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Success

Through

Neighborhood  
Organization

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*Neighborhood Conservation Office  
Department of Planning and Development  
City of Springfield, Missouri  
Revised November 2006*



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# Success Through Neighborhood Organization

This booklet has been developed and published by the Neighborhood Conservation Office (NCO), a division of the Department of Planning and Development with the City of Springfield. The function of the NCO is to promote strong neighborhoods. Therefore, through this booklet, the NCO hopes to assist interested citizens in the formation of successful neighborhood organizations.

There are many ways in which this process of establishing a neighborhood can take place. The steps in this booklet provide just one recommended method. Changes to this process may be necessary in order to produce the results that are desired in each individual neighborhood. The initial information contained herein should be applicable to all areas. More involved information, provided thereafter, can be used at the neighborhood's discretion.



## First Things First . . . Why Organize?

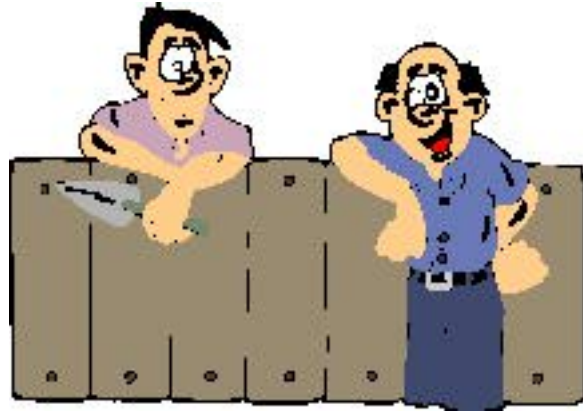
There are many reasons for a neighborhood to organize. Some of the most important benefits are outlined below.

- **You can establish neighborhood bonds.** Building 'community' within your neighborhood is of utmost importance. Working together with your neighbors helps make everyone feel like they 'belong'. With a common sense of ownership, more residents will be likely to participate because their interests are at stake.
- **You can solve problems together.** "Ten voices are louder than one." In a team, you can focus your interests and your efforts on the things that are most important to you. In the end, you will be much more successful.
- **You can raise the level of property maintenance.** This is one of the most common efforts in a neighborhood. You may not be able to improve the conditions of an unsightly neighboring property by yourself. A neighborhood-wide effort can target these problems and assist in their solution. In the end, both visual quality and property values are improved.



- **You can establish better communication with your neighbors.**

Too often, people do not even know their neighbors. A neighborhood organization gives everyone something in common. Merely getting people introduced to their neighbors will affect improvements in untold ways.



- **You can work more effectively with**

**municipal services.** In the same way that the residents benefit by working together, a group provides a larger forum for communicating with city government to voice concerns and solve problems.

- **You can create a vision for your neighborhood.** Once your neighborhood is organized, you can begin to discuss your wishes for the future. You can outline steps that you will take to make positive improvements. If you are interested in city-coordinated planning processes, contact the NCO.
- **You can create pride in your neighborhood.** Creating pride is something so basic, yet so important. Neighborhoods can easily fall into disrepair and despair. However, when people care, you will be able to maintain and improve that place that you call home.
- **You can help make your neighborhood a safer place.** By working together, looking out for each other, and coordinating with your police officers, neighbors can help to create a safer, more secure environment in which to live.

## Sounds Good But . . . Where Do We Start?

Here are some suggested steps to take in organizing your neighborhood. If you have not yet begun this process, start at the beginning. If you have already initiated the process, begin at the point that is appropriate for you.

1. **Organize a steering committee.**

This committee may be a temporary group of advisors that will serve until the group becomes fully-functional.

- The committee should be a manageable group, perhaps containing 6 to 12 members. Too few persons will limit the group's potential, but too many will make it inefficient.



- The committee should consist of a diverse mix of individuals that represent various community interests. Examples could be residents, landlords, businesspersons, educators, religious representatives, and active civic leaders.
- Identify your neighborhood's boundaries. It is best to use easily identifiable paths as your boundaries. Major streets, highways, rivers, and railroad tracks are all good examples of effective boundaries. Furthermore, seek a manageable size: something that provides a reasonable population base, but not something that makes coordination and communication difficult. Having firm, manageable boundaries will help you to focus your concerns and efforts.
- Ensure representation from all areas of the neighborhood. Stakeholders should not be geographically concentrated. You may wish to identify one person from each block, for example.

## 2. Conduct the initial meeting of the steering committee.



The first meeting is very important. This is where you will discuss your common interests and concerns. You will also use this as an opportunity to gain the support of key influential members of the neighborhood.

- This meeting should be relaxed and informal, so you should hold the meeting in a comfortable environment, such as someone's home. Make sure that the location is convenient for those who will attend.
- Solicit attendance from key members of the public. This can be done through written invitations and/or phone calls.

Provide a sign-in list for participants. Having the names, addresses, phone numbers, and even e-mail addresses of concerned citizens can be invaluable in the initial stages of an organization.

- In the meeting, discuss important issues and concerns of the neighborhood.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood.
- Discuss what should be the role of the organization, whether it is solving problems or building 'community'.

The role should be rather broad. ***Organizations that form for a single or just a few reasons tend to lack longevity and overall success.***



- Make a list of goals that the organization will hope to accomplish. Make sure to identify small, achievable goals. This list, however, can be a long-term wish list. These are not written in stone.
- Select a temporary group leader and a few assistants to conduct the first neighborhood-wide meeting.

### 3. Hold a neighborhood-wide meeting.

While the steering committee meeting helped to identify the major issues, this open neighborhood-wide meeting, will be the opportunity for an organized, focused discussion with all interested parties. The leaders chosen at the initial committee meeting should be prepared to present information to the audience. (Sign-in lists are recommended at this meeting, as well.)

- Solicit attendance from a wide range of community leaders and concerned residents.
- The meeting should be held at a convenient time within a neighborhood facility, such as a school, church, or fire station. Provide seating for all who may attend.
- List the main benefits that you feel this type of organization will provide. Explain what the organization will be expected to do. The audience should have comments, and they may have concerns. This is an opportunity for open dialogue.
- Discuss proposals from the steering committee meeting. You may wish to review your strengths and weaknesses, and you should definitely review your wish list of things that you hope to accomplish. You will find that these lists are not exhaustive. You should get a great deal of input from the community. Remember, you are working with a heterogeneous population, so expect heterogeneous input.
- Decide what should be accomplished by the next meeting. You can be as ambitious as you wish, but initial small steps are recommended so that no one experiences 'burn out'. List your priorities, and make a tentative agenda. (A sample agenda can be found in **Appendix I**.)
- Involve everyone. If someone cares enough to come to a meeting, they should be invited to participate in achieving your goals. Everyone counts, so utilize your available resources, even if it is merely bringing coffee to the meetings.



- Select officers. This is a good opportunity with everyone present. You should have officers as needed (President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer) and a Board of Directors, or equivalent, that will serve as the trustees in the neighborhood's interests. At this meeting officers should be elected or nominated for an election at the next meeting. In any case, know who is coordinating each important function.
- Decide the time and place for the next meeting, as well as subsequent meetings. Will the meetings be monthly or quarterly? (The Board and officers should also decide the time and place for their meetings. These should be more frequent than the public meetings, so that work can be accomplished and reported at the public gatherings.)

#### 4. Begin officer and Board meetings.

These should begin very soon after the public meeting so that details can be easily remembered. This group will be responsible for carrying out the administrative functions of the organization. Included in this responsibility is the initial need to draft several documents.

These are outlined below.

- Review the topics and discussions from the public meeting. This is important not only in recognizing important issues, but also in identifying people who will be key players in making progress.
- Develop a mission statement. The organization should have a written statement that outlines its reason for being and its anticipated goals. After discussing all of the issues from your public meeting, these things should be rather clear. See the **Appendix II** for a sample statement.
- Develop a set of by-laws. This should be the document that formally outlines the procedural and functional requirements of the organization and its members. It serves as a type of constitution to guide the organization. A sample set of by-laws can be found in **Appendix II**.
- Develop a work plan to guide progress, and put it into writing. This should include the wide variety of issues already identified, their potential solutions, and specific strategies for achieving these goals. Efforts should be made to coordinate your goals with the goals of the Springfield-Greene County Comprehensive Plan and other applicable plans. Then, you will, in effect, be a partner with your local government. Copies of these plans are available in the Department of Planning and Development. A sample work plan has been included in **Appendix III**.



- Assign duties to officers. Based upon your work plan, you should commence efforts to achieve your goals. Give members objectives to accomplish by the next meeting. Progress reports should be given by each member during the 'Old Business' section of subsequent meetings. In this way, everyone will stay informed, and members will have an incentive to produce results.

## 5. Take action!

Now, it is time for the organization to begin solving problems and improving the quality of life within the community.

- Develop a newsletter or flyer. This may become a regular or a periodic publication. The importance, however, is the same: communication. You must help all neighbors to stay informed of what is happening. It boosts interest, enthusiasm, and participation. Maybe you can solicit young volunteers to hand deliver correspondence. You could also think about developing an e-mail list within the neighborhood. Find out the best way to communicate with your neighbors.
- Plan a neighborhood social event. It could be a pot-luck dinner, a neighborhood cleanup, a community picnic, or an afternoon concert. Neighborhood organizations should be about developing relationships and socializing, as well. The more comfortable people are with their neighbors, the more effective the group will be.
- Develop an identifiable logo and letterhead. This will help to make all correspondence 'official'. It will also help to demand attention from people with whom you are interacting.

## 6. Apply to Become a Neighborhood Partner

Once you have become established, you should contact the NCO to become a neighborhood partner. Along with an application, which can be found in **Appendix VIII**, you should submit the following items to the NCO:

- A list of officers;
- A copy of your organization's by-laws (See **Appendix II** for an example.);
- A physical description of your organization's boundaries;
- A list of your organization's members and their addresses; and
- A copy of the sign-in sheet or minutes from at least one annual meeting (See **Appendix IV** for an example.) If your organization has just been established, you may provide a copy of the sign-in sheet or minutes from your original public meeting.

By providing this information, you will be included in the City's 'Neighborhood Organizations' booklet, which is published twice per year. Furthermore, upon initial registration or annual renewal, the Department of Planning and Development will provide your organization with a complete set of mailing labels. These labels, which will be based on the information provided in your application, can be very helpful in the event of a mass mailing. By keeping photocopies, this service can benefit you throughout the year.

## What Resources Are Available? . . . The City's Department of Planning and Development



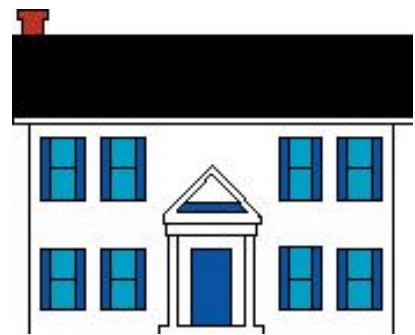
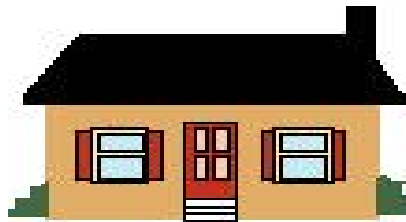
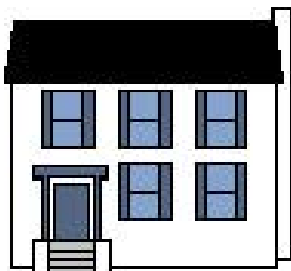
City staff can be a very valuable resource for your organization. The Department of Planning and Development, the NCO in particular, provides numerous services. The staff is ready to help you improve your neighborhood. Some of the available services are outlined below. If you have other concerns, the Offices of Neighborhood Conservation and Public Information will help to find the appropriate contact.

### **General Services: Services made available to everyone.**

- You can discuss certain neighborhood concerns with City staff. The staff will be able to make suggestions or help in achieving your organization's goals.
- Neighborhood representatives can work with the Grants and Program Implementation Division of the Planning Department to pursue programs such as housing rehabilitation. This division offers, among other things, low-interest loans to qualified property owners for the purpose of rehabilitation. If you live in an older neighborhood, this service may be available to you.
- You can get information on zoning changes in your area through the Planning and Development Department's Division of Zoning and Subdivision.

### **Special Resources: Services available to neighborhood partners.**

- The NCO publishes a biannual booklet of all existing neighborhood organizations within the city. This publication provides the name, boundaries, and contact persons for each neighborhood. It also includes a map that illustrates the neighborhood's boundaries. In order to be included in this publication, you must apply to become a neighborhood partner as outlined previously. As a neighborhood partner, you will receive this publication in the mail.



- The NCO also publishes a biannual newsletter called *The Front Porch*. This publication is committed to providing information that is useful to the City's neighborhoods. As a neighborhood partner, you will also receive this newsletter shortly after publication. (Past and present issues of *The Front Porch* can be found on the City of Springfield website.



- You may consider participation in Neighborhood Teams. This program helps neighborhoods on an ongoing basis by gathering officials from a variety of departments to a single table to solve chronic recurring problems. These problems, such as inoperable vehicles, trash in yards, and vacant buildings, only blight the neighborhood. Neighborhood Teams attempts to solve them. More information about this program can be obtained through the NCO.
- The City operates an extensive service request database, which can benefit your organization. Each time a resident asks the City to solve a problem in their area, a request is sent to the appropriate department for a solution. Summaries of service requests within each neighborhood are available to each respective organization. This is helpful in keeping the neighborhood informed of what is occurring within their boundaries and what the City is doing to solve each problem. This can be a very valuable resource.
- The Zoning and Subdivision Division of the Department will inform you of zoning cases in your area. While this information is available to the general public, City staff proactively provides this information to recognized neighborhood organizations.
- The NCO provides periodic notifications regarding upcoming grants, awards, and other opportunities available to neighborhoods.
- The NCO can also provide neighborhood maps to neighborhood partners.

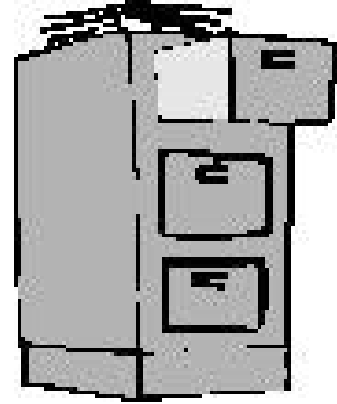
## Helpful Tips: Make Your Group More Successful

- **Agendas**  
Making agendas before a meeting will prove very helpful. There should be sections on the agenda for 'Old Business' and 'New Business' and you should also provide an opportunity at the end for those in attendance to voice concerns. In 'Old Business', topics from previous meetings should be discussed. Reports should be given by those with responsibilities. 'New Business' should be the discussion of new issues or upcoming events. These two areas will not always cover everything important. Therefore, time should be given for open comment. You may want to put other sections on your agenda

as they are needed. Agendas will save you lots of time, because the meeting will be focused, and you will cover all necessary issues before adjournment. While there is no 'right' way to make an agenda, a good example has been included in **Appendix I**.

- **Record Keeping**

Keeping track of documents is very important. In particular, the secretary of the organization will need to keep records of all activities, whether they are administrative or social. Consider putting together a large 3-ring binder. Keep copies of everything, and organize them into separate sections. Meeting agendas, minutes, communications, newsletters, flyers, city reports, and much more can be kept in their own sections. (A sample agenda and a sample set of minutes have been included in **Appendices I and IV**, respectively.) Your own documents, such as your mission statement, by-laws, and work plan should also be included for quick reference.



(Sample copies of these documents can be found as **Appendices II and III**.) Consider using plastic covers to protect these important documents. This simple method of record keeping will provide an inexpensive, yet effective, way to archive the history of the organization. It will probably prove invaluable as you look for details on past events or previous meetings. This binder can be passed from officer to officer as elections are held. An even more useful method is to have a binder for each officer. Then, if one is accidentally lost, it can be more easily replaced.

- **Money Matters**

Financial records are of utmost importance. The treasurer should keep very close track of all monetary income and outlay. The best practice is to run your organization like a real business. Establish a bank account, and provide a detailed report of all financial activity from meeting to meeting. (Two brief sample balance sheets are included in **Appendix V**.)



- **Volunteers**

People are what make neighborhood organizations successful. Without volunteers, nothing would be accomplished. Therefore, it is important to keep your volunteers motivated. The following are some suggestions to help keep people coming back.

*Ten Commandments for Working with Volunteers*

1. SOLICIT new volunteers by talking to previously inactive residents. Give them a personal invitation to become active. This extra attention can go a long way.



2. **RESEARCH** their talents. Know where they excel, and put them to work attacking problems within your organization.
3. **VARY** their tasks so that their participation does not become monotonous.
4. **CONSULT** volunteers on important decisions and policy-making directions including goals, projects, special events, and new ideas.
5. **LIGHTEN** the atmosphere. Make sure that there are enjoyable aspects to their work so that they will have fun. Smiles and positive attitudes can be contagious.
6. **PRAISE** achievements. Let people know when someone has accomplished something good for the organization.
7. **LEAD** by example. Show your volunteers how to work effectively by being ambitious and enthusiastic about your efforts.
8. **COMMUNICATE** by way of memos, newsletters, greeting cards, etc. Convey news of business- and socially-related topics. Discuss who went to Europe, who is Volunteer-of-the-Month, when and where the next social event will be, etc.
9. **SOCIALIZE** with outside functions, such as morning coffee, luncheons, ball games, parties, etc. Your volunteers will feel that they are part of a family.
10. **RECOGNIZE** volunteers. Show your appreciation daily with a pat on the back. You can also accomplish this more formally with an annual recognition event to thank everyone for their daily efforts.

- **Time efficiency**

Many members of your organization will live very busy lives. For everyone's sake, meetings should be efficient. They should start on schedule, and they should end on schedule as well. Of course, all business must be effectively handled, but do not dwell on issues for long periods of time. Your members will want to get back to their lives after the meeting is completed. By being time efficient, you will be more likely to gain the help of busy neighbors.



- **Socializing**

For those who have the time, the gathering location should be open at least 30 minutes before and after each meeting. In this way, people who have the time can either come early or stay late to visit with their neighbors. The more interaction, the better. They will work together more effectively, and they will enjoy coming to meetings. Consider serving coffee, maybe even some light snacks, at your meetings. Particularly when meetings are held in the evenings, people are tired from working all day. This will help to refresh them, to lighten the atmosphere, and to prepare people to get something accomplished.

## We Are Now an Established Organization . . . What Else Can We Do?

- **Becoming a Tax-Exempt Organization**

Many organizations choose to seek tax exempt status. While it is not a requirement, this is a way to improve the financial situation of your organization. Tax exempt status, called 501 (c) (3), is a distinction acquired from the federal government through the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

There are several benefits to attaining tax-exempt status:

1. Your group will not have to pay federal income tax.
2. Donations to your organization can be tax deductible. This encourages charitable contributions to the organization.
3. You will have the potential to apply for sales tax and local property tax exemption.
4. You will be eligible to participate in the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP), which is administered by the Missouri Department of Economic Development.
5. You may also be eligible for other types of grant funding programs.

If you choose to pursue this designation, there are several requirements that you must fulfill:

1. You must be a not-for-profit, charitable organization. You meet this prerequisite if your organization works to maintain public buildings or works, lessen the burdens of government, lessen neighborhood tensions, or combat community deterioration, among other things.
2. You must complete an application.
3. You must file an annual tax return with the IRS.
4. You must refrain from endorsing candidates for political office.

If you would like more information on applying for 501 (c) (3) status, visit the IRS website at [www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/bus\\_info/eo/eo-faqs.html](http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/bus_info/eo/eo-faqs.html). If you would like to order application forms, call the IRS at 800-829-3676.

- **Dues**

Your organization will probably need money at some point, even if it involves only volunteer labor. You may need paper or other supplies to make fliers, signs, or letterhead. You may also need a fund for postage if you will be mailing newsletters or other correspondences.



One easy way to raise small amounts of money is to charge membership dues. This helps to encourage members to be active, rather than passive, in the functioning of the organization. People tend to pay closer attention to areas where their money is being allocated. Dues should not be so high as to be cost prohibitive to less-fortunate yet willing members of your neighborhood. If you decide to charge dues, find a price that generates some money but that is easily payable by the residents of your area. Then, keep very accurate records of income and expenditures so that you will be accountable to your neighbors.

- **Fundraising**

Depending on the types of activities that your organization wishes to pursue, you may need more money than can be raised through dues collections. In this case, you will probably want to initiate a fundraiser. Traditional types of activities could be a bake sale, a car wash, or a pancake breakfast. Some neighborhoods, particularly those of a historic nature, have home shows where the public purchases tickets to get an interior tour. There are endless possibilities in regard to fundraising. Choose something that will be fun and that will get lots of people involved. Again, make sure that all financial matters are closely monitored. Keep track of all receipts, and produce a detailed report for your membership to view at the next meeting.

- **Communications**

Communication is a very necessary tool in neighborhood improvement. Written communication will probably be a very important part of your routine functions. You may want to develop a letter to welcome new residents as they move into the neighborhood



and invite them to become active in the organization. (A sample letter has been attached as **Appendix VI.**) You may also wish to write a friendly letter that can be distributed to area residents that are causing problems. Often times, there are some residents that neglect their yard or other property, which usually causes blight on the neighborhood. (An example of this type of letter can be found as **Attachment VII.**) You will probably write various letters to public officials and other community leaders

from time to time, as well. Finally, one of the best ways to keep neighborhood residents informed and involved is to produce and distribute a neighborhood newsletter. This can be published as often as you deem necessary. A new issue should be developed, though, at least every six months. Both the newsletter and your letterhead can benefit from an identifiable neighborhood logo. This will make your communications highly recognizable, and people will be more likely to pay attention to them.



- **Activities**

Neighborhood activities form the foundation for strong neighborhood organizations. Your neighborhood was formed to achieve some goal. So, you should plan and facilitate activities that help to attain this goal. Activities can be social, educational, or service-oriented, to name a few. Building 'community' is always a worthy objective, so social activities should be held periodically to get residents together for informal conversation and fun. Hold a pot-luck dinner or plan a block party with fun for the whole family. Educational programs could inform area residents about a neighborhood watch or tips on growing plants and flowers. Target an area where people can use training, and find someone to share their knowledge on this subject. Service activities can range in type and scale quite a lot. Getting your hands dirty is one option. The whole neighborhood can benefit if you organize a clean-up. Enlist the help of residents to pick up yard waste and bulky trash items so that they can be properly disposed. Wondering how to develop a good logo for your neighborhood? Organize a contest, and ask neighborhood children to submit plans. The types of things that can be done to better your neighborhood are endless. Get creative, and find things that will work best in your area.

- **Recruitment**

All organizations need a strong membership. This is important to gain help for activities and to build support for neighborhood goals. Recruitment is not a one-time process; it will be an important function throughout the life of the organization. The first thing to do is to invite people. Many individuals would not need much encouragement to become active, but they need to feel welcome and needed. Social activities are a great way to sponsor membership drives. Have members bring guests who may be interested in becoming involved as well. Remember, it is in a resident's best interest to be active in their neighborhood organization, because it is this group that should be having a direct, positive impact upon their quality of life.

- **Neighborhood Watch**

You can form a neighborhood watch program in your area. Designate block captains and a primary block captain to serve as the liaison to the police department. Contact the Crime Prevention Unit of the Police Department, and make an appointment for an officer to attend a social gathering or other meeting to discuss the program.



Developing a successful neighborhood organization can be hard work, but the results will be noticeable and rewarding. Please contact us if we can provide assistance. Good luck!

-The Neighborhood Conservation Office

**Appendix I.**  
Sample Agenda

VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION  
Monthly Meeting Agenda  
March 13, 2001  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

1. Introduction
2. Officer Reports
  - a. Secretary
  - b. Treasurer
  - c. Beautification Chair
  - d. Safety Chair
  - e. Maintenance Chair
3. Old Business
  - a. March Bake Sale/Car Wash
  - b. Sidewalk Graffiti
  - c. Crosswalk improvements in front of Holmes Elementary; Comments by Guest:  
Principal John Frattini
  - d. Neighborhood 'Welcome!' Kits
4. New Business
  - a. Zoning Case in the 1100 Block of Carolina Avenue
  - b. Meeting with Police Department about Neighborhood Watch
  - c. Wine and Cheese Social at the Village Gallery
5. Open Floor
6. On a Good Note . . . Positive Reports from Neighbors
7. Adjournment

The next meeting will be: April 9, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. See you there!

## **Appendix II.**

### **Sample Mission Statement**

We, the resident and property-owning members of the Village Neighborhood Organization, sharing a love for the area that we call 'home', will work to improve the aesthetic qualities and the overall quality of life in our neighborhood.

### **Sample By-Laws**

#### **Article I: Purpose**

The Village Neighborhood Organization is organized to improve the aesthetic qualities and the overall quality of life within the Village Neighborhood. The specific functions of the neighborhood organization will include, but will not be limited to, crime prevention, improvement of property maintenance, residential unit rehabilitation, business development, increased tree density, and streetscape improvements.

#### **Article II: Boundaries**

The Village Neighborhood Organization will cover all land contained within the following boundaries: St. John Street on the north, the back property line of all businesses on the east side Randall Avenue on the east, Holmes River on the south, and Carolina Avenue on the west.

#### **Article III: Members**

General membership in the Village Neighborhood Organization shall be open to all residents, business owners, and property owners within the Village Neighborhood. General members who are eighteen (18) years and older may become voting members of the Organization through the payment of annual dues of \$15.00. Each paying member will be entitled to one vote on any given issue.

#### **Article IV: Meetings**

General meetings of the Organization will be held on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in the Holmes Elementary School Gymnasium. Special meetings may be called when necessary. These must be announced at the meeting immediately preceding the special meeting. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting membership must be present to constitute a quorum and conduct official business.

#### **Article V: Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors of the Village Neighborhood Organization shall consist of seven (7) members who are elected by the Organization. The Board shall consist of four (4) zone members, who are elected by their respective zone to a one-year term. The zones shall conform to the quadrant created by the intersection of Chapel Avenue and Hill Street. The remaining three members of the Board shall be elected to two-year terms by the general, voting membership of the entire Organization.

#### **Article VI: Officers**

The officers of the Village Neighborhood Organization shall consist of the following: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Each position shall be filled by a vote of the Board of Directors/membership. The President shall be the chief operating officer of the Organization and shall preside over meetings of the general

membership. The Vice-President will serve the same purpose in the absence of the President. This individual will also be the liaison between the Board of Directors and all active committees. The Secretary shall record minutes of each meeting and shall develop the agenda for each upcoming meeting as well. The Treasurer shall have the responsibility of overseeing the financial matters of the Organization. Each officer shall be elected to a one-year term.

**Article VII: Elections**

Elections of the Board of Directors shall take place at the first meeting of each calendar year. Candidates will be chosen by the popular vote of the voting membership. In case of a vacancy, an election will be held at the meeting following the meeting of announcement of the vacancy. Officers will be elected by the Board of Directors at the first meeting following the first general meeting of each calendar year.

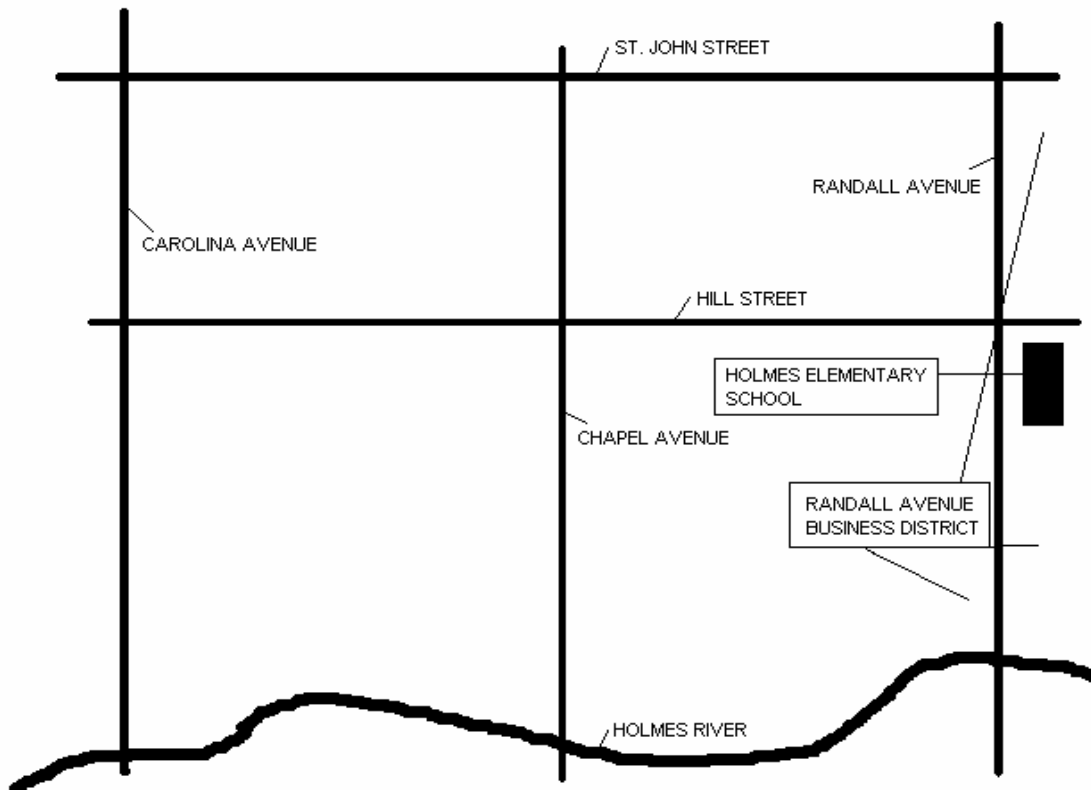
**Article VIII: Committees**

Committees may be formed to pursue particular issues and to solve individual problems. Each committee must have at least one member of the Board of Directors and one officer in its membership. The committee meetings shall be open to the general public, and they shall be recorded and reported through minutes just as a regular meeting of the membership.

**Article IX: Amendments**

These by-laws may be amended or repealed by a popular vote of the entire voting membership.

VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION MAP



## **Appendix III.**

### **Sample Work Plan**

The Village Neighborhood Organization will pursue the following goals in the next year.

#### **Goal 1: Beautify the neighborhood.**

- Objective 1: Sponsor an annual, neighborhood-wide spring clean-up.
- Objective 2: Work with business owners to establish a routine litter pick-up along the Randall Avenue business district.
- Objective 3: Start an annual contest for the best looking residential yards, and encourage everyone to participate.
- Objective 4: Raise money and pursue a grant to fund tree plantings along St. John Street and Chapel Avenue.

#### **Goal 2: Make the neighborhood safer.**

- Objective 1: Work with the police department to establish a neighborhood watch.
- Objective 2: Work with the City to improve street lighting along Randall Avenue and Hill Street; perhaps, considering the use of a Neighborhood Improvement District.
- Objective 3: Improve the two crosswalk facilities adjacent to Holmes Elementary School.

#### **Goal 3: Work to improve property maintenance throughout the neighborhood.**

- Objective 1: Assemble volunteers to make needed repairs to homes of elderly persons who cannot do them themselves.
- Objective 2: Develop a friendly letter from the Organization to send to neighbors whose property maintenance is substandard and is causing blight in the neighborhood.
- Objective 3: Sponsor an educational program on how residents can improve the quality of their housing, and discuss programs available to them (e.g. the City's rehabilitation loan program, etc.)

## Appendix IV. Sample Minutes

### VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION Monthly Meeting Minutes March 13, 2001

#### OFFICER REPORTS

*Secretary:* Mary updated everyone on the members' comments and concerns from the previous meeting. She also welcomed the three newest members of the Organization.

*Treasurer:* Richard stated that the car wash/bake sale brought in \$291.20. Plus, the three members joining the Organization generated an income of \$45. We spent \$28.16 on paper and \$34.00 on stamps. That brings our bank total to \$919.07. He stated that he had the budget set up in a spreadsheet on his computer.

*Beautification Chair:* Catherine said that plans are moving along for the upcoming Clean The Village Day. It will be May 12, 2001. The grant application for public trees is almost completed. Local business have been solicited to secure matching funds. We currently lack only \$125.

*Safety Chair:* Amy informed us that we have set up a meeting with City staff to get information on a Neighborhood Improvement District and its possible use for lighting improvements. No news from Neighborhood Watch.

*Maintenance Chair:* Willa stated that the letter from the Organization to neighbors causing blight has been drafted. Copies are available for comment. City staff has agreed to provide information and give a talk at an educational program for housing rehabilitation.

#### OLD BUSINESS

*March Bake Sale/Car Wash:* This was a real success. We brought in \$291.20, which is quite a bit more than our first one. Everyone had a good time, and we will plan to do another one in a few months.

*Sidewalk Graffiti:* Residents have been noticing a lot of graffiti on the sidewalks in recent weeks. This has been referred to the maintenance committee to find a solution.

*Crosswalk improvements in front of Holmes Elementary:* Elementary School Principal John Frattini attended the meeting. He discussed the real need for crosswalk improvements so that neighborhood children would be more safe coming to and going from school. He also outlined some ways in which the neighborhood could team up with the school to see that improvements are made.

*Neighborhood 'Welcome!' Kits:* The kits have been assembled. Several neighborhood businesses have provided small items for inclusion; some have even provided valuable coupons. Maps are being collected from the City, too. If anyone has suggestions for other necessary items, please talk to Paul.

## NEW BUSINESS

*Zoning Case in the 1100 Block of Carolina Avenue:* This area is being considered for a planned development. We heard comment on the details of the development. It seems to fit in with the overall character of the neighborhood. A few members will go to the next Commission meeting to speak in favor of it.

*Meeting with Police Department about Neighborhood Watch:* Amy is in contact with the police department to help expand the Neighborhood Watch from its current pilot area. It has been relatively successful so far. Discussion should commence on the boundaries for the next phase of the project.

*Wine and Cheese Social at the Village Gallery:* Everyone is invited to the next social function. It will be Thursday, March 29 from 7:00-10:00 p.m. at the Gallery. Admission will be \$4, or \$7 per couple, which will include wine and cheese tasting and a look at some of the local art on display. Cathy has used her connections to get a fine selection of wines and cheeses for the evening, so no one should miss this great opportunity. It will also serve as a membership drive, so guests are welcome.

## OPEN FLOOR

Carie Boschert said that her neighbors continually park their vehicles in the yard. They rarely tend to their lawn, and they generally have a lack of respect for the neighborhood. She requested that one of the 'friendly' letters be sent to the homeowners. Several other members will do a drive-by to see the problem themselves.

## ON A GOOD NOTE . . .

Willa informed us that the house on the corner of Chapel and Arcadia had been purchased. This structure, which had been vacant for over a year, finally has a nice family to call it 'home.' They will be moving in by the end of the month. She will invite them to attend the next meeting.

Richie informed us that the Nichols' have had their new baby. Anne Marie was born on Saturday morning. Everyone is happy and healthy.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

**Appendix V.**  
Sample Budget Sheet

**February Balance Sheet**

<b>January Total</b>	<b>\$504.39</b>
Income	
Private Donation	150.00
Member dues	75.00
Expenses	
Coffee Pot for Meetings	21.79
Letterhead Printing	28.40
Printer Cartridge	34.17
<b>February Total</b>	<b>\$645.03</b>

**March Balance Sheet**

<b>February Total</b>	<b>\$645.03</b>
Income	
Bake Sale/Wash	291.20
Member dues	45.00
Expenses	
Paper	28.16
Postage	34.00
<b>March Total</b>	<b>\$919.07</b>

## Appendix VI.

### Sample Welcome Letter

Dear New Neighbor,

Welcome to the Village Neighborhood! We, the members of the Village Neighborhood Organization, feel that this is a great place to live, and we are very happy to have you as a part of it. Therefore, we would like to give you a brief orientation to your new neighborhood.

One of our great assets is Holmes Elementary School. It is a great location for our children to learn and grow. Adjacent to the school is Randall Park, a place for everyone in the community to meet and recreate. Enjoying a walk, a bike ride, or a picnic in the park are some of the ways in which the park can provide numerous fun opportunities. You can shop in the Randall Avenue Business District without even leaving your neighborhood—something that makes our area unique. Finally, the residents of this neighborhood are the best in town! We have a good sense of community, and neighbors have grown close and built friendships through working together. These attributes, and many others, make The Village a great place to live.

You will notice signs that we are active in the area. We have monthly meetings to discuss concerns and opportunities. We work closely with the police department through our neighborhood watch program. This helps to ensure a safe environment for everyone. We sponsor annual spring clean-ups where we dispose trash, fix up our homes, and tidy up our yards. We also distribute a quarterly newsletter. You can expect to start receiving a copy in your mailbox. It will keep you informed of all upcoming activities, especially social functions, where you always have the opportunity to come and join us for a variety of enjoyable events. As you can see, we are an active organization.

Along with our welcome, we would like to extend an invitation for you to join our organization. We have a great group of people who work together to make this an even better neighborhood in which to live. Our meetings are the second Tuesday of every month in the gymnasium of Holmes Elementary. They begin at 6:30 p.m., but you are welcome to come early for a 'meet and greet.' We hope that you will join us.

Again, welcome to the neighborhood! We are happy to have you here, and we look forward to getting to know you. Feel free to call us if you have any questions. A helpful list of phone numbers has been included with this letter. Hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

(Insert all officer signatures here.)

The Village Neighborhood Organization

**Appendix VII.**

**Sample Neighborhood Letter of Concern**

**Village Neighborhood Organization**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To our neighbor, the owner/resident of the home at \_\_\_\_\_ :

Someone within the neighborhood has brought a concern to our attention. As your neighbors, we would like to request that you try to solve the following problem:

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Your concerned neighbors in the Village are very proud of our neighborhood. It is a safe, fun, and healthy environment for adults and children alike. However, we are not without our problems. When we can identify them, we do our best to communicate with residents and work together to solve problems. Therefore, we would like to request your help in continuing to make the Village a great place to live and work. Please help us by solving the problem that is mentioned above.

If you are able to solve this problem, we will appreciate your prompt attention. If, however, you are unable to solve it, we are here to help. There is a group of your neighbors who has volunteered to help with occasional issues, such as hauling large trash items, disposing of yard waste, and making minor exterior home repairs for those who are physically unable. If we are unable to help you, there still are resources available within the city that may prove beneficial. If your home is in need of either interior or exterior renovations, assistance is available. The Grants and Program Implementation Division of the Department of Planning and Development provides low-interest loans for home rehabilitation. Furthermore, the Village Neighborhood Organization conducts an annual neighborhood clean-up. We locate several large dumpsters in the parking lot of Holmes Elementary, and you are encouraged to bring trash that is occupying your home and your lot.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us. We have inserted a helpful phone list along with this letter. If your problem is the timeframe of solving this issue, we would like to know. If, within two weeks, the problem has not been solved and we have not been contacted, then we will pursue a solution through our municipal services. If you are renting this property and this issue is not your responsibility, please pass this letter to your landlord as soon as possible.

We would like to thank you for your attention to this matter. We would also like to invite you to become active in our organization, if you are not already involved. We are proud of the Village, our great neighborhood. Help us to maintain and improve our quality of life for ourselves and for our good community.

Sincerely,

(Insert all officer signatures here.)

The Officers of the Village Neighborhood Organization

**Appendix VIII.**



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## **Neighborhood Partner Application**

Department of Planning and Development  
City of Springfield, Missouri

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The city recognizes neighborhood organizations through its Neighborhood Partner Program who can meet minimum qualifications. The City considers the following information when granting neighborhood partner status:

- **Geographic Size:** Neighborhoods should generally be one square mile in size.
- **Population:** Neighborhoods should generally contain 3000-6000 residents.
- **Location:** Neighborhoods should be within the city limits of Springfield.
- **Boundaries:** Neighborhoods should be defined by major geographic boundaries (i.e. arterial roads, major streams, railroads, or major non-residential areas). Organization boundaries must not overlap any existing recognized organizations' boundaries.
- **Amenities:** Neighborhoods should have public open space, a mixture of housing types, and convenient access to some retail stores and personal services.

To apply to become a neighborhood partner, please detach this sheet from the booklet. Fill in all information, and submit it to the NCO of the Department of Planning and Development.

Attach the following items to this page: *(please check as attached)*

- a copy of your by-laws
- a copy of the minutes from at least one meeting (or a sign in sheet from your initial public meeting)
- a list of all organization members and their addresses

Please return this application to the NCO. If you have any questions, please contact them for assistance.



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## Neighborhood Partner Application

Department of Planning and Development  
City of Springfield, Missouri

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Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Boundaries \_\_\_\_\_

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***President***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

***Vice-President***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

***Secretary***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

***Treasurer***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

***Other Officer*** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_