

Starting a Neighborhood Association

NEIGHBORHOODS ORGANIZE TO:

- Meet the neighborhoods' common goals
- Provide residents with the tools to help resolve issues for their neighborhoods
- Empower the neighborhoods to help control what happens in the area
- Provide the neighborhoods with an effective communication link with government officials and other groups
- Allow members an opportunity to take part in the decision making that directs the neighborhoods' actions



A GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD LEADER:

- SHARES THE POWER - Prepares other association members to assume leadership responsibilities
- Defines and discusses the goals and objectives of the association with the membership
- Encourages members to participate In the association and committee planning process
- Gives recognition to members ond committees who have contributed to the advancement of the neighborhood association
- Keeps the organization open and flexible enough to bring in new members and ideas

Originally Prepared by:

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Minor revisions by ASJN (The Association of South Jackson Neighborhoods) May 2003



A GOOD BLOCK CAPTAIN:

- Attends neighborhood association meetings
- Encourages his neighbors to attend neighborhood association meetings
- Supports efforts to make his community a model community
- Protects his community assets
(clean streets and yards, elderly, children and community property)
- Promotes the climate of neighbors helping neighbors
- Knows who lives on his street
- Shares information with his neighbors



TIPS FOR RESOLVING ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

- Talk directly to each other - Direct conversation is much more effective
- Choose a good time and place to meet - Meet in a place that is neutral and a time of day that is less stressful
- Plan Ahead - Decide what needs to be said ahead of time, state clearly what the problem is and how it affects the membership
- Don't place blame - Antagonizing each other only serves to compound the problem
- Listen - Give all the members an opportunity to express their opinions
- Talk it all through - Put all of the issues and opinions on the table, don't ignore them because they are difficult to discuss
- Work on a joint solution - People cooperating is much more effective than one or two persons telling others what to do or to change
- Follow through - Agree to review the agreed upon solutions at certain times to make sure they are still working

PART I - GETTING STARTED

One of the first steps an organizer should take in forming a community organization is the development of the core group (representatives of the community). In order to identify the core group, the organizer must spend time:

- Talking to the people in the community
 - Identifying problems in the community
 - Identifying who will be affected by the issues
 - Identifying WHO IS WILLING TO STEP FORWARD AND TAKE ACTION
- Examples of groups that may be represented in the core groups:
- Residents/homeowners from the targeted area (remember to consider the elderly and the youth)
 - Local business owners
 - Civic leaders

Keep in mind that if the core group becomes too large, it may become too hard to manage and you won't be able to accomplish as much. Set up the meeting soon after you get the commitment from the core group so that your contacts will not lose interest.

At the initial meeting of the core group, make sure everyone understands the purpose of organizing the vision of the community and their potential role in the organization. At this meeting, it is not important to be overly concerned with the structure of the organization. However, it is important that a coordinator be selected to make sure that the planning activities of the organization remain focused. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if there are enough concerned community members to begin the hard work of putting together a collective vision and plan for the organization for the community.

Another very important item for discussion at the initial meeting is the boundaries of the targeted area. Keep in mind that you should have an area that is manageable. Once the core group decides upon the boundaries of the area, a complete list of residents and property owners should be compiled. The list should be kept current during the whole organizing and planning process so that

every person has an opportunity to become involved. The list can be compiled by doing door-to-door canvassing or going to the city tax or voter registration records and identifying the property owners.

Once the core group, the boundaries, and list of residents and property owners have been established, you are now ready for the core group to begin volunteering for various activities. The following examples may be used for volunteer activities:

- Community Inventory - prepare a list of information unique to your community such as property owners\residents, housing, land use, etc. .
- Identification of issues and opportunities - identify issues, concerns and opportunities through surveys sent to residents or through a series of community meetings. Some of the concerns may deal with crime, land use issues, physical improvements, transportation, economic development and social functions. Opportunities may be vacant land that could be used for affordable housing, business or recreational development.
- Community Plan - develop a vision and draft a set of goals (broad statements about what the residents would like to have happen) and objectives (policies) for the future development and maintenance of the community. Also develop a set of suggested strategies on how to reach the goals.

As the organization develops, it is very important that the coordinator makes sure that the public, particularly the residents and property owners in the targeted area, are aware of the progress, activities, victories and stumbling blocks of the organization. Good communication about the organization helps to build the strength of the group and attract new members. These are some suggested methods for communicating information about the organization.

- a community newsletter
- local media (newspapers, television & radio)
- bulletins, pamphlets, posters, and fliers placed in strategic locations
- phone calls
- Community meetings and events

ORGANIZATION

Although it would be nice if people formed groups just on the basis of wanting to better their neighborhood, it often doesn't work that way. Most of us respond to issues; and it is sometimes hard to attract anyone to an initial meeting that has no issue or major concern. The important thing is to turn issues into a positive plan of action.

How to Begin

Once you have an issue that people can rally around, it is time to start talking about it. Get a few interested neighbors together for a meeting in someone's home. Here is a tentative agenda:

- Discuss each person's idea of the problems, opportunities and needs of the neighborhood.
- Determine the boundaries of your neighborhood.
- Choose a temporary chairperson.
- Plan a larger meeting to announce the formation of your group to everyone within the neighborhood boundaries.

It is helpful to have this first planning meeting in order to "get a handle on" the group's direction. Quite often a group will start out with a large meeting that has no direction, no chairperson, and no agenda other than a discussion of the issue. The resulting confusion from such a meeting can be frustrating to the initiators, alienating to potential members, and wasteful of a lot of good energy.

The First Large Meeting

Once you have a core group together, start planning your first large meeting. Here are some tips:

- Arrange for the use of a church basement, school, or community center within your area. If you have a choice, choose a room that is a bit too small for the crowd you are expecting. A group of 50 can get lost in a room meant for 200; whereas, that same group in a room meant for 40 will feel a greater sense of unity and closeness (although it might get a bit stuffy).
- Prepare a colorful flyer that states the time, place, date, and purpose of the meeting. Get the flyers made at a quick-copy printer. If there is such a place in the neighborhood, ask if they will donate the printing. If not, the core group can bear this first cost (after all, it's a worthy cause).

NOTE: Schedule the meeting during the early evening and make arrangements to transport seniors.

- The core group should personally distribute flyers throughout the neighborhood. Be prepared to do a lot of talking. Check with the principal of the elementary school in your area about sending flyers home with children. Don't forget to include merchants, ministers and others who work in your neighborhood.
- At this first meeting, it will help if special attention is given to the setup of chairs, etc. Since it is possible that many people will need to get acquainted, make it easy for them by arranging the chairs so that people have to look at each other. Post a map of the neighborhood with the areas of concern clearly marked (maps are available from the City Planning Office for a small fee). Have coffee or other light refreshments available and allow time for min-gling. Use a flip chart or other paper taped to a wall to write down people's ideas.
- Follow a prepared agenda and give everyone a chance to speak. If there are several issues, vote to prioritize them. Obviously, some of the problems can be solved immediately while others will require months and maybe years of effort. It is best to have a steady stream of small projects to make the group feel successful as well as one or two big issues.
- End the meeting by giving committee assignments to develop the projects identified. If the tone of the meeting has been sincere and enthusiastic, you will have ample volunteers. Follow up by drafting your neighborhood association plan of action showing your group's goals, projects to achieve the goals, and committees and timetable to work on the projects. Plan to present your draft in a later meeting for review by the group.

Bylaws

By-laws are simply general rules governing a group. They should include the name and purpose of the group, description of members, terms of officers, dues, meetings, and a provision for amendments. (See page 11 for sample bylaws.)

Incorporation

Incorporation as a non-profit organization helps define a group and contributes to its credibility as a viable, working body of interested people. It also protects the liability of group members. In the state of Mississippi, the cost for filing non-profit incorporation is \$50. For incorporation papers, contact the Secretary of State, 202 North Congress Street, Post Office Box 136, Jackson, Mississippi 39205 (359-1133).

Tax Exempt Status

The tax exempt status is often confused with incorporation. A group usually must be incorporated at the state level before it can apply for tax exemption from the federal government, Internal Revenue Service. This status allows contributors to deduct their contribution from their income tax. An application may be obtained from your local IRS office. In Mississippi, the telephone number is 1-800-829-1040 and the address is IRS, Room 101, 100 W. Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39201. The filing fee is \$300 which must accompany the application. The application process takes about six months to complete.

Legal Assistance

The ideal way to obtain legal assistance is to locate a lawyer who lives within your area and hopefully is also a part of the group. They may be willing to donate some or all of their time when assisting the group. If this is not possible, contact a local lawyer group about providing some assistance either free or at discount rates.

Volunteers

The most successful groups are thoughtful of their volunteers, with recognition, an occasional social gathering, and many words of thanks to let everyone know that they are needed and appreciated. Failing to let people know you appreciate their help is the surest way to lose their interest.

On this same subject, try not to let one or two persons shoulder all of the responsibility for the group. For someone who knows the issues, is eager, and has a lot of free time, the temptation to "do it all" is overwhelming. When that happens, you cease to be a group and become a couple of overworked people who call

themselves a group. Spread the work around and you'll reap the benefits of an involved, interested group of people.

Meetings

Many a group has lost valuable momentum because of poor meetings. With a little thought and some attention to detail, your meetings can be effective.

First of all, why are you meeting? It isn't always necessary to call a full group meeting to make minor decisions; for that, you should use your executive committee. Most groups meet once a month unless something important requires an additional meeting. Plan your agenda before the meeting and post it in the meeting room. A sample agenda might read like this:

- I. Minutes of Previous Meeting
- II. Correspondence
- III. Committee Report
- IV. New Projects
- V. Announcements
- VI. Adjournment

If you have a regular meeting scheduled but don't really have anything to discuss, then create something. Invite a guest speaker, take a neighborhood tour or have a potluck. It is good for groups to make contact on a regular basis, and it is sometimes necessary to reaffirm your "groupness."

Arrange the meeting room in such a way that it encourages people to talk. Set chairs in a semi- or full circle so that everyone can be seen. Avoid the "classroom meeting" where everyone sits in stiff little rows facing the speaker. Do away with tables unless you need them to hold drawings or literature; they can form barriers to communication. An exception would be sitting everyone around a large table; especially if you need to write.

Hold the meeting in an appropriately-sized room. A lot of energy can be lost by putting thirty folks in a room meant for two hundred. If substantially fewer people show up than you expected and you are in a large room, just use one corner. All of this moving around and rearranging might seem silly, but the experience of neighborhood organizers has shown that it does make a difference.

If a group is comfortable using Robert's Rules of Order, by all means use it (condensed revisions can

be found at most libraries). If a group is not comfortable or feels inhibited by Robert's Rules of Order, a special effort should be made to ensure that a vote truly represents the will of the group. Keep meetings orderly and democratic. Allow plenty of debate on important issues, but don't be afraid to set time limits.

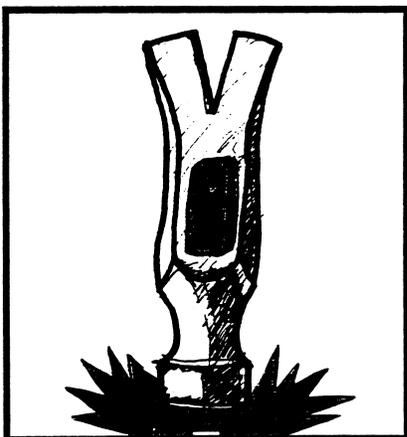
Finally, try to end each meeting with some concrete action. Have a list of things to be done and try to involve as many members as possible to do them.

NOTE: See Tips for Effective Community Meetings on page 13.

Money

Although fund raising, private foundation grants, etc., are certainly useful when large amounts of money are needed, the kind of money referred to here is that contributed by members themselves. Every group needs to have seed money for activities such as mailings, flyers, social gatherings or a newsletter.

One way of getting money is to assess each member. Another way is to simply pass the hat to all regular meetings. Even ten people giving a dollar each at ten meetings can generate a substantial sum. The treasurer should keep an account of every penny that is spent. If no one in the group has accounting skills, ask a high school or trade school accounting/book-keeping instructor to help out, or assign you a student to work with. It is best to set up a system for accounting at the beginning. Arguments about where the money went can be very destructive. Open an account in the group's name at a bank in the neighborhood. Arrange it so that two signatures are needed to make withdrawals.



Hammering Out Problems and Ideas

Newsletter

Many groups do quite well without ever having a newsletter. It is a good project, though, and can increase a group's visibility far beyond its boundaries. Advertisements placed by neighborhood merchants and residents can help pay for production costs. The basic steps for the production of a newsletter are as follows:

1. Form a committee and designate an editor. The editor writes articles, corrects article submitted by others and sets deadlines. The rest of the committee should assist with typing, soliciting advertising and arranging for printing.
2. A good newsletter might contain the following:
 - a. Notices of important meetings and group events.
 - b. Report on the progress of the group's activities.
 - c. Articles of community interest.
 - d. Recognition of volunteer efforts.
 - e. Advertising.
3. Decide on a format:
 - a. Title of the newsletter.
 - b. Number of pages (if you print on an 11"x 17" sheet on both sides, you can fold that into a four page newsletter for less cost).
 - c. The arrangement of copy (for instance, a two column format or full-page).
 - d. Paper (color stock will be most visible).
 - e. Reproduction. Ask a local printer if he will donate printing services if you buy the paper. Consider mimeographing if a machine is available.
4. Determine how many copies you will need for members, civic and political leaders and advertisers. Printing costs per unit are substantially lower for 1,000 copies than for 500.
5. Decide how you will distribute the newsletter. The boundless energy of children is useful here.
6. If you decide to mail the newsletter, call the U. S. Post Office regarding a bulk mail permit.

PUBLICITY

The establishment of a good publicity network is absolutely essential to any group. Whether it is a simple flyer advertising a meeting or a 30-second television announcement, groups must take advantage of all media (including word-of-mouth) to make people aware of their activities and keep members informed.

News Releases/Public Service Announcements

News releases give information about newsworthy events of a timely nature. Public Service Announcements (PSA's) simply announce an event. A good rule of thumb is to use a PSA whenever you want people to respond; i.e., buy tickets, come to a meeting; and write a news release when you want to inform the public about some action; i.e., a neighborhood cleanup, election of officers.

News releases generally should not be longer than one typewritten, double-spaced page. Your first paragraph should include who, what, when and where. Following paragraphs should give details and background. Be sure and give the name, address, and telephone number for your contact person. Indicate a "release date" and a "do not use after" date. Send a copy of the release to the City Desk (newspaper) or News Editor (TV and radio) at least two weeks ahead of time.

NOTE: If something wild and exciting is in the process of happening, call the local newspapers and see if they'll send someone to cover it.

Public Service Announcements (PSA's) should follow the same format, but shorter than a news release; maybe only a paragraph.

If you are sending the PSA to a newspaper call to find out which section of the paper would give the best exposure. Then send the PSA to the editor of that section.

With radio, it is best to send a PSA that can be read in 30 seconds (7 or 8 lines) and attach the details and background on a separate sheet. Send it to the Public Affairs Director.

Since television must involve a visual image, you'll probably need to prepare a slide of some sort. Our

local stations will help you develop a good quality TV "spot" that will probably include a title slide and narration. Call them at least a month before you plan to send the spot to other TV stations.

NOTE: Although most radio and television stations are required to give the public service time, the requests for time usually outweigh the time available. Be polite but persistent. Make friends.

Flyers

Any activity, project or goal of the A be sure the wording is bold enough to be read from a distance of ten feet. Use colorful paper. If possible, arrange for the use of a church or school mimeograph machine. Or, better still, have them quick-copied. Post flyers in markets, laundromats, schools, stores, any place frequented by the people you want to reach.

Posters

Large, effective posters can be made using pieces of cardboard box, write your message in black enamel paint to make the poster rainproof. Remember to keep the message brief and fancy artwork to a minimum.

Logo

A logo is a design image associated with a group. It can be as simple as an attractive display of the group's name or artwork. Whatever, it should be unique to the group if it is to have maximum impact.

Buttons, T-shirts and Decals

If your group has a logo, consider having the design transferred to buttons, T-shirts and decals which can be either sold for fund raising or distributed to volunteers.

FUND RAISING/FUNDING

Although people are the most important ingredient for a successful community group, at some point the group will also need money. The ways that a group acquires funds are limited only by the members' imaginations. Funds can be raised by the group itself, through private foundations or through the federal government. Following are some tips on these three types of funding sources.

Group Fund Raising

Before undertaking a fund raising campaign, a group should answer the following questions about the project:

1. What does the community need and how is your project going to meet that need?
2. Who will benefit from the project?
3. How much will it cost?

Select a fund raising committee to prepare a budget and oversee the project to its completion. The committee should be led by a person well known and liked in the community, who has good contacts in your local business area as well. Most important, that person must have the time. Following are a few tried and true fund raising ideas.

Rummage/Garage Sale

This is one of the easiest events to have. Pooling items from group members will ensure variety.

1. Form a committee of people responsible for the event.
2. The best days are Saturday and Sunday. Have the sale in the garage of someone who lives on a busy corner or near a main street.
3. Decide what percentage of the profits will go to individuals and how much is for the group.
4. Get a good mix of items. Televisions, dinette sets, dressers and beds are good crowd drawers. Try to keep the absolute junk to a minimum. Don't forget knickknacks, glassware, dolls, and children's clothes.
5. Invest in an ad in the local weekly papers as well as in the daily.
6. Please note that it is illegal to post signs on utility poles. Call the Sign Division at 960-1154 for information about temporary signs.

Raffle

1. The success of a raffle depends on two things, plenty of ticket sales, and donated (or cheaply acquired) prizes. Ask a merchant or member of the group to donate prizes. If you have to buy prizes, your profits will diminish considerably.
2. Keep cost down by mimeographing tickets. Have a maximum number of people selling tickets.
3. Keep track of each person who takes tickets. Allow two months for selling. The price of the tickets should not exceed \$.50 or \$1.00, unless the prizes are exceptional.

You do not need a permit for a raffle if you are nonprofit.

Local Merchants

Most local merchants will readily help a neighborhood group with either merchandise or a cash contribution. Assess merchants according to the size of their business. When soliciting a merchant for a contribution, remember these points.

1. The best person to approach a merchant is a good customer.
2. Never solicit a merchant at the beginning or end of the business day or during peak business hours.
3. Have a letter from your organization (printed on letterhead if possible) introducing you as the member who is authorized to solicit contributions.

Private Foundations

There are thousands of foundations that contribute to community projects. Unlike the government, foundations seldom announce the availability of funds for particular types of projects. Most of them have statements of purpose that outline their areas of interest and a certain amount of money set aside for grant making each year. They select those proposals most compatible with their own interest, funding capability and geographic scope.

Before you submit a proposal, do some research on what is available. The Eudora Welty Library has a reference copy of a two-volume set that includes the FOUNDATION DIRECTORY, describing the inter-ests and funding of approximately 2,500 foundations; and the FOUNDATION GRANTS INDEX, which categorizes grants by subject.

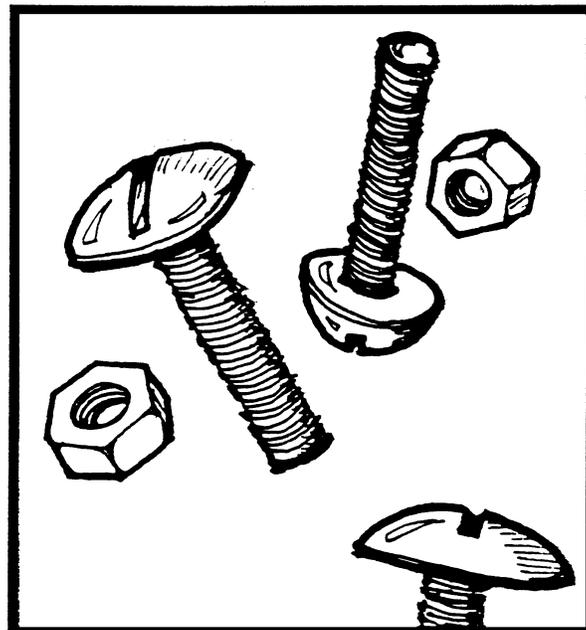
Some suggestions:

- Find out whether your group must have tax-exempt status in order to apply.
- Learn all the facts about the foundation you are to approach, the areas in which it gives, the facts it requires in each presentation, and the periods in which it makes grants.
- Make a preliminary inquiry as to the foundation's interest in your area.
- Tailor each presentation to the foundation being approached.

- Be specific. Present only facts that can be documented.
- Present a budget that can meet the scrutiny of an accountant.

Don't

- Substitute influence for facts, although knowing an influential person can certainly help.
- Make a shotgun approach by sending the same presentation to a number of foundations.
- Try to bypass channels in offering your presentation.
- Inflate the size of the grant you request in the hope that even if it is cut you will meet your need.
- Expect fine writing to hide weaknesses in your case, or substitute quantity for quality.
- . Expect emotional statements to carry weight.



Organizing the Nuts and Bolts

SAMPLE BYLAWS

Name

The name of the group shall be _____.

Purpose

The purpose of the group shall be to promote a better neighborhood and community through group action.

Membership

Any person residing on _____ between _____ and _____ is eligible for membership.

Dues

Dues shall be _____ per person per year.

Officers

The officers shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be elected in of each year. The term of office shall be one year.

Committees

The membership may establish necessary committees at any meeting. The President may also establish such committees. Committee chairpersons shall be appointed by the President.

Steering Committee

The officers and committee chairpersons shall constitute the Steering Committee and may act for the group between meetings.

Meetings

Regular meetings will be held on the _____ of each month, or more often as deemed necessary.

Quorum

At least ten percent of the membership must be present to conduct official business.

Amendments

The bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting. Two-thirds (2/3) of those members in attendance must approve the amendment.

In addition to the preceding sample bylaws, here is an outline for more detailed bylaws.

Article I

Name

Article II

Members

Sec. 1 - Members Defined

Sec. 2 - Voting and Other Rights

Article III

Directors

Sec. 1 - Number

Sec. 2 - Vacancies

Article IV

Meetings

Sec. 1 - Regular and Special Meetings

Sec. 2 - Place of Meetings

Sec. 3 - Notice of Meetings

Sec. 4 - Quorum

Sec. 5 - Absence of Meetings

Article V

Officers

Sec. 1 - Officers

Sec. 2 - Duties of Officers

Sec. 3 - Elections

Sec. 4 - Removal and Resignation

Article VI

Miscellaneous

Sec. 1 - Checks, Drafts, etc.

Sec. 2 - Fiscal Year

Article VII

Amending or Repealing Bylaws

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Attitude

Remember that people come to community meetings because they want to, not because they are required to. If your meetings are sloppily run, never start on time, or are dominated by a few people, it won't belong before some of your members get frustrated, stop coming to meetings, and finally drop out of the group. If it is true that members are your greatest resource, then it's worthwhile to spend some time to make sure that your community meetings are effective.

The belief that "time is money" is best applied to office meetings or any meetings that you have to attend. In community meetings it is far more important that members participate fully and feel good about the decisions made at a meeting. That doesn't mean that all of your meetings should be "encounter sessions," but it is possible to have a productive meeting that also meets the human needs of your members.

Consider the following points:

Meeting Setup

The best arrangement for a community meeting is a circle of chairs. People sitting in a circle are forced to look at each other; making it easier for them to talk with each other. Tables form barriers and are easy to hide behind, so avoid using them unless they are needed for maps or handouts.

Choose a neutral room that will just barely accommodate everyone. This will allow the energy of the group to stay within the group and add to your feelings of enthusiasm. A group of twenty people in a room that will hold two hundred should gather in a small bunch so their energies aren't wasted on walls and empty chairs. Above all, make sure that your setup contributes to the "we-ness" of your group.

Agenda

Every meeting must have an agenda or purpose. Spend time before the meeting to decide not only what you will discuss, but also how long and in what order you will discuss it.

It is sometimes best to put emotional or controversial issues at the end of the agenda. This will allow you to take care of those small, but necessary decisions that are usually part of a meeting, without getting into a "heavy" discussion that will probably exhaust everyone. You might even consider calling a meeting just to discuss one important issue.

When listing agenda items, it's always good to put a time limit down. It's possible that you'll go over or under the limit on some items, but at best you'll have a frame of reference. Also, work the items so that folks will know what is expected of them, for instance:

- Decide on potluck time, date and place
- Discuss upcoming City elections
- Speaker will provide information on new water rate hike

NOTE: Don't overload your agenda. Since most community meetings are held at night, the energy level of many members might be low. Try to stay with 1-1 1/2 hours and allow some time for coffee drinking, cookie eating, and mingling.

Running a Meeting

Start the meeting on time. Don't penalize those on time by making them wait 20 minutes for latecomers. If you know that several people are coming late, go ahead and start the meeting with your less important agenda items. By doing this, you will reinforce the behavior of those who arrive on time without excluding those who are late.

Although Robert's Rules of Order are effective for "getting things done," they shouldn't be used in community meetings unless everyone in your group understands them. In many instances, Robert's Rules discourages meaningful input by intimidating members that are not familiar with it. As an alternative, consider using your agenda to provide structure and simply guide, encourage, and limit discussions where appropriate.

Make sure that someone takes the minutes or records them. If you don't have a secretary, then rotate this task. Be aware that the person who takes minutes will not be able to involve themselves in much discussion.

Making Decisions

Good decisions are usually reached by combining information, emotion, and logic. How a decision is made has a lot to do with its acceptance by a group. The following are three different ways to make decisions:

Divine Right: The leader/chairperson is really smart and perceptive and comes up with what seems to be a good decision without any input from the group.

Does it work? Only in the Army and other non-voluntary situations. While the leader's idea might be a good one, the acceptance of the idea will be low.

Voting: Most of us have been led to believe that voting is the best way to make a decision. What we don't take into account is that voting on a decision produces strong winners and strong losers. If a substantial portion of the group disagrees with a decision, then it might not be the best decision for your group.

Consensus: Getting most everyone to come to an agreement is not an easy task, but your most enduring and satisfying decision will come from discussion toward this goal. Encourage everyone to speak their minds and try to reach a compromise. It helps to have people rank ideas after each alternative has been discussed, then look for areas of agreement among the several top-ranked ideas.

NOTE: As much as possible, a group should take care of itself. As a leader, you should not allow yourself to be overbearing. If someone is a continual problem, the group has some responsibility to deal with that person.

Ending the Meeting

It is surprising how many meetings are allowed to just fizzle out. All of the energy generated isn't put into any kind of action. There is nothing more satisfying to members than ending a meeting with something to do. If committees need to be formed, appoint members and then ask for volunteers. If someone objects, be flexible. Give each committee a deadline for reporting back to the group. Summarize what has been decided. This will give a feeling of accomplishment to members and reinforce the decisions made.

Decide on the date, time and place of the next meeting **before** members leave.

PROPOSED
BY-LAWS FOR GEORGETOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
(A Homeowners Association)

ARTICLE 1. Name and Location

Section 1 - Name. The name of this organization shall be the Georgetown Community Association, hereinafter referred to as GCA. GCA is a non-profit Mississippi corporation.

Section 2 - Purpose. GCA shall be a local community association, whose goal is to improve the quality of life of its residents through community mobilization and empowerment.

Section 3 - Boundary. The area of GCA's concern is defined geographically as having Medgar Evers Drive as the north boundary; Fortification Street as the south boundary; Bailey Avenue as the east boundary; and Way Street and Center Street as the west boundary.

ARTICLE II. Membership

Section 1 - Eligibility for Membership. Membership shall be residents residing within the aforementioned boundaries, and any interested homeowner residing within the city limits of Jackson, Mississippi, who are 18 years of age or older.

Section 2 - Dues. Membership dues for individuals shall be \$10.00, and organization members, businesses, etc., shall be \$25.00 Both shall be paid annually. Associate members' dues are also \$10.00 per year and \$25.00 per year for individuals and organizations, respectfully. All dues and contributions to GCA shall be used to meet its operating expenses, projects and programs which advance its objectives, and distressed members.

Section 3 - Privileges of Membership. Each member in good standing as defined above shall have the right to one vote to elect officers and directors of GCA. Members will be entitled to receive all newsletters or other publications provided by GCA.

Section 4 - Associate Members. Associate members are defined as persons or organizations not residing or located within the Georgetown limits but who support and subscribe to the objectives of the Georgetown Community Association. Associate members may serve on committees but are not eligible for membership on the Board of Directors or for election to any office and no more than 33% of any committee may be composed of association members.

Section 5 - Termination of Membership. Expulsion shall be the only remedy for nonpayment of dues if the dues are more than 60 days delinquent. In addition, a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors may expel any member for conduct which, in their discretion, they deem to be detrimental to the objectives and policies of GCA as previously described.

ARTICLE III. Election of Officers

Section 1 - Nominating Committee. A nominating committee composed of five members of GCA shall be appointed by the President during the period from October 1 to December 31 of each calender year. A member of the nominating committee may not serve in this capacity for more than two consecutive years.

ARTICLE IV. Officers and Committee

Section 1 - Officers. The officers shall be president, two vice-presidents, a secretary and a treasurer to be elected in November every tow years. The term of office shall be two years. Officer may succeed themselves in the open election.

Section 2 - Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be comprised of the following officers: president, two vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer and such other elected members to form a board of 15. The term of office shall be two years. Board members may succeed themselves in the open election. Should there be an unexpected vacancy, the president may appoint someone to complete that term.

Section 3 - Committees. The committees shall consist of Membership, Courtesy, Crime and safety, Community Improvement, and Crime Watch.

ARTICLE V. Duties of Officers

Section 1 - President. The president shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Director and general meetings. He or she has general supervision of the affairs of GCA and furnishes leadership in implementing program planning and organization. Individual block clubs wishing to contact city or other outside officials to address problems should have their request approved by executive board. The president shall also serve as the media liaison of GCA.

Section 2 - Vice-President. The duties of the vice-presidents shall be assigned by the presidents shall be assigned by the president. The vice-presidents duties shall include membership, and organization of the block captains. One or both of the vice-presidents shall conduct any meeting of GCA when the president is unable to attend.

Section 3 - Secretary. The secretary shall issue notices of meetings as appropriate, keep minutes of the meetings and assist the Board of Directors with correspondence.

Section 4 - Treasurer. The treasure shall keep regular books of accounts related to membership dues. Requests for funds shall be accompanied by a voucher. The funds held by GCA shall be deposited by the treasurer into such bank account as the check or order of the treasurer and

one other member of the Board of Directors. The president shall appoint an audit committee composed of three members to audit the books at the end of each calendar year and furnish a report of the Board of Directors as the result of the audit.

Section 5 - Past Presidents. The immediate past president shall become a member of the Board of Directors at the conclusion of the presidential term and shall serve for a term of two years.

Section 6 - Committee Chairpersons. Chairpersons of GCA are responsible to the president as designated by same. Committee chairpersons shall report progress and seek counsel of the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

ARTICLE VI. Meetings

Section 1 - Meetings. The regular meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month, or more often as deemed necessary. But, meeting times are flexible and may be rearranged to accommodate the community.

Section 2 - Board of Directors' Meeting. The Board of Directors shall meet monthly prior to the next regular membership meeting.

ARTICLE VII. Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by the following: (1) the affirmative vote of a majority of votes cast at a general membership meeting or special meeting called for that purpose of (2) the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire Board of Directors, not the majority of those present at the Board of Directors' meeting.

BY-LAWS FOR JACKSON ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

ARTICLE I. Name and Location

Section 1 - Name. The name of this organization is the Jackson Association of Neighborhoods, Inc., hereinafter referred to as JAN. JAN is a Mississippi nonprofit corporation.

Section 2 - Location of Office. JAN's principle office shall be in the City of Jackson, Mississippi, in such location that the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall designate from time to time. The area of JAN's concern is defined geographically as the Jackson city limits.

Section 3 - Objectives. JAN is a nonpartisan, non-sectarian organization dedicated to preserving and improving the residential character and integrity of neighborhoods within the city limits of Jackson. A primary objective of JAN is to develop a spirit of cooperation between neighborhoods and businesses within Jackson and to develop a better quality of life for all residents.

ARTICLE II. Membership

Section 1 - Eligibility for Membership. Any individual 18 years of age or older and a resident of the City of Jackson is eligible for an individual membership. In addition, neighborhood associations and similar organization located within the City of Jackson are also eligible for an organization membership.

Section 2 - Associate Members. Associate members are defined as persons or organizations not residing or located within the Jackson city limits, but who support and subscribe to the objectives of JAN. Associate members may serve on committees, but are not eligible for membership on the Board of Directors or for election to any office. No more than 33% of any committee may be composed of associate members.

Section 3 - Dues. Membership dues for individuals and associate members shall be \$10.00, and neighborhood/community organizations shall have dues of \$25.00 per year. All dues and contributions to JAN shall be used to meet JAN operating expenses and expenses of projects and programs that advance its objectives. Membership dues shall be renewed on the anniversary date of initial payment.

Section 4 - Privileges of Membership. Each member in good standing as defined above shall have the right to one vote to elect officers and directors of JAN. Members will also be entitled to receive all newsletters or other publication provided by JAN.

Section 5 - Termination of Membership. Expulsion shall be the only remedy for nonpayment of dues if the dues are more than 30 days delinquent.

ARTICLE III. Board of Directors

Section 1- Eligibility for Board Membership. Must become a member in good standing as defined above in Article 11, Section 1.

Section 2 - Nominating Committee. The nominating committee shall be composed of no more than seven board members. The committee shall submit at least two names for each ward vacancy. Members of the nominating committee may only serve in this capacity for one year.

Section 3 -Board Nominations. Letters will be sent to the JAN membership to solicit nominees for the Board of Directors. The nominating committee shall present the names of individuals to the Board of Directors. However no name shall be submitted without the consent of the nominee and a second from another JAN member. At the time of the nominating committee's report, the floor will be open for additional nominations from the members that are present. Once the nominations are completed, ballots with the list of Board nominees will be sent to the JAN membership.

Section 4 - Election. Board members will be elected by ballots. The ballots will be sent to those individuals and organizations with current membership in JAN.

Section 5 - Term of Office. Board Members shall be elected for a three-year term. No Board Member will serve more than two consecutive terms (6 years). Only in the adherence to a staggered rotation schedule will the regular three year term be altered.

Section 6 - Size of Board. The Board of Directors shall consist of fifteen (15) members - two representatives from each council ward and the immediate past president.

Section 7 - Alternate Board Members. Each ward should have an alternate board member. This nominee shall come from the nominating committee. The alternate shall be the nominee receiving the second highest vote during the election process. Alternates can only vote in the absence of an elected board member. Alternates will have all rights and responsibilities of the primary board members. Alternate board members will only serve one three-year term as an alternate.

ARTICLE IV. Officers and Committees

Section 1 - Officers. There shall be a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer. Officers shall serve for a term of one year beginning January 1 of each year.

Section 2 Committees. The president, after consultation with the Board, shall appoint the chairpersons of standing committees. The president shall appoint the chairperson of any ad hoc committee, subject to the advice of the other members of the Board of directors. All committee chairs will be members of the JAN Board in good standing.

Section 3 - Terms of Office. All officers shall be elected for a one year term and shall be eligible for re-election for an additional year. No officer shall serve in the same position for more than two consecutive years. Committee chairpersons shall be appointed for a one year term and may be reappointed by the president as needed.

ARTICLE V. Duties of Officers

Section 1- President. The president shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and general meetings. The President has general supervision of the affairs of JAN and furnishes leadership in implementing program planning and organization.

Section 2 - Vice-President. The duties of the vice-president shall be assigned by the president. The vice-president shall conduct any meeting of JAN when the president is unable to attend. The vice-president shall serve as chair of the nominating committee.

Section 3 - Secretary. The secretary shall issue notices of meetings as appropriate, keep minutes of the meetings and assist the Board of Directors with correspondence.

Section 4 - Treasurer. The treasurer shall keep regular books of accounts related to membership dues, subject to the assistance of an accountant or other bookkeeper designated by the Board of Directors. The funds held by JAN shall be deposited by the treasurer into such bank account as the directors shall designate and shall be withdrawn only upon the check or order of the treasurer and president. The president shall appoint an audit committee composed of three members to audit the books at the end of each calendar year and furnish a report to the Board of Directors.

Section 5 - Past President. The immediate past president shall become a member of the Board of Directors at the conclusion of the presidential term and shall serve for a term of one year. If the past president's term as a Board Member has not expired, he/she will continue to serve on the Board as a ward Representative until his/her term expires.

Section 6 - Committee Chairpersons. Chairpersons of JAN are responsible to the Board of Directors as designated by name. Committee Chairpersons shall report progress and seek counsel of the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

ARTICLE VI. Meetings

Section 1 - Meetings. The Board Members shall hold as many membership meetings as it deems appropriate. However, the Board of Directors shall hold quarterly general membership meetings each calendar year. Notice of said meeting shall be given to all members in good standing by mail, or otherwise, at least five days prior to said meeting. The Board shall select the time and place for the meeting and has the duty to insure that proper notice of the meeting is given.

Section 2 - Board of Directors' Meetings. The Board Members shall meet monthly or as necessary to carry out the goals of JAN. The president shall designate the time and place for the meetings and shall give at least three days prior notice of the meetings to each board member by mail or otherwise.

Section 3 - Absent Board Members. Any board member absent from a meeting of the Board may designate, in writing, a member of JAN to represent him/her. In the event a board member is absent from two consecutive meetings, he/she may be removed by a majority vote of the remaining Board Members. In extenuating circumstances, a Board Member may request a leave of absence for one year. The ward alternate will take the absent board members place on the board. At the end of one year the original board member may return to complete his/her term.

Section 4 - Quorum. At any general meeting of JAN that is properly noticed, those present shall constitute a quorum. At any Board of Director's meeting, a majority of the Board of Directors, or their representatives, will constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VII. Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by the following: (1) the affirmative votes of a majority cast at a general membership meeting or special meeting called for that purpose and (2) the affirmative votes of a majority of the entire Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VIII. Dissolution

In the event of the proposed dissolution of JAN, a committee shall be appointed by the president to investigate and make recommendations for the reorganization or abolishment of JAN.

Amendments Approved- June 25, 1998

Amendment Approved - February 11, 2000 4