Those moving in invest in their home and the neighborhood
- Higher home prices keep speculators out
- Quality housing opportunities for people of modest means are maintained

Physical Conditions:

- People continually invest in their properties
- “In-between” properties (those neither public nor private) are in a high state of repair
- Public property enhances the value of adjoining private property
- It makes social and economic sense to invest above the market

Neighborhood Management:

- Neighbors manage change and threats
- Problems are solved quickly
- Public institutions are held accountable and are accountable
- Property owners communicate with a high degree of care
- Behaviors that are a detriment to reinforcing confidence in the neighborhood are quickly curtailed



ONE Oshkosh

Our Vision:

That all neighborhoods throughout the Oshkosh community are attractive, well maintained, friendly, and desirable places to live that inspire and create competition within the local real estate market.

Our Mission:

Engage residents, encourage reinvestment, and elevate community pride through the creation of community investment partnerships for the benefit of residents in the greater Oshkosh area.

Our Objectives:

- Facilitate neighborhood organizational development and identity
- Increase resident involvement
- Increase home investment
- Improve the existing housing stock
- Increase home ownership
- Create higher standards of property improvement and maintenance
- Enhance the public realm
- Build confidence in the neighborhood
- Create Healthy Neighborhoods of Choice

Our Strategies and Resources:

- Provide homeowner rehabilitation loans and grants to increase property values
- Provide first time homebuyer programs and incentives to increase home ownership
- Conduct property acquisition and rehabilitation to improve the existing housing stock
- Provide quality design and rehabilitation services to increase standards of property improvement and maintenance
- Develop partnerships with local businesses, lenders, foundations, and residents
- Provide homebuyer education services;
- Provide financial and credit counseling services to build residents' financial capacity and personal wealth
- Facilitate the development of neighborhood associations to build social capital in the neighborhood
- Provide resident leadership training to increase residents' knowledge and leadership capacity
- Provide services in targeted areas for maximum impact



Greater Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods Incorporated

Our Mission:

GO-HNI is a private/public nonprofit community development corporation dedicated to strengthening Oshkosh neighborhoods by engaging residents, encouraging reinvestment and elevating community pride through the creation of community investment partnerships for the benefit of residents of the greater Oshkosh area.

Our Activities:

Neighborhood Development: GO-HNI seeks to engage neighborhood residents of the greater Oshkosh, WI area, empower them to be leaders in managing neighborhood issues, and to participate fully in determining the future of their neighborhoods. **Community Building & Engagement:** GO-HNI will assist in developing and sustaining recognized Neighborhood Associations in Oshkosh. **Neighborhood Revitalization:** GO-HNI will pursue partnerships to create positive neighborhood revitalization such as Rock the Block Oshkosh.

Real Estate Development: In an effort to cultivate demand in the residential real estate market, the GO-HNI Board of Directors will routinely purchase, rehab, and sell strategically selected residential properties in partner neighborhoods. We will adhere to the highest standards of construction to attract stable homebuyers and to make the greater Oshkosh area a community of choice.

Asset Management: Rental properties contribute significantly to the look and feel of our neighborhoods. Disinvestment in rental properties can cause nearby property values to similarly decline. The GO-HNI Board of Directors will acquire, rehab, and manage rental units in our target neighborhoods, creating a supply of high-quality housing units that are attractive and affordable for residents, while ensuring that minimum health, safety, and physical standards are not only met, but exceeded.



NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZING PROCESS

1. Originate idea to explore organizing as a recognized neighborhood

Do you want to get more involved in your community?

2. Contact GO-HNI for guidance

Call 920.230.2717 for a pre-organizing consultation (these can be done by phone or in person). Collaborate with GO-HNI to plan the neighborhood organizing process. GO-HNI staff must be involved in this process.

3. Form the Core Group

Discuss the idea with others that you think might want to be involved. The more people you have involved at the start, the more talent, skills, and abilities you'll have available for your neighborhood association.

4. Schedule your Core Group meetings

Don't forget to invite GO-HNI staff! We are here to help and can assist you through the entire organizing process.

5. Schedule and plan your first General Membership meeting

The General Membership meeting is open to the entire neighborhood, this is required in order to vote on the neighborhood name, boundaries and by-laws.

6. Send out invitations

Contact City of Oshkosh Planning Services Division at 920.236.5059 to take advantage of our mailing services (printing and neighborhood wide mailing). Invite all residents of your neighborhood to your first General Membership meeting.

7. Vote

At your General Membership meeting vote on neighborhood boundaries, a name, and your governing rules or by-laws.

8. Submit required documents

Submit all required documentation to GO-HNI in accordance with City of Oshkosh's Neighborhood Recognition Policy (found in this guidebook on page 15).

9. Get something on the calendar

Plan your first neighborhood project or event and **HAVE FUN!!!**



GOOD NEIGHBORS, GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

What Does It Mean to be a Good Neighbor?

History precludes that being a neighbor is being someone who lives with others within a social community. Within this social community, reside individuals, families, businesses, and schools. Good neighbors are interested in their entire neighborhood by showing respect for the property of others. And, their interest does not stop at their property line. Neighbors are individuals who work together to improve their neighborhood. Most individuals contribute to the social and economic prosperity of their neighborhood by establishing and participating in neighborhood associations. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with others who reside within their community proves to be beneficial not only for individual residents, but for their entire neighborhood. Some of the direct and indirect benefits of residing in desirable neighborhoods are that people obtain a sense of security because they know that they can rely upon the eyes and ears of their neighbors to protect their properties.

What is a Neighborhood Association?

A neighborhood association is a voluntary organization of residents who work together to improve and maintain the quality of life in their neighborhood. Associations can form out of a concern over a particular issue or as a means of enhancing a "sense of community." Neighborhood associations can work collaboratively with their local government agencies to facilitate the need for a rapid response from local agencies and residents to resolve

community concerns. Forming a neighborhood association can make a big difference in the quality of life for you personally and your community.

Voluntary, open membership makes neighborhood associations different from homeowners' organizations. Homeowners' organizations require homeowners to be members as a part of a covenant included in their purchase agreement. Non-homeowners in the area (renters or leasees, for example) are excluded. Usually a homeowner's organization is set up by the subdivision developer to provide maintenance fees for common areas. No matter what an organization is named, it's how the organization functions that determines what it is. This booklet focuses on neighborhood associations, but some of the material may also be useful to homeowner's organizations.

What are the Benefits of a Neighborhood Association?

Neighborhood associations are a valuable tool in helping bring residents together to preserve and enhance the livability of a neighborhood. Associations provide a forum for discussing local and citywide issues, and they often plan activities and projects that are beneficial to the area. Neighborhood associations can also help maintain neighborhood standards through code enforcement and help residents stay informed on city policies and procedures.

GETTING STARTED

Simple Steps to Remember When Getting Started

- Forming a neighborhood association is a process
- Identify your priorities and build them step-by-step
- Set realistic goals and start small
- As you are more established, set your goals higher
- Treat people with respect and integrity for the best results
- Have FUN!!

Forming the Core Group

If there is no neighborhood association organized in your area, starting one is a simple process. Begin by discussing the idea with others that you think may want to be involved. The more people that are involved at the start, the more resources your neighborhood association will have available in terms of skills, talents, and abilities of leaders and volunteers.

Recruit a core group of people to help get the word out about forming an association in your neighborhood. In addition to the contacts you may already have, consider reaching out to the organizations and places that make your neighborhood unique. It is a good idea to include individuals who represent your neighborhood's diversity in age, income, race, religion, ethnicity, etc. Some suggestions include:

- Schools (Principal, PTA/PTO)
- Local businesses (including home-based businesses)
- Churches (board, minister, groups)
- Service organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- Long-time residents (People with a sense of the neighborhood's history)
- Child care providers
- Local politicians
- Local professionals (attorneys, real estate agents, CPAs, etc.)

If there is general support for starting a neighborhood association, the next step is to discuss what the purpose of your association will be. Will it mainly coordinate existing neighborhood activities? Will it be an action group to address urgent issues? Perhaps it will be both. The purpose of your neighborhood association will help determine how your group will be organized.

Tasks of the Core Group

The core group meets to establish:

- Neighborhood boundaries
- Possible neighborhood names
- Vision/mission/purpose of the association
- Communication/outreach plan for the neighborhood
- Organizational structure of the group
- Date for the first general meeting

Roles for the Association Leadership/Committees

Outreach and recruitment: Leadership is responsible for outreach and to talk/listen to their neighbors. Neighborhood association leaders should find out the interests, skills, and issues/concerns for the people in their neighborhood. It is up to association leaders to find the right niche for each person in the association and recruit their participation.

Leadership development: Neighborhood association leaders should see themselves as the people who develop the leadership potential of other neighbors. This involves providing meaningful roles for others to play in the neighborhood association and providing support and back up as they carry out their assignments. Your group's leadership must delegate responsibility to others in the association. After tasks are assigned, follow-up to ensure tasks are completed and to provide any assistance.

Representing a constituency: Your association's leadership group should accurately represent the other members of the association. Leaders should not just speak for themselves, but speak with the voice of the group's members.

Vision: Your association's leadership should have a vision for the neighborhood. Leaders should be able to articulate that vision in a way that excites other members. The enthusiasm should be contagious!

Meeting organization: Your neighborhood association's leaders should organize periodic meetings for the group. This does not mean that the leaders do all the work, but it will be necessary for someone to get the ball rolling and then delegate tasks to other members to ensure successful meetings. The neighborhood association leaders will generally serve as chairpersons for the

meetings, but may also share that responsibility with others in the group as appropriate.

Communication: The association's leaders are responsible for disseminating information through flyers, door knocking, phone, e-mail, and other means. The best method for accomplishing this is by delegating roles to others and by establishing phone trees, door knocking teams, e-mail lists, etc. It is necessary to structure a two-way communication system so that the leaders can let others know about upcoming meetings, events, changes in policies, or other important news, and receive feedback and input from the association's members as well.

Problem solving: The association's leaders can sometimes be the people that neighbors will turn to when problems arise. Leaders can help to mediate disputes and negotiate solutions. This can also be done by others in the group, or a grievance committee, if they have the appropriate skills.

Conducting Neighborhood Outreach

Conducting neighborhood outreach is the perfect time to become acquainted and reacquainted with new and old neighbors. Engaging one another will foster new relationships within neighborhoods. Contacting potential association

members is vital to ensuring the success and development of one's neighborhood. Following are some recommended steps for attracting association members:

Identify people who can help:

- People/groups who have already achieved the results your group desires make great additions to your association.

Conduct a door-to-door canvas of your neighborhood to:

- Inform residents about the desire to establish a neighborhood association. Provide interested parties with a list of frequently asked questions (see sample documents for list of FAQs).

- Invite interested parties to the general meeting.

- Establish the initial neighborhood contact list (name, address, phone number, email, etc.).

Begin to build on the strengths of the neighborhood, once you have identified and selected your representatives and members.

- Network with other neighborhood associations.

- Network with non-profit organizations such as school and parent groups, churches, GO-HNI, the City's Planning Services Division, and the Common Council.



FIRST GENERAL MEETING

Meeting Location

Determine a meeting place and time, and invite everyone you contact to attend an opening meeting to discuss the idea of forming a neighborhood association. Your meeting location will depend largely on how many people are likely to attend. You may choose to have an ice cream social at the park, a meeting at the library or neighborhood school, or coffee at your home. Your neighborhood will receive immediate benefits through the simple act of neighbors getting to know each other!

Getting Prepared

In preparation for the first general meeting, the core group may:

Establish a date, finalize a meeting location and publicize the first general meeting.

Identify resources available to the group:

- City of Oshkosh Planning Services Division
- GO-HNI
- Local schools and churches
- Oshkosh Police Department
- Local businesses

Establish draft boundary lines for the neighborhood:

- Recommended size of a neighborhood is approximately 300 homes

- Boundaries should follow existing streets or natural barriers
- Draft a vision/mission statement for the group

Draft by-laws or organizational governing rules.

In order to be recognized by the City of Oshkosh, by-laws or organizational rules must include the following:

- A statement that the association is open to all residents of the neighborhood
- Neighborhood boundaries
- Meetings must be held annually, at minimum
- Contact information for the association's leadership

Create a general outreach plan for the neighborhood.

Identify a potential project to focus the group's efforts (preferably something that is not a controversial neighborhood issue).

Identify some possible names for your neighborhood association.

The best names are easy to remember and describe your neighborhood in some way. Some suggestions include:

- A name that describes your neighborhood's location
- A name centered around a shared asset of the neighborhood (a park, a landmark, or other common element that makes your neighborhood special)
- A name that reflects the history of the neighborhood



- A name that reflects a shared cultural element

Develop a short survey to identify resident interests/skills/abilities (see sample documents, pgs. 23 and 24).

Conduct reminder phone calls to interested parties.

- People respond best to personal invitations!

Suggestions for the first general meeting:

- Have fun!
- Discuss the mission/vision of the association
- Vote on the discussed and revised vision
- Approve by-laws, organizational structure
- Vote on a neighborhood name
- Identify your neighborhood's issues/concerns, prioritize the list
- Identify possible committees and committee leadership
- Answer key questions
- Involve as many participants as possible
- Discuss next steps

Tips for Running Successful Meetings

Set goals: At your core group or committee meeting, decide what you want to accomplish, and prepare an agenda.

Review the minutes of the last meeting:

- Who was assigned what task? Are they prepared to make a report? Where do they fit in the agenda? How much time is needed for the presentation?
- What issues are unresolved?
- What issues are you now prepared to make decisions about?

Collect information: Collect all new information which has been received by the core group or committee. Put this in outline format so all committee members have the information.

Resources and information: Confirm speakers/presenters. Also ensure that all information to be passed out is obtained and printed for distribution.

Sending notices of the meeting: Notify participants and attendees of the time, date, and location of the meeting at least one week in advance.

Prepare an agenda: Items may include review/approval of prior meeting minutes, introductions, and an itemization of topics/issues to be discussed at current meeting.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION RECOGNITION POLICY

Purpose

Neighborhoods are an important part of our quality of life within the City of Oshkosh. As a community, it is vital to have neighborhoods which are strong. The City recognizes the important role neighborhood associations can play in developing a vision(s) within neighborhoods and the community as a whole. Therefore, the City of Oshkosh encourages the voluntary formation of neighborhood associations for the purpose of facilitating communication between residents and City officials, fostering interaction between individuals on issues of common geographic concern, and building a better community through cooperative action.

Neighborhood associations provide many opportunities for people to work together at the neighborhood level on issues that directly benefit their own neighborhood and strengthen the entire community. A neighborhood association meeting and sustaining the requirements within this policy will be recognized by the City of Oshkosh.

Definitions

Neighborhood: A neighborhood can be defined by, but not limited to geographic or man-made boundaries. Its residents share a common link such as a school, public street pattern, parks, architectural styles or time periods, or infrastructure. A neighborhood is typically not a single residential development. Neighborhoods may include businesses, churches, homes and other community entities.

Neighbors: Neighbors are people or legal entities owning or occupying property within a neighborhood. A neighbor also includes a representative of a person or legal entity owning or occupying property within a neighborhood.

Neighborhood association: Voluntary organizations, neighborhood associations are recognized by the City and made up of a group of people who identify with a common area, who share common goals and concerns, and who work together to improve and maintain the quality of life in their neighborhood. Recognized neighborhood associations work collaboratively with the City of Oshkosh to facilitate the need for a rapid response from local agencies and residents to resolve neighborhood concerns.

Benefits of a Recognized Neighborhood Association

Development of a neighborhood plan: Recognized neighborhood associations are eligible to develop a plan embodying citizen's desires on a broad range of concerns in a designated neighborhood. The purpose of a neighborhood plan is to provide detailed goals and objectives for the designated neighborhood in a manner consistent with the City of Oshkosh Comprehensive Plan and current ordinances. Neighborhoods with an approved plan are eligible for additional programs which are developed to assist with plan implementation.

Public Participation: Recognized neighborhood associations will be included in the public input process, but will not be assumed by City officials to speak on behalf of all neighbors and will not limit the ability of any person or entity, including non-recognized Neighborhood groups, to participate on their own behalf. Communication with the neighborhood association will not replace the City's traditional methods of direct outreach to residents.

Guest Speakers: The City will develop and maintain a list of City staff that can be scheduled as guest speakers by neighborhood associations. Speakers will be scheduled based on availability. Speakers may be requested to make a presentation on a special topic. The guest speaker program is designed for education and information sharing purposes.

Neighborhood Meeting Signs: GO-HNI will provide access to yard signs to help advertise neighborhood meetings/events. The signs are available on first-come, first-serve basis and can be requested by contacting GO-HNI staff.

City Staff Liaison Assistance: When requested, a City staff liaison can provide technical assistance, including but not limited to, advice on how to effectively run meetings, how to advertise meetings and other association events.

Funding: Recognized neighborhood associations are eligible to submit funding requests for public improvement projects and community building and engagement activities within their neighborhood. Funding is based on yearly allocation and there is no guarantee that every request submitted will be approved for funding.

Expectations of a Recognized Neighborhood Association

The following expectations exist with respect to recognized neighborhood associations:

- Organize and hold at least one (1) general meeting and one (1) neighborhood-wide activity/event per calendar year and notify City staff liaison of date(s) of activity(s)/event(s).
- Ensure the attendance of 10 Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhood Alliance meetings by at least 1 neighborhood representative.
- Provide the GO-HNI staff with names, telephone numbers, and addresses of core team members.
- Neighborhood associations are strictly voluntary and no neighbor will be required to participate.
- Each neighborhood association will determine its own priorities and desired level of activity.
- Neighborhood associations will not assume the role of an administrative or legislative body.
- Neighborhood associations have no legal authority to enact or enforce property design or maintenance requirements.
- The City shall not serve as the fiduciary agent for a neighborhood association.
- Any neighborhood association that raises money outside of a city-sponsored grant or program is responsible for complying with applicable state and federal laws.
- If funds are disbursed by the City, a neighborhood association may be required to provide documentation of appropriate use. Failure to do so may result in removal of recognition.

Recognition Requirements

To earn an official recognition designation from the City of Oshkosh the following requirements must be met:

1. A group of neighbors intending to form a recognized neighborhood association must notify the City staff liaison and form an organizing committee. An existing neighborhood organization seeking a designation must notify the City staff liaison of its intention.
2. An educational/informative meeting, upon request, may be conducted by the City staff liaison regarding steps to organize and the process to receive a recognition designation from the City.

3. The organizing committee notifies, in writing, all neighbors of the opportunity to vote on becoming a recognized neighborhood association.
4. Upon request, the City will assist with a neighborhood-wide initial mailing, notifying residents of a meeting to vote on the formation of a recognized neighborhood association. Content must be prepared by the organizing committee and delivered to the Planning Services Division at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting date to ensure timely delivery. Mailing will be addressed to "Current Resident."
5. A set of bylaws to include the following information:
 - a. Name of the neighborhood association
 - b. A statement identifying the purpose/mission of the neighborhood association
 - c. Description of the neighborhood boundaries
 - d. A statement explaining the neighborhood association is voluntary and that neighbors will not be required to participate or join
 - e. A statement that the neighborhood association will be open to all people living in or owning or representing property within the neighborhood boundary
 - f. Procedures for election and removal of leadership
 - g. Method of determining how votes are taken and recorded at annual meeting(s)
 - h. Method of changing or amending the bylaws
6. Upon an affirmative vote, the neighborhood association must submit a copy of the neighborhood association bylaws and supporting materials
7. The City staff liaison will review the materials and notify the neighborhood association and City Council of his or her decision with regard to recognition within three weeks in writing

Reporting Requirements

A recognized neighborhood association must provide the following information to sustain its recognition with the City of Oshkosh:

1. Changes in core team (officers, governing committee, contact person(s))

2. Amendments to bylaws
3. Names, telephone numbers, and addresses of all core team members.
4. Organize and hold at least one (1) general meeting and one (1) neighborhood wide activity/event per calendar year and notify City staff liaison of date(s) of activity(s)/event(s)

These reporting requirements must be submitted in writing to the City staff liaison as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after a request is made or event/meeting has occurred. Non-compliance may be cause to suspend or revoke the City's recognition.

Removal of Recognition

The City has the authority to suspend or remove recognition from a neighborhood association if the association fails to comply with any requirement of this policy. In the case of conflict over which group represents a certain neighborhood, the City staff liaison will work with the City Manager to determine which group is officially recognized by the City of Oshkosh.

A suspension from recognition may be authorized by the City staff liaison. The neighborhood association will be given written notice of non-compliance and a period of 30 days to achieve compliance. The City staff liaison must inform the City Manager of such suspension within one (1) business day.

Should a recognized neighborhood association not achieve compliance within 30 days, the City staff liaison will submit a written report to the recognized neighborhood association and Common Council stating noncompliance, when the neighborhood association was notified of non-compliance and any other pertinent information. The City Council will decide whether to revoke recognition.

If the City removes recognition, the neighborhood association and City Council will be informed in writing.

Neighborhood associations may reapply for recognition at any time.

City Staff Liaison

A City staff liaison will be assigned by Planning Services to all forming neighborhood association. The responsibilities of the staff liaison will be to:

- Provide technical assistance and support to forming and recognized neighborhood associations

- Ensure that the recognition requirements are met and notify the neighborhood association, City Manager and Common Council of any shortcomings
- Maintain City records related to neighborhood associations;
- Facilitate communications and contact between recognized neighborhood associations and City staff, if requested
- Educate City staff on the role of neighborhood associations and how to fully engage neighborhood associations as a valued resource
- Promote and administer neighborhood programming within recognized neighborhood associations
- Advise Common Council members on issues related to neighborhoods or neighborhood associations
- Draft or review, as requested by Common Council or City Manager, recommendations for new policies and/or policy changes relating to neighborhood issues or concerns
- Refer issues brought forward by neighborhood associations to appropriate staff

It is not the role of the City staff liaison to organize a neighborhood on behalf of a proposed neighborhood association or to advocate positions on behalf of neighborhood associations.

Communication Support

The City shall not serve as the primary communication vehicle for neighborhood associations.

Basic communication support from the City includes:

- City of Oshkosh neighborhood web page: The neighborhood group's page will include the neighborhood boundaries and notable features, neighborhood association bylaws, neighborhood association contact information, and links to the neighborhood association website or other online resource, if applicable.
- Upon request, the City will provide printing services for each association. Associations should anticipate a minimum of 3-4 days turnaround for each copying project.

Communication with the neighborhood association will not replace the City's traditional methods of direct outreach to residents. The City will not facilitate any communication that is inconsistent with its policies, general operating principles, or the City Municipal Code. Examples of communication that would be inconsistent with City policies include items that are discriminatory or politically partisan in nature.





SAMPLE DOCUMENTS



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of your neighborhood association?

A neighborhood association is a voluntary organization of residents who work together to improve and maintain the quality of life in their neighborhood. Associations can form out of a concern over a particular issue or as a means of enhancing a “sense of community.” Neighborhood associations can work collaboratively with their local government agencies to facilitate the need for a rapid response from local agencies and residents to resolve community concerns. Forming a neighborhood association can make a big difference in the quality of life for you and your community.

How is a neighborhood association different from a homeowner’s association?

A homeowner’s group, whether in a condominium, townhouse, or single-family subdivision, establishes general guidelines for the operation of the community, as well as its standards. The homeowner’s association decides on matters affecting the common areas, such as whether an individual unit owner may put up window boxes or plow a garden. Most homeowners’ associations have a right of first refusal, or right to purchase a unit at market value before the owner seeks other purchasers; however, this right may not be used to discriminate against prospective buyers on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, handicap, or families with children.

What does a neighborhood association do?

Neighborhood associations help identify challenges and concerns, support change and improvement efforts, help resolve conflicts, provide volunteers for community initiatives, represent the neighborhood as a whole to elected officials and find resources to make the neighborhood a better place to live.

How often does a neighborhood association meet?

This answer is dependent upon each association’s need and preference for the frequency of meetings. This will be determined upon the needs of the group.

What would be my role in a neighborhood association?

Your role in the association is dependent upon you and the time and resources that you would like to contribute. You are welcome to volunteer as much time as you see fit. If you are interested in having a role with expanded responsibility, positions on the Steering Committee/Board of Directors, President, Vice President, etc. may be of interest to you.

Sample Membership Questionnaire I

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Day: _____ Evening: _____

The Neighborhood Association depends upon you, its members, to make it effective. In order to determine what your interests and skills are, please provide us with answers to the following questions.

INTERESTS

Do you wish to be involved in:

- ___ Committee activities
(check those you are interested in)
 - Membership
 - Social
 - Safety
 - Beautification
 - Communication/Public Relations
- ___ Projects or events
- ___ Fund-raising
- ___ Clerical tasks
- ___ Children’s activities
- ___ Other: _____

SKILLS

Please indicate the skills/talents you can share with our neighborhood association.

- ___ Artistic design/decoration
- ___ Clerical
- ___ Computer skills
- ___ Fund-raising
- ___ Hospitality
- ___ Newsletter writing/editing
- ___ Public relations/speaking
- ___ Accounting/finance
- ___ Experience as a committee chairperson
- ___ Other

TIME

Please indicate your desired level of involvement.

- ___ Ongoing ___ Occasionally ___ Rarely

EQUIPMENT

Do you have access to equipment, such as computers, copy machines, supplies, etc. which could be used to help the association?

- ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, what? _____

THANK YOU!

Sample Membership Questionnaire II

(Courtesy of the Millers Bay Neighborhood Association)

Neighborhood Survey

We need your help in identifying and prioritizing issues in our neighborhood, learning about your talents and your overall comments.

How long have you lived, owned or rented in our neighborhood? _____

What is it that you love about our neighborhood?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Identify and prioritize issues that are of major concern to you.
(e.g. speeding, pet concerns, vandalism, etc)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Name: _____ Phone/email: _____

What committee(s) would you like to serve on?

- ___ 1. Membership ___ 2. Communication ___ 3. Social ___ 4. Beautification ___ 5. Block Leader ___ 6. Safety

Please share any specific talents and interests you have that you would consider sharing with our neighborhood:

SAMPLE BY-LAWS I

[Insert Name] Neighborhood Association

Courtesy of Menominee South Neighborhood Association

Vision: *Neighborhood Association Name* is a walkable, socially and economically diverse neighborhood where the quality of life is rich for all ages. All people are welcomed and valued and are encouraged to engage in open and effective communication and to participate in community activities. The neighborhood treasures its ample public spaces, unique historical buildings, and abundant natural resources and is committed to creating and sustaining a healthy and safe environment for all.

Mission: *Neighborhood Association Name* brings neighborhood residents together to get to know one another, create community and build upon existing assets, develop a collective voice to represent the desires of its membership, and collaborate with neighbors and other Oshkosh stakeholders to address issues and opportunities related to local quality of life.

Neighborhood Boundaries: The *Neighborhood Association Name* boundaries are (*insert boundaries here*):

Membership: All residents, property owners and businesses that lie within the above stated boundaries are eligible for membership in the *Neighborhood Association Name*. Membership is on a voluntary basis and there are no dues or fees to belong.

Fundraising: There are no fees or dues required for membership in the *Neighborhood Association Name*. Donations and grants are accepted, and fundraising is encouraged and monitored by the steering committee. All monies raised will be used to pursue the goals of the *Neighborhood Association Name*.

Leadership: *Neighborhood Association Name* is led by a steering committee consisting of an odd number of neighbors and of no less than five (5) participants and no greater than nine (9) who will volunteer on a one (1) year basis, to be extended if needed and have an interest to do so. Any neighborhood resident aged eighteen (18) years or older is eligible to be a member of the Steering Committee. Steering Committee members will be elected by verbal consent annually by those residents in attendance at the *Neighborhood Association Name's* annual membership meeting. One *Neighborhood Association Name* Steering

Committee member will be designated as the lead point of contact for the City of Oshkosh and the City Staff Liaison. Steering Committee members may be removed through a majority vote at a recognized neighborhood meeting if the member is not working towards the best interest of the *Neighborhood Association Name*.

Committees: Membership participation is best served by joining a committee that has been assigned responsibilities and authorities by the Steering Committee. Committees shall be established by the Steering Committee as deemed necessary to pursue our stated Mission. Membership on committees is open to all Association members.

Committees shall be responsible for the coordination of activities and programs, for research and review of issues and proposals, and for recommending actions to be taken by the Steering Committee in the area(s) of responsibility assigned to the committee.

Committee structure is informal to encourage member participation. Committees shall choose their own officers, schedule regular meetings, and report findings to the Steering Committee.

Meetings: An annual membership meeting will be held each year in May. Other meetings may be called for organizing purposes. All *Neighborhood Association Name* members are eligible to vote on all matters brought before the association. Decisions are to be made by consensus, whenever possible, with a majority vote necessary to pass. Decisions are to be made by those present.

Changing of Bylaws: The accepted above bylaws may be changed only through majority vote at the *Neighborhood Association Name* annual membership meeting or an open neighborhood meeting where the intent of the meeting has been clearly defined. The Steering Committee, with advisement from the association may draft additional guides that are in the best interest of the *Neighborhood Association Name* and will become guiding with a majority vote.

It is by consensus of those attending the meeting on (*insert date*) (*insert place*) that these organizational governing rules are adopted.



[Neighborhood Association Name] Agreement

1: Name

The name shall be the [Neighborhood Association Name]

2: Vision Statement

The Association's Vision Statement: [Insert Here]

3: Mission Statement

The Association's Mission Statement: [Insert Here]

4: Boundaries

The Association's boundaries are: [Insert Here]:

North: East:

South: West:

[Insert Map of Boundaries as Appendices]

5: Association Membership

Membership in the [Neighborhood Association Name] is open to all persons, 18 years of age and older, residing in or owning a property or business or representative(s) of business within the [Neighborhood Association's Name] boundaries. Membership is strictly voluntary. No neighbor will be required to participate. There are no fees to be a member of [Insert Neighborhood Association Here].

5.1: Voting

Each member shall be entitled to one vote each. Decisions are made by majority rule of those present at a meeting.

6: Meetings

An Annual meeting or General Membership meeting shall be held once a year. The core team members determine the time and place of these meetings and provide advance notice to members as a reminder. Other meetings may be held with advance notice provided by all members.

*Oshkosh Civility Project principles will be utilized during all meetings (oshkoshcivilityproject.com).

7: Leadership

Members of [Insert Neighborhood Association] will form at least (5) core team members. All members of the Core Team must be [Insert Neighborhood] resident (owning or renting), property or business owner or business representative within the neighborhood boundaries. In the case of a Core Team member vacancy, the remaining members of the Core Team members are authorized to recruit and replace the committee member.

7.1: Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods Alliance

Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods Alliance (OHNA) is made up of leadership core team members from all neighborhood associations and are represented at a monthly meeting every third Tuesday from January through October. At least one (1) neighborhood association member(s) must represent at the OHNA meetings within each neighborhood association.

8: Funding

There are no fees to belong to [Name of Neighborhood Association]. Fundraising is encouraged and up to the [Name of Neighborhood Association].

8.1: Community Building and Engagement Funds

Greater Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc (GO-HNI) has funds to be used for neighborhood associations to encourage connectedness in the neighborhoods. To use funds, majority vote on projects and/or events with documentation must be submitted with a Community Building and Engagement Application for consideration. Once approved by GO-HNI staff, neighborhood associations are able to purchase items for stated project and/or event as stated in approved application. After project and/or event, receipts and additional documentation are required to receive reimbursement for expenses.

8.2: Raffle License

GO-HNI has a State of Wisconsin Raffle License that can be used for fundraising efforts by submitting a Raffle License Application and be approved by GO-HNI staff. Documentation will be needed for the use of Raffle License by State guidelines.

9: Policy Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

The [Name of Neighborhood Association] values the uniqueness of the individual, the power of the collective good and the importance of communities. We promote a climate that welcomes, understands and respects the diversity of our neighbors, staff, clients, donors, volunteers, and community partners. Dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to age, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic protected by law.

10: Dissolution

The [Name of Neighborhood Association] shall dissolve if and only if the [Name of Neighborhood Association] has attempted to remain active through the guidance of Greater Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc or the City. If [Name of Neighborhood Association] decides to dissolve the [Name of Neighborhood Association] must present a majority vote from [Name of Neighborhood]. The [Name of Neighborhood Association] must provide documentation of vote to Greater Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc and the City. All remaining funding will be returned to Greater Oshkosh Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc.

11: Amendment of Agreement

The power to alter, amend or repeal the Agreement or adopt new Agreement shall be vested in the members. Such action shall be taken at an Annual Membership meeting, General Membership meeting, or a meeting called for that purpose by a simple majority vote. The Agreement may contain any provision for regulation and management of the affairs of the [insert Name of Neighborhood Association] consistent with the law. Two weeks' notice for any proposed change to the Agreement shall be given.

Appendices:

Map of [Name of Neighborhood Association]

*Oshkosh Civility Project: oshkoshcivilityproject.com

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA I

Neighborhood Association Meeting

Date:

Time:

Location:

Agenda

- Introduction of steering committee volunteers
- Description of a neighborhood association from City staff liaison
- Name approval
 - Suggestions of name
 - Vote
- Bylaws
 - General description
 - Changes
 - Vote
- Annual recognition requirements
 - Annual meeting
 - Annual event
- Potential projects that need committees
- Next Steps
- Closing

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA II

[Association Name] Neighborhood Meeting

Date:

Time:

Location:

Agenda

- 6:00 PM Call to Order
 - Minutes of previous meeting
- 6:10 PM Chairperson's Report
- 6:15 PM Standing Committee Reports
 - Finance
 - Membership
 - Safety
 - Beautification
 - Social
 - Public Relations/Communication
- 6:30 PM Old Business (items left from previous meetings)
 - a.
 - b.
- 7:00 PM New Business
- 7:30 PM Announcements
 - Next meeting and adjournment



BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR!

Living in a great neighborhood requires "Responsible Freedom" — to make choices in pursuit of our own interests and lifestyles which do not detract from the neighborhood as a whole by upholding laws, statutes and City of Oshkosh Municipal Codes (MC) and expecting the same of others!

Introduce yourself to new neighbors and near neighbors

- Establish a helping relationship

Respect your neighbor's right to a quiet/peaceful environment

- Keep music and other noises from disturbing them (MC - 17:41)
- Keep pets from barking excessively (MC - 6:12)

Respect your neighbor's right to a clean environment

- Clean up after your pets (MC - 6:9)
- Keep your property clear of garbage & debris (MC - 17:36)

Respect your neighbor's safety

- Obtain a pet license and have your pet vaccinated (MC - 6:3 and 6:14)
- Keep your swimming pool inaccessible to children (MC - 17:20 B)
- Keep pets from roaming loosely (MC - 6:7)

- Remove snow/ice from sidewalks abutting your property within 24 hours after precipitation ends (MC - 25:68)
- Obey all traffic laws
- Report suspicious activity to local authorities

Strive for a visually pleasant neighborhood

- Regularly mow your lawn (MC - 17:44)
- Keep branches and shrubbery trimmed (MC - 26:10)
- Park cars in driveways only (MC - 27:37)
- Refrain from parking/storing/conducting major repairs on non-operational vehicles in your driveway (MC - 27-19) & (MC - 27:24C)
- Keep exterior of your home in good repair (MC - 16:35 and 17:36)
- Place trash by the curb AFTER 4:00 PM on the evening prior to pickup
- Store containers out of view from the street (MC - 16:37 A 2)

If friendly dialogue "over the fence" or "over a cup of coffee" has not been successful, individuals may contact the Oshkosh Police Department at the non-emergency number of (920) 236-5700 for violations. For property maintenance complaints, call the Inspection Services Division at (920) 236-5050 and for snow/ice removal issues, contact the Street Department at 236-5065.

12 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD RIGHT NOW

1. Make a list of the names and phone numbers of every neighbor on your block. Not just two neighbors — set a goal of at least 10 and preferably 20 or 30. Find almost any citizen who has turned around a problem block, and you will find a citizen who really knows the people who live there. Did you grow up in a neighborhood where “everyone knew each other” and find that today your neighborhood isn’t like that? That’s true for many people. That’s not “society’s” fault. Instead, think of it as your own fault, and you can fix it. Unless you know neighbors’ names and numbers, you can’t call them about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem. Learn the names and phone numbers of your neighbors this weekend.
 2. Make a list of landlords in your areas as well. As owners of property in the community, landlords are responsible to the neighborhood, and most are rightly concerned about the health of the community in which their properties stand. You can find out the name and address of the person or organization who owns any property, including the rental house next door, by contacting your county tax assessor’s office. Do it today.
 3. Walk around the block. It sounds simple enough, but neighbors benefit over time when more responsible citizens walk about more, particularly for those who are comfortable doing it, at night, every night around their block. At minimum, walk around the block, once every day, preferably at night if you feel comfortable doing so. Take a moment to chat with neighbors, including youth, when the opportunity arises.
 4. Help your neighborhood association or similar groups. If you are willing, decide what greater contribution you would like to make — then take the lead and do it. If leadership isn’t your desire, at least make sure someone in your household attends local neighborhood association meetings. You’ll be kept better informed of the issues facing the neighborhood and how you can help, and perhaps more importantly, you’ll have the chance to shape, guide, and participate in the future of your neighborhood.
 5. Pick up the litter near your home, even if you didn’t put it there. Most people are less likely to litter where they don’t see litter already. You can help stop the growth of trash in your neighborhood by taking away the existing litter that attracts it.
 6. Meet the youth who live on your block and greet them by name. This is one of the simplest steps an adult can take; yet it can make a profound difference should there be a future need for adults and young people to speak to each other in the midst of a neighborhood crisis. Also, it is difficult to help form a safe and supportive community for children without the adults and children knowing each other. Even those without children should know to whom the various children in the neighborhood belong. In this way, each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to discuss problems immediately as they arise.
 7. Drive slowly on neighborhood streets. While we often call for stop signs, lights, and speed bumps, we often forget that we can organize a means to slow down neighborhood traffic sooner. Remember that it is legal to drive a few miles per hour below the speed limit in your neighborhood. For example, if the speed limit is 25, try 20 instead. Regular slower driving on neighborhood side streets by multiple neighbors will dampen the desire of racers to use your street — it isn’t as fun to cut through a neighborhood if the likelihood of being stuck behind a car traveling at a more respectful pace has increased. Also, do it on every side street in the neighborhood, not just the one near your home.
 8. Turn on your porch light. Do this every night at dusk, and keep it on until dawn. Crime tends to decline in neighborhoods that are well lit. Turning on porch lights is a simple way to start this process. It also makes the street feel more “welcome” to good residents who are out for a walk in the evening. It communicates a higher level of caring for the neighborhood by residents. This can become a daily routine, or it can be accomplished by installing a timer. It is also immediate — while you wait for local government to install that new streetlight that everyone is asking for, go ahead and add a little more light yourself. Then encourage other neighbors to do the same.
 9. Take away the opportunity for crime. Think about your home, your car, and even your lifestyle and ask what you could change to take away the opportunity for crime. Lock your car and never leave valuables, for a few minutes, in the car where would-be thieves might see them. Trim bushes or trees on your property that offer too-convenient hiding places. Also, trim where trees and bushes block a clear view of your front door and address from the street or make it difficult for a person to see out of windows in your home. In short, make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like it has its “eyes” (windows) open.
 10. Report crime promptly. Neighbors sometimes don’t report criminal activity because they don’t want to bother the police, they assume police are too short staffed to respond, or they believe that there isn’t much an officer can (or will) do about a given problem anyway. Whether the issue is graffiti, petty vandalism, or something much more serious, police cannot act without first hearing about the problem from you. Calling won’t guarantee that police can fix the problem, but failing to call can guarantee that they won’t. Also, don’t assume someone else has called. Make the call yourself.
 11. Report nuisances and other noncriminal problems promptly. Examples: Junked cars on front lawns, abandoned autos in the streets, old mattresses left to rot in a backyard, garbage dumped illegally in a vacant lot. When you find yourself thinking, “someone ought to do something,” do something. Call code enforcement, nonemergency numbers, landlords, residents, local business owners, or any other person or agency that may have influence on the issue. Then call your neighbors and ask those who are also concerned about the issue to call and report as well. Then keep calling until the issue is resolved.
 12. Stay where you are. Stable neighborhoods are built on the commitment of long term residents who would rather live in a healthy community than move to a bigger house. Communities reach stability when conscientious citizens allow their roots to grow deep and help transform a geographic area that exists as a “neighborhood” in name only into a real community of involved people. Please, stay and help.
- Finally, don’t stop at 12 tasks: Do whatever else you can to make your neighborhood a safe and enjoyable place to live, work, go to school, and raise a family. Remember: living in a good neighborhood isn’t a right, it’s a responsibility.





SUPPORT RESOURCES

GO-HNI

Phone: 920.230.2717

Address: 404 N. Main St., Ste. 605

Email: pam@gohni.org

City of Oshkosh - Planning Services Division

Phone: 920.236.5059

Address: City Hall, room 204

Email: planning@ci.oshkosh.wi.us

www.nextdoor.com

This is a free, private, online neighborhood social network where neighbors can:

- Share community events
- Advertise items and services for sale/free,
- Voice neighborhood concerns
- Share ideas about how to improve your neighborhood
- Track down a trustworthy babysitter
- Organize a neighborhood rummage sale
- Ask for help finding a lost pet

www.neighborhoodlink.com

Free web hosting for your neighborhood website, plus articles and resources for all things neighborhood related.

