

Neighborhood Organization Workbook



Muncie, IN

Prepared by: Task Force 2, Muncie Action Plan

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Plan**

May, 2011

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1. Introduction to the Workbook and Muncie's Neighborhoods

This Muncie Neighborhood Organization Workbook has been prepared under the direction of the Muncie Action Plan's (MAP) Task Force 2 Initiative "Fostering Collaboration." It is designed for neighborhood Zone Facilitators and organizers. It is based on publicly available information found through research and input from the City of Marion, Indiana. The workbook is structured with stand-alone sections addressing issues and challenges faced by neighborhood organizers. The 3-ring binder allows users to add supplemental information easily. An electronic copy of the workbook can be found on the MAP website (www.muncieactionplan.com).

Neighborhoods are the heart of a city. For many people, the neighborhood they live in is as important as the house they live in. Most neighborhoods have clearly identifiable characteristics: housing types, appearance, "neighborliness," and safety. These characteristics affect the value of the houses in the area as well as the desirability of living in the neighborhood. There are both emotional and economic benefits to having friendly, safe, and attractive neighborhoods.

If you want to preserve or enhance your neighborhood, you must first get to know it. Begin by walking your neighborhood. You will notice the small, but significant, details that make your neighborhood unique. Pay attention to:

- **Different housing styles**—Notice the ages of the homes. Is there a unifying element to your neighborhood—a school, a central park, a busy street? Try to find out which houses or structures have historical or cultural significance.
- **Characteristics of neighborliness**—Notice the absence or presence of porches, privacy fences, sidewalks, children, and pedestrians. Do you see people outside gardening jogging, biking, and walking for pleasure? What schools, churches, institutions, businesses, and natural amenities are parts of your neighborhood? How do they contribute or detract from its "neighborly" feel?
- **People**—Do some streets have higher concentrations of seniors or families with young children? Who are the respected elders in the neighborhood? Are there families new to America?
- **Safety issues**—Are there sidewalks, streetlights, bike lanes, and well-marked crosswalks? Are hedges and branches trimmed back from the sidewalks and intersections? Are walkways well maintained? Are speed limits and pedestrian laws enforced?
- **Your neighborhood's political presence in the city**—Who are the acknowledged community leaders? What is the history of involvement in your neighborhood? Perhaps much of the groundwork has already been laid!



An Eastside Neighborhood house in Muncie (bottom); house in the Morningside neighborhood in Muncie (top)

Once you have assessed your neighborhood's strengths and challenges, you will be ready to engage your neighbors in the truly satisfying work that lies ahead.

This handbook is intended to provide some ideas for working with your neighbors to improve and maintain the quality of life in your neighborhood. We celebrate the fact that each Muncie neighborhood is different, and we acknowledge that each neighborhood association will be a reflection of its unique constituents.

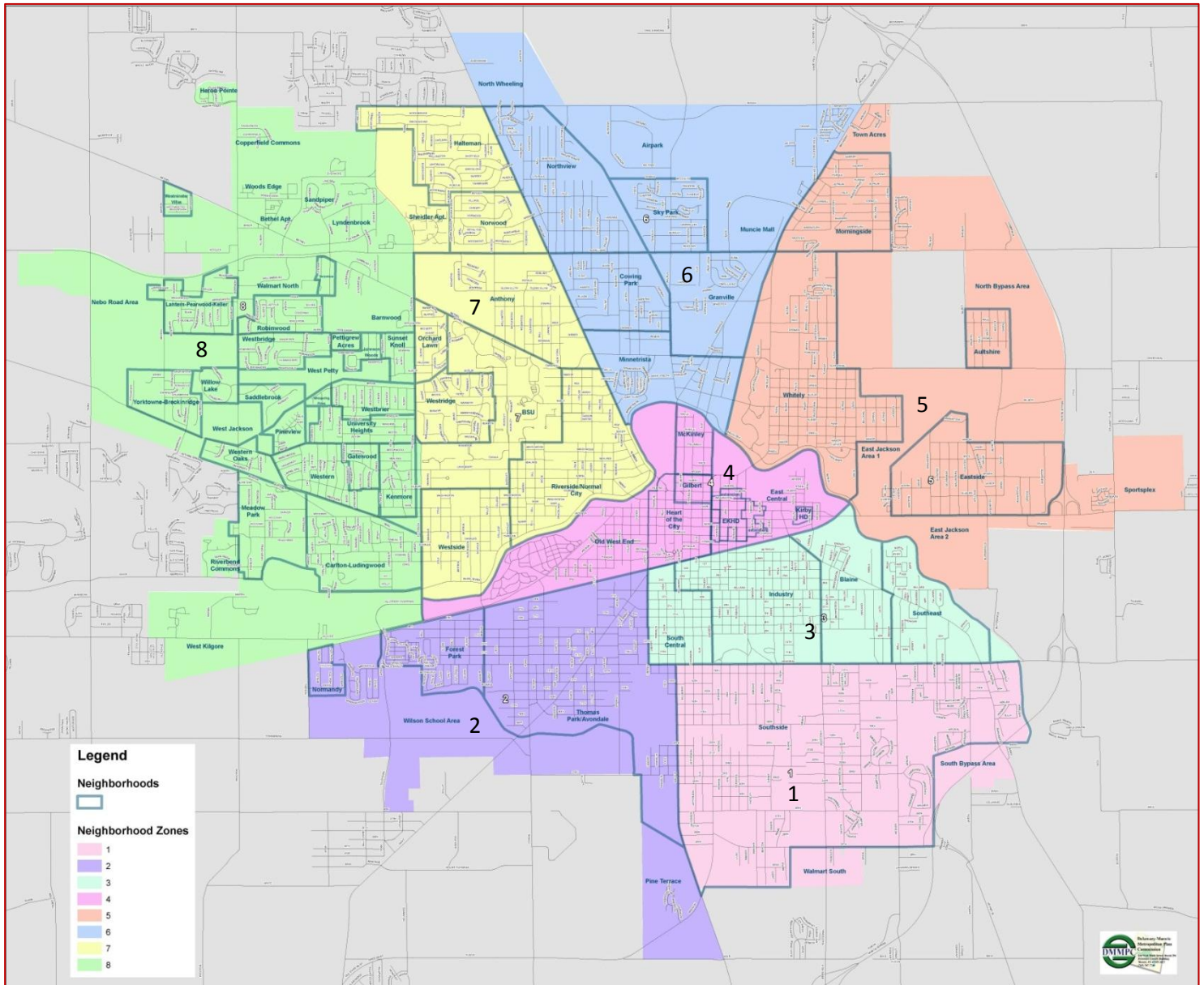
Your neighborhood association should be organized in a way that best suits your needs so long as it meets legal requirements. There are certain things that all neighborhood associations must do, such as writing bylaws or articles of incorporation. However, you do not need to take on more fiscal and legal responsibilities than are appropriate for your organization. There are things that must be done, things that should be considered, and things that are optional.

- **Write bylaws.** To be recognized as a legitimate neighborhood association by the City of Muncie, you must have bylaws or articles of incorporation.
- **Bookkeeping.** Even if you are dealing with small sums of money, you should set up a bookkeeping system. Choose a business name; the least you should do as a neighborhood association is to apply for a business name. This protects your identity as an association.
- **Get an Employer ID number.** Like a Social Security number for your neighborhood association, this number is necessary to open a bank account.
- **Incorporate.** You can incorporate with the State of Indiana as a nonprofit corporation. This is necessary if you intend to apply for a nonprofit, tax exempt status. Corporations must comply with a number of legal and fiscal requirements, some of which are outlined in this section.
- **Apply for a tax exempt status.** The Internal Revenue Service allows neighborhood associations to apply for a tax exempt status.
- **Apply for a bulk mailing permit.** The post office offers a special rate to nonprofit, tax exempt organizations.

Some research may be necessary before you decide which of these optional actions you want to pursue. The size of your organization, its level of activity, and the amount of money you have are among factors that determine the best status for your neighborhood association

The map on the next page shows Muncie's neighborhoods. There are over 50 identified neighborhoods in the City of Muncie. While the older parts of the city, particularly on the east and south sides, have larger long established neighborhoods, many of the neighborhoods on the west and northwest sides of the city are basically subdivisions that were formed during suburban expansion. To organize a plan to lead to more effective organizations, Task Force 2 divided the city into eight zones. The strategy calls for Zone Facilitators to lead each zone, working hand in hand with volunteers from neighborhoods to create their organizations. For more information on the MAP Task Force 2, visit the MAP website at www.muncieactionplan.com.

Map of Muncie Neighborhoods



Zone 1
Southside

Zone 2
Forest Park;
Thomas
Park/Avondale;
Pine Terrace;
Normandy

Zone 3
South Central;
Industry; Blaine;
Southeast

Zone 4
Old West End;
Heart of the City;
Gilbert; East
Central; McKinley;
Kirby Historic
District; East Kirby

Historic District

Zone 5
Whitely;
Morningside;
Aultshire; Eastside

Zone 6
Northview; Cowing
Park; Minnetrista;
Granville; Sky Park

Zone 7
Westside;
Riverside/Normal
City; BSU;
Westridge;
Orchard Lawn;
Anthony;
Norwood;
Halterman

Zone 8
Westminster
Village; Lantern-
Pearwood-Keller;
Willow Lake;
Yorktowne-
Breckinridge;
Saddlebrook;
Western Oaks;
Pineview; Meadow
Park;

Western Woods;
Gatewood;
University Heights;
Westbrier; Sunset
Knoll; Johnson
Woods;
Westbridge;
Robinwood;
Pettigrew Acres;
Kenmore; Carlton-
Ludingwood

2. Getting Organized

The first step in organizing your neighborhood is to begin with an honest assessment of what you want to accomplish and how much time and energy you are willing to put forth to achieve it. There are three approaches to improving neighborhood quality of life, outlined below, in order of increasing involvement:

- 1) Getting to know some of your immediate neighbors (*see Appendix A*).
- 2) Finding solutions for one or two specific problems (*see Appendix A*).
- 3) Organizing or revitalizing an ongoing neighborhood association that will deal with a variety of issues—including the above—as they arise.

Why Organize?

Neighborhood associations draw citizens together in a working and social relationship which can enhance livability in a variety of ways. Neighborhood associations can offer many things, among them:

- Advocacy and Communication
 - Represents the neighborhood to the City Council and staff
 - Creates an organized, unified voice
 - Identifies issues and advocates solutions to local problems
 - Provides the City with direct communication from concerned citizens about upcoming issues.
- Study and Planning
 - Neighborhood associations are valuable resources for City planners in areas such as land use, utilities, traffic, and public works projects.
 - Local residents are the best resource to help make those improvements
- Public Safety
 - The Police Department depends upon interaction with and knowledge of the community.
 - Addresses local enforcement problems.
- “Small-Town Atmosphere” and Livability
 - Promotes personal interaction and strengthens the social fabric of the community.
 - Using community volunteers, associations help neighborhoods move from talk to action in tasks of some immediacy, like block watches, park and roadside clean up, and the like.

Membership

There are three bodies of membership within a neighborhood association:

1. **The General Membership** includes any interested person who lives within the boundaries as specified by the neighborhood association. The general membership may also include those who work or do business in your neighborhood.
2. **Committees** are task-related groups formed from the general membership that work on a particular project or issue. Some committees meet for a specified project and disband when the project is over, while others are ongoing. Committees report to the Executive Board.

3. **The Executive Board** is the governing body of the neighborhood association. The Board is made up of the officers, as stated in the bylaws, and is the day-to-day decision-making body for the general membership. Officers are elected from the general membership and serve for a specific term. Meetings of the Executive Board are held regularly, usually at least once a month. The Board's responsibilities include: neighborhood communication (listening and speaking), public relations, and resource development.

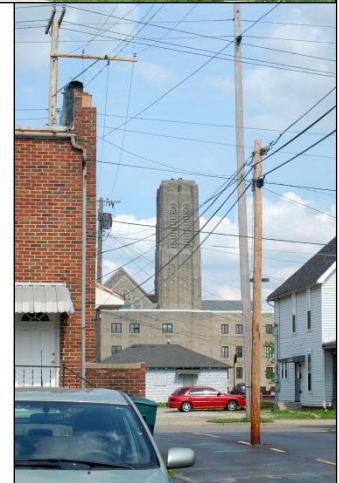


Organizing a Neighborhood Association

Often, groups organize or revitalize because of a sudden crisis or issue which galvanizes the local citizenry. Hopefully, you are thinking of organizing as a proactive measure.

Whatever the motivation, before you begin:

- Recognize the importance of crime prevention.
- Consider the character and needs of your neighborhood. If the association serves the residents' interests and priorities, it will not be hard to get members. However, if it appears that the organizers have a particular axe to grind, it may be hard to attract or keep members.
- Consider what issues might appeal to residents of your neighborhood. Possibilities include traffic and pedestrian issues, water and drainage problems, health and safety concerns, community beautification issues, or parks development.
- Make full use of volunteers. When people offer to help, enlist their services in a timely manner.
- Understand that neighborhood associations are grassroots organizations that depend on volunteers. Bringing more people into roles of responsibility in the organization will make it easier to organize and to sustain over the years.



Colorful residences brighten Madison Street (top); a view from Downtown Muncie (bottom)

Successful Association Components

The following are some basic building blocks for creating and maintaining a solid foundation for your neighborhood association. These steps are not meant to be all-inclusive.

- **Clear Goals and Objectives**—Goals and objectives provide a road map for associations and give them a reason to exist. Realistic and attainable goals promote communication and provide members with direction and a sense of accomplishment.



Local signs on the eastern edge of Muncie

- **Written Operating Procedures**—To ensure continuity from year to year, especially when officers and leaders change, your association needs to have written operating procedures and policies. These written procedures can take many forms. The most common operating documents are bylaws. Your association does not have to be incorporated to adopt bylaws.
- **Democratic Process of Leadership and/or Officer Elections**—Members should have a voice in the leadership of the association. Through the election of officers/leadership, members are able to participate in the development and direction of the association. Election of officers also helps to promote officer/leadership accountability to the members.
- **Solid Leadership**—A neighborhood leader needs to have the vision and the ability to build consensus, to encourage neighbor involvement and maximize neighborhood talent, and to delegate duties and authority to others. A leader needs to help the association cultivate future leaders for the association and knows how important it is for the association to experience a change in leadership. Look for individuals who have shown that they want to succeed, want the group to succeed, and communicate well with people.
- **Committees**—Committees are the basic operating groups that allow the association leadership to delegate issues, including identifying and researching problems and solutions, and meet its goals by involving a number of members. Many associations have standing committees, which operate continually to address key issues, or special committees and/or task forces, which may be created to address short-term issues. Special committees and/or task forces are dissolved after the issue has been addressed to the satisfaction of the members.
- **Neighbor Input and Involvement**—A neighborhood association is only as strong as its weakest member. The key to a vital and active association is its members—neighbors who pool their resources and maintain the integrity of their neighborhood. Associations help promote the self-help tradition and empower neighbors.
- **Funding**—Neighborhood associations have expenses and should operate with a budget capable of supporting association goals. In many cases, membership dues are the main source of funding for neighborhood associations. The association leadership, specifically the Treasurer, should provide a monthly report of the revenues, expenses, and balance on hand. Associations are encouraged to build their budget from their goals and objectives.

Mobilizing the Organizing Committee

Find some neighborhood leaders to serve as the organizing committee. Make a list of people who've been involved in charitable fund drives, political campaigns, hearings at City Hall, sports organizations, children's activities, and parent teacher organizations (PTA), or are known as community-minded citizens. Expertise is not required; if you care enough to read this workbook, you are already a neighborhood leader!

Telephone or visit each person on your list

Tell them about your ideas for a new or existing neighborhood association and what positive impacts it might have. Ask what community issues are of concern to them. Ask for their suggestions about others who might serve on the organizing committee. Tell them that you will call soon about a meeting to

discuss the idea with other neighbors. Remember to give your name and telephone number in case they want more information or to refer others.

When you have talked to everyone on your list of neighborhood leaders and have at least six to eight interested parties, call a meeting of this initial organizing committee after about two weeks. If you wait too long, people begin to lose enthusiasm. Meetings may be held in a private home or public space that is convenient.

Hold a preliminary organizing committee meeting

This organizing committee is an important group. At the meeting, first make sure that everyone is properly introduced and comfortably seated. Consider providing light refreshments.

Familiarize your group with the neighborhood's boundaries. This handbook contains a map of the commonly understood neighborhoods of Muncie as stated in the Muncie Action Plan. Neighborhood grants, the Neighborhood Connection program, and other City programs are provided to neighborhoods based on the boundaries designated in the City of Muncie's Comprehensive Plan, which can be reviewed during City Hall hours at the Planning Department front desk.

Plan the agenda for the first general purpose meeting. A prototype agenda appears in "The First General Meeting" section below. As an organizing committee, you need to provide topics for discussion that appeal to people as a reason to get together.

Agree on a place and time to hold the first general meeting. Estimate the number of people you expect, and then look for a meeting space to fit that number. When possible, book the space for a second meeting about a month after the initial meeting date. That way, you can announce the follow-up meeting's date and time at the first general purpose meeting.

Discuss and answer the following questions:

- 1) Why do you want to organize or revitalize a neighborhood association?
- 2) What are some of the common problems or concerns of your neighborhood that you think an association could help or improve?
- 3) If there is a crisis at hand, explain the situation and discuss how it may affect the livability of your area and how coming together in an association can help impact the outcome of the crisis. Make sure you have accurate information about the crisis situation (*see Appendix*).
- 4) Will funding be necessary to support your activities?

Assign the following tasks for the general purpose meeting:

- **Assign someone to chair and facilitate the meeting**—This person must be able to present well-considered ideas about the association and be able to involve the audience in brainstorming common problems and concerns.
- **Assign someone to take minutes of the meeting**—The meeting minutes will include notes about tasks assigned and when the task should be completed. Keep a notebook or folder where all minutes and task assignments can be centrally stored.
- **Assign someone to set up the registration table**—Have sign-up sheets (including space for home addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses), copies of the agenda, and perhaps

some community information. You may want to provide stick-on nametags and a large marker. Nametags make introductions and conversations easier.

- **Assign someone to be in charge of seating and refreshments**—This person will make sure there are enough chairs available for the approximate attendance you expect. Refreshments do not have to be anything special, but can go a long way toward making people feel comfortable and social. Volunteers can bring coffee and cookies; if area merchants donate any items; make sure that you thank them publicly.
- **Assign the publicity chore**—All publicity must contain *what, where, when, and why*. If possible, include a phone number for people to call who have questions or need more information. Each member of the organizing committee should commit to inviting at least five other people. Other types of advertising include:
 - **Flyers**—Hand out door to door; post on store bulletin boards; and deliver to stores, churches, local schools, PTA, business, and clubs. Flyers may not be placed inside mailboxes.
 - **Signs**—Be sure the homeowner/resident will see the information likely spots include: inside screen doors or cracks of doors, under mats or flower pots.
 - **Neighborhood website**—Consider creating a neighborhood website. Your website should include neighborhood contact information, meeting information (date, time, location, and agenda), minutes from previous meetings, and upcoming events pertaining to your neighborhood. The Muncie Action Plan's website can be used for posting neighborhood bulletins or important events. (**Note:** several associations use part of their grant funding to support their website.)
 - **Emails**—Try to collect emails to build up an email contact group.
 - **Local government cable TV channel**—Contact the program director at WIPB about placing local events on the station's community calendar. WIPB is the public television channel for east central Indiana and broadcasts local information. See Chapter 6 in this workbook for more information on WIPB.
 - **Mailings**—Mailings can include newsletters that highlight neighborhood information, postcards that remind your neighbors of an upcoming meeting or event, or even surveys to get an idea of your community's ideas and opinions. Mailings are a simple way of updating those people who want to be engaged with the neighborhood association but could not attend the meeting.
 - **Newspaper press releases**—Press releases are another option for getting the word out.
 - **Phone trees**—Phone trees can either remind residents of an upcoming meeting or event, or cancel a meeting or event in case of an unforeseen problem.

The First General Meeting

The organizing committee should arrive at the meeting site about 30 minutes early to set up the registration table, chairs, and refreshments. If possible, greet people as they enter to help make them feel like part of the group.

Sample Meeting Agenda

- 1) **Introductions.** Introduce the members of the organizing committee.
- 2) **Why our neighborhood should organize.** This should be a short presentation on why the organizing committee thinks that a neighborhood association is a good idea.
- 3) **Brainstorming issues and concerns.** You must be open to the needs and concerns of your neighbors, the membership. You and the organizing committee are not the neighborhood association—you are only the catalyst for it to happen. Take care to solicit the attendees' opinions on the important issues for your neighborhood. Perhaps people can break into smaller "interest groups" to focus on problem areas, returning with reports to the larger group.
- 4) **Identification of tasks for the next meeting.** These include: Who will serve as chair? Who will do publicity? Who will set-up chairs and refreshments? Who will be in charge of registration and agendas (including copies of minutes)? Be sure to ask people to "network" for new members.
- 5) **What tasks were suggested during the brainstorming session?** Is research needed on a particular topic? Would a speaker from the City, another neighborhood association, or a local business be helpful? Make sure the minute taker is keeping track of these assignments.
- 6) **Are you ready to develop the organization?** Assign a small committee to review and suggest bylaws, propose a slate of officers, establish a dues structure, and consider other housekeeping details.
- 7) **Announce date, time, and place of the next meeting.**
- 8) **Adjournment and social time.**

There, you have done it! You have successfully launched a neighborhood association, representing some hard work and commitment on the part of the organizing committee. It will take work to keep the association running well in the future, but there will be more participants to share the responsibility.

Maintaining your Neighborhood Association

Set a regular meeting schedule and stick to it

Some associations rely on a 6-10 member executive committee to meet bi-monthly or even monthly to monitor neighborhood projects and issues. The whole membership then meets only a few times a year. In some, the entire membership meets monthly or bi-monthly. A popular schedule is to have the executive board meet in even months to prepare for the general membership meetings that are held in the odd months.

Decide as a group what your schedule will be, keeping the following in mind:

- Meeting at a regular time and place will give interested residents the opportunity to incorporate association meetings into their schedule.

- A regular schedule allows more time for planning and implementing long-term goals (i.e. Neighborhood Grant programs).
- Meeting on a regular basis will encourage bonds to develop among residents, creating a stronger sense of community.
- Consider using Robert's Rules of Order (*see Appendix A*) as a way to structure your meeting.

Regularly assess the mission of the neighborhood association and its priorities

Are you on track? Are you following through on topics discussed at earlier meetings? Are you following up on previous endeavors? Are your plans, goals, and activities realistic? Will they get you where you want to go? Do you need to scale back your original ideas to more attainable goals? Do you need to delegate some tasks, or get others involved in activities to achieve your goals?

Aggressively promote the association and recruit new members

Advertise meetings through flyers, mailings, phone trees, emails, your neighborhood association website, and sandwich boards. Promote your regular meeting time and place.

Include new members in tasks and activities quickly. An active member feels like a part of the association, not just a spectator. Provide small tasks as well as executive positions for people to be involved in.

One-time special projects, committees, and task forces are great ways to include the general membership without committing people to an officer's position. Do not let the membership become static or "clique-ish." With the support of most area residents, neighborhood associations have unlimited utility.

Make sure the leadership is committed and is representative of the neighborhood as a whole

Do not let the leadership become "one-issue" or designate the needs of all neighbors. Nothing will erode the membership rolls faster!

Maintain ongoing communication with all area residents

One of the easiest ways to do this is through the publication of a neighborhood newsletter.

Publish a website and/or newsletter

An updated website or regular newsletter (especially distributed through email) is an excellent way to let your full membership know about issues in your neighborhood and areas where they can be involved.

Find out about and work with existing organizations in your area

Make sure that the local PTAs, business groups, churches, sports associations, and the like know of your existence. Make sure your neighborhood association supports other groups when its interests are served also. This will provide you with a broad base of neighborhood political and financial support.

Do not let factions develop

Deal with issues as they arise; solve group problems before they become major crises that may destroy the group. If you are having problems in this area, do not hesitate to ask for help. Contact officers of other neighborhood associations who may have dealt with a similar problem (see Appendix A).

Invite outside speakers to discuss interesting topics

The City has developed a list of resource people, including people from other neighborhood associations, who you may find useful to further your group's interests.

Create and maintain a list of neighbor's interests

As different topics come up, (for example, traffic, safe school walk routes, land use, or the environment) you can refer to this list of people and their interests, then get them involved in examining the issue.

Muncie Action Plan Zone Facilitators are a resource and in touch with people from other neighborhood associations who may be able to find the perfect speaker for your group. If you have a question about who your MAP Zone Facilitator is, contact the MAP Coordinator at 765-747-8229 or lstrange@munpl.org.

3. Choosing Leaders

Once your neighborhood association is organized, the membership will need to choose leaders. If you have bylaws, they will include provisions for electing a board of officers and describe what those positions will be, how often officers are elected, and some responsibilities for those positions. Leaders provide continuity and accountability for the organization. Good leaders are trained, not born. Help each other become effective leaders and officers as you develop your association.

Neighborhood Communication: Be responsive to the neighborhood, and seek input from people who aren't involved in the association. It is important to keep people informed about what the association is doing.

Public Relations: Develop a positive image in the community for the neighborhood and the association.

Resource Development: Identify and solicit resources: active members, financial support, meeting space, supplies, etc.

Neighborhood Association Position Descriptions

Board Members:

- **Chairperson:** Responsible for the overall leadership of the Board. Sets the agenda and facilitates meetings
- **Vice Chairperson:** Assists the Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson conducts the meetings and exercises all the usual duties of the Chairperson.
- **Secretary:** Records the minutes of the meetings and makes sure that copies of the minutes, agendas, and other neighborhood association records are available for the Board and the public.
- **Treasurer:** Is responsible for the funds of the neighborhood association. Most Boards do not require anything but an occasional status report from the Treasurer. (Note: This is an optional position since some neighborhood associations do not have a treasury. The Treasurer position can also be added to the Secretary position for a joint Secretary/Treasurer.)
- **Newsletter Editor:** This position has overall responsibility for overseeing production of any newsletters the neighborhood association puts out.
- **Additional Positions and Chairs:** Each neighborhood association is different and will need different committees and positions accordingly.

Sample Officer Job Descriptions:

President: The President of the neighborhood's association serves as the chief executive officer of the association. The President serves at the will of the Board of Directors and can be removed with or without cause at any time by a majority of the vote by the Board. The President should not allow personal feelings or outside pressures to influence his or her actions.

- Presides at all meetings of the association, including helping the Secretary prepare the meeting agenda, and to begin and close the meeting.

- Appoints all committee and task force chairs. Serves as an exofficio member of all committees, except the nominating committee. Serving as exofficio does not mean the President has to attend the committee meetings. The President should not serve as a committee Chairperson.
- Assumes charge of the daily administration of the association.
- Has the authority to authorize specific actions in promoting the Board's policies.
- Leads orderly discussions by tactfully and politely enforcing rules that offer every member a chance to speak for or against a motion.
- Determines whether or not enough members (a quorum) are present to conduct business.
- Informs people about how the meeting will proceed. Reviews the agenda and explains each motion before a vote.
- Votes to break ties.
- Serves as spokesperson for the Board of Directors in most matters relating to association business.
- Cannot, without specific Board approval, borrow funds in the name of the association or otherwise act beyond the scope of the authority established by the association documents and its Board of Directors.

Vice President: The Vice President of the association is responsible for performing the duties of the President in the absence of the President. Examples of the types of duties and responsibilities the Vice President may perform are:

- Coordinates committee chairs and reports progress to the Board.
- Assumes duties as defined or assigned by the President and/or Board of Directors.

Secretary: The Secretary is responsible for maintaining the records of the association, including preparing notices for all meetings of the Board and the membership, and authenticating the records of the association. Examples of the types of duties and responsibilities the Secretary may perform are:

- Takes the minutes of the meetings and keeps a permanent, accurate record of what has taken place in meetings.
- Prepares written minutes for the Board of Directors and reads the minutes of the previous meeting.
- Is familiar with previous minutes in order to provide needed information to the President.
- Receives and handles all correspondence.
- Prepares meeting notices of all association meetings.
- Keeps an accurate list of members' names, addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers.

Treasurer: The Treasurer is the custodian of the association's funds and financial records. Examples of the types of duties and responsibilities the Treasurer may perform are:

- Coordinates the development of the proposed annual budget for the association.
- Keeps track of all revenues and expenditures; usually signs all checks or vouchers.
- Pays all the expenses upon authorization by the Board and the association.
- Presents a written report each month to the Board of Directors and/or association of the month's disbursements and the balance on hand.
- Prepares all financial reports in accordance with state law and IRS codes.

Committees: Committees play an important and vital role in associations. They help distribute the workload and provide an opportunity for members to get involved, training and preparing future officers and Board members. The President and/or the Board of Directors have the authority to establish committees and task forces needed to carry out the functions of the association. Standing committees continue from year to year. Special committees are appointed or elected for specific assignments.

Examples of standing committees used by many associations include: nominating, social, welcome, beautification, grievance, safety, etc. A special committee or task force may be formed to coordinate a neighborhood picnic or special event, or to address an issue affecting the neighborhood, such as lighting, traffic issues, etc.

The role of the committee chair is to head a small group that reports, makes recommendations, and/or acts on specific issues. The committee chair:

- Is usually the first person appointed to the committee.
- May be appointed by other committee members or by the President.
- Meets regularly with his/her committee and reports its activities to the Board.

4. Sample Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation

Bylaws

Bylaws contain the rules governing the internal affairs of an organization. They are the constitution of your organization that establishes its legal requirements. Bylaws govern the way you must function as well as the roles and responsibilities of your officers.

To be recognized as a legitimate organization you must have written bylaws. They are also necessary to obtain tax-exempt status from the federal government. However, some groups may not want to or see the need to have a formal set of bylaws initially and may want to consider developing articles of incorporation as a first step.

A sample set of bylaws are included in this workbook. It is important to think about the needs of your group and tailor your bylaws to meet your needs. Be as specific as possible, yet allow for flexibility within your organization. Take this process seriously, as your bylaws will be with your neighborhood association for a long time.

Sample Bylaws

North Rose Hill Neighborhood Association Bylaws

Article I: Mission Statement

The mission of the Association is to maintain and improve the unique residential characteristics of the North Rose Hill Neighborhood, with objectives to include:

- 1) Promote safe and adequate pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic, and traffic calming measures.
- 2) Protect wetlands, streams, wildlife habitat, and other sensitive areas.
- 3) Minimize noise, water and air pollution.
- 4) Support and enhance Mark Twain Elementary School and Lake Washington Technical College.
- 5) Promote markers at appropriate gateways to identify North Rose Hill as a residential entity and not simply a traffic corridor between NE 85th and NE 116th.
- 6) Promote and support parks and open spaces.
- 7) Monitor and inform residents of changes proposed by the City of Kirkland that could affect residents (e.g. opening or widening streets, expanding the sewer system, and changing zoning).
- 8) Consider and study other neighborhood concerns identified by residents.
- 9) Provide lines of communication between residents and the City of Kirkland and assist in obtaining a cooperative response by the City to residents' concerns.

Section 1

The name of this organization shall be the North Rose Hill Neighborhood Association.

Section 2

Purposes:

- 1) To enhance the livability of the area by establishing and maintaining an open line of communication and liaison between the neighborhood, government agencies and other neighborhoods.
- 2) To provide an open process by which all residents of the neighborhood may involve themselves in the affairs of the neighborhood.
- 3) To perform activities related to said purposes, to have and enjoy any lawful activity for which corporations may be organized under (RCW 24.03)
- 4) To be organized exclusively for educational, scientific and charitable purposes. Notwithstanding any statement of purposes or powers aforesaid, this association shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in activities or exercise powers that are not in furtherance of its specific and primary purpose.

Article II: Membership Qualifications

Membership in the Association shall be open to all residents. A resident shall be defined as anyone who lives within the boundaries of North Rose Hill Neighborhood Association as defined in Article X of these bylaws.

Section 1

Membership Voting:

All residents, located within the Association boundaries, 16 years of age or older, shall have one vote each to be cast during attendance at any general or special meeting.

Article III: Dues

No dues or membership fees shall be charged. Voluntary contributions will be accepted. Activities to raise funds may be held if appropriate.

Article IV: Membership Meetings

Section 1

General Membership Meetings:

There shall be at least one general membership meeting yearly. The meetings shall be convened in the fall or spring and upon any day decided upon by the majority vote of the board of directors. Notification for general meetings shall require seven (7) days advance written or telephone notice to active members of the Association. Active member is defined as one who has attended at least one of the last two general or special meetings of the membership.

Section 2

Special Membership Meetings:

Special meetings of the membership may be called by the chair or the board of directors as deemed necessary. Notification and purpose(s) of the special meeting shall require written or telephone notice to active members of the Association.

Section 3

Agenda:

Subject to the approval of the board of directors, the chair shall prepare the agenda for general and special meetings of the membership. Any member may make a motion to add an item to the board, general or special agendas at those respective meetings. Adoption of that motion requires a second and majority vote.

Section 4

Quorum:

A quorum for any general or special meeting shall be the number of members in attendance. Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, decisions shall be made by a 2/3 majority vote of those members present at any meeting.

Section 5

Participation:

Any general, special, board or committee meeting is open to any person and all who may wish to be heard. However, only those eligible for membership are entitled to vote. All actions or recommendations of the general or special meetings, including minority reports, shall be communicated to all affected parties.

Section 6

Procedures:

- 1) Letters or statements on behalf of the Association will require board approval before dispatch.
- 2) The Association shall follow Robert's Rules of Order (Revised) in all areas not covered by the bylaws (see Appendix A).

Article V: Board of Directors

Section 1

Number of board members:

The board of directors shall determine the exact number of board positions annually. There shall be at least 6 and no more than 12 members.

Section 2

Terms of Office:

Each director shall hold office for a term of one (1) year for which he/she is elected or appointed and until his/her successor shall have been elected or appointed to take office.

Section 3

Eligibility for board service:

Only persons eligible for Association membership shall be qualified to hold an elected or appointed position.

Section 4

Duties of board members:

The affairs of the Association shall be managed by the board in the interim between general meetings. The board shall be accountable to the membership; shall seek the views of those affected by proposed policies actions before adopting recommendations on behalf of the Association; and shall strictly comply with these bylaws.

Section 5

Election of board members:

Board members shall be elected annually by a vote of the membership at its annual meetings. The names of all candidates for the board shall be placed in nomination. In the event two or more names are proposed for a position, secret written ballots shall be issued for voting for board members. Election requires a majority vote of the members present.

Section 6

Board vacancies:

The board may fill any vacancy on the board by a majority vote of the board in cases involving absences by a board member from three (3) consecutive meetings. A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term and until his/her successor is elected or appointed.

Section 7

Duties of board officers:

- a. Chair—the Chair shall prepare the agenda and preside at meetings of the board and membership; shall appoint members of committees not elected, with a majority approval of the board, except for members of the Grievance Committee.
- b. Vice-Chair—the first alternate shall assist the Chair; in the Chair's absence shall function as Chair; shall serve as a member of the Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods (KAN).
- c. Secretary—the Secretary shall keep the minutes and written records of majority and minority opinions expressed at all meetings; shall assist with correspondence of the Association; shall make records of the Association available for inspection for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.
- d. Treasurer—the Treasurer shall be held accountable for all funds and shall give an accounting at each general meeting; shall receive, keep safe, and disburse Association funds, but such disbursement shall require the signature of one other board member for expenditures of \$100.00 or more.
- e. Board members—at-large members shall inform the board and the Association of activities of their areas of responsibility.

Section 8

Board meetings:

The board shall meet prior to any general meeting and at other times the chair may designate. These meetings shall be open session; however, only board members shall be entitled to vote. A quorum for board meeting shall be the number of board members in attendance; decisions shall be made by a 2/3 majority vote. Directors shall be notified of board meetings in writing or by telephone in advance. A majority of board members, by signed petition, may call a board, general or special meeting.

Article VI: Committees

The board shall establish both standing and ad hoc committees as it deems necessary. Committees shall make recommendations to the board for board actions. Committees shall not have the power to act on behalf of the Association without specific authorization from the board.

Article VII: Conflict of Interest

Section 1

Definition:

A conflict of interest exists for a member or board member whenever the member or board member holds a personal financial interest, which will be impacted by the action or inaction by the Association on a proposal before the membership or board. A personal financial interest shall include a financial interest held by the member or board member and/or by members of their immediate family. A personal financial interest includes an ownership interest above 5% of a business, which will be impacted by the decision. Examples of personal financial interest would include: Employment by the Association; ownership of property the use or control of which is being considered by the Association; plans to purchase property the use or control of which is under discussion by the Association, etc.

Section 2

Declaring the conflict of interest:

Whenever a member or board member determines that they have a conflict of interest relating to an item under discussion, they must inform the body (membership or board) hearing the proposal that the conflict of interest exists.

Section 3

Abstention from voting:

Members or board members shall not vote on matters in which they have a conflict of interest.

Article VIII: Grievance Procedures

Section 1

Eligibility to grieve:

A person or group adversely affected by a decision or policy of the Association may submit in writing a complaint to any member of the Grievance Committee.

Section 2

Complain Receipt:

Within seven (7) days of receipt of the complaint, the committee shall arrange with the petitioner a mutually acceptable place, day and hour for a review of the complaint, and will, in writing, within thirty (30) days recommend a resolution of the grievance to the board.

Section 3

Final Resolution:

The committee shall attempt to resolve the complaint and shall submit a report of their recommendations and/or action to the complainant, board and membership. If the committee, board, and petitioner cannot reach agreement, final resolution of the complaint shall be by a vote of a 2/3 majority of the membership at a general or special meeting.

Article IX: Procedure for Consideration of Proposals

Section 1

Submission of proposals:

Any person, group, or city agency, inside or outside the boundaries of the Association may propose in writing items for consideration and/or recommendation to the board. The board shall decide whether proposed items will appear on the agenda of either the board, standing or special committees or general or special meetings.

Section 2

Notification:

The proponent and members directly affected by such proposals shall be notified in writing or by telephone of the place, day and hour the proposal shall be reviewed not less than seven (7) days in advance.

Section 3

Attendance:

The proponent may attend this meeting to make a presentation and answer questions concerning the proposal.

Section 4

Dissemination:

The Association shall submit recommendations and dissenting views as recorded from the meeting to the proponent and other appropriate parties within thirty (30) days.

Article X: Boundaries

Section 1

Boundaries:

Boundaries of the Association shall be defined as follows: Beginning at the Northern edge of Planned Area 14A on 124th Ave. NE at approximately NE 87th St., West to 123rd Ave NE, thence North to NE 90th St., then West to the East boundary of I-405. Thence North to the intersection with NE 116th St., then East on NE 116th St. to the intersection with Slater Ave NE. Then Northeast on Slater to the South side of NE 123rd St along to and including both East and West sides of 131st PL NE. From Slater Ave NE, East on NE 120th St. to the juncture with 132nd Ave NE, thence South along the center of 132nd Ave. NE, to the Northern edge of Planned Area 14B (just North of NE 85th St.). Thence West along the Northern border of the Planned Area to the beginning on 124th Ave NE.

Article XI: Public Meetings/Public Records Requirement

The Association shall abide by all Indiana statutes relative to public meetings and public records. Official action(s) taken must be on record or part of the minutes of each meeting. The minutes shall include a record of attendance and the results of any vote(s) taken.

Article XII: Non-Discrimination

The Association will not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, income or political affiliation in any of its policies, recommendations or actions.

Article XIII: Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws

All amendments to these bylaws must be proposed in writing and submitted to members at a regular meeting of the Association. Adoption of and amendments to these bylaws shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote by the members present at a general meeting.

Articles of Incorporation

(Articles of Incorporation are not required if your association is not filing for 501c3 status.)

A corporation is simply an intangible entity that is recognized by the law. It acts like a person; however, not being one, it needs people to function. These people are its Executive Board.

An advantage of incorporating is that the corporation provides liability protection to its members. The corporation, not the individuals, is the legal entity responsible for its actions. If there is ever a legal problem, your neighborhood association (as a corporation) is liable for its actions, not its members.

To become a corporation in Indiana, you must file an Articles of Incorporation form with the office of the Indiana Secretary of the State. For an application, go to: <http://www.in.gov/sos/business/2426.htm> or call 1-317-232-6531 for additional agency information.

Note: Neighborhood associations are eligible to be considered as nonprofit corporations. However, filing for nonprofit incorporation status does not mean you are also tax exempt. You must file with the

federal IRS to become tax exempt. If you intend to get a tax-exempt status, you must first be a nonprofit corporation.

5. Basic Bookkeeping for Neighborhood Associations

While neighborhood associations generally do not have much money, it is important to keep track of whatever money does come to or goes out from your organization. It is a good idea to have an accountant or bookkeeper help you set up a set of books from the start, then to let someone who feels comfortable with numbers and figures take on bookkeeping responsibilities. The sooner your system is set up, the easier it is to keep accurate financial records. The following double-entry system has been recommended for use by neighborhood associations to help them keep accurate records. The system provides a record of all money received and where it came from, and all money paid out and the purpose for which it was used.

Cash Receipts and Cash Disbursements

All money coming or going out from the organization should be recorded on a daily basis, or whenever you have something to record. These transactions are recorded in a format called a journal.

Cash Receipts Journal

- Record the total amount of money (cash or checks) the day it is received and the source of each amount: i.e., contributions, grants, sale of advertising, etc.

Cash Disbursements Journal

- Record each disbursement from each bank account. Disbursements made by check should be recorded with the check number, date of the check, the payee (who the check is made out to), the amount of the check, and the purpose of the disbursement. For saving accounts without pre-printed checks, record the date of the withdrawal, amount, and purpose (use) of the funds. Photocopy the withdrawal slip and file with the cash receipts journal to create a record of who withdrew the money.

General Ledger

A General Ledger might be useful for associations with many different sources of receipts or many different categories for disbursements, particularly those which receive foundation grants that restrict the use of the grant money. The General Ledger is essential for an organization which wants to use accrual basis accounting, a method which records amounts owed to the organization (receivables) and amounts owed by the organization (payables). If you think your association needs a General Ledger or has significant payables or receivables, get help from a trained accountant to set up your system. The Treasurer or another designated person should prepare a written financial report each month. The report should present the results of the full month's activity (i.e., the March report covers March 1 to March 31). At a minimum, the report should include the following elements:

Cash at the Beginning of the Month

- Total receipts during the month (organized by source). Total disbursements during the month (with breakdown by type—i.e., postage, supplies, printing).

Cash at the End of the Month

- The cash on hand at the beginning of the month plus the cash received less the cash disbursed must equal the cash at the end of the month. As the organization gets larger, you may want to use a more standard format for financial reports, such as a Balance Sheet (a form for Revenues and Expenses) and a Statement of Support. You may also want to compare the funds received and disbursed to the budget adopted by your board. Even in a very small organization, it is essential that the bank statement be reconciled to the financial statements. Reconciliation involves adjusting the bank balance for outstanding checks and deposits. A written bank reconciliation should be available to prove that the amount of cash reported on the financial statement at each month's end agrees to the reconciled bank statement. If no one in the organization is familiar with bank reconciliation, ask an accountant or bookkeeper to teach the Treasurer a simple reconciliation method.

Bank Accounts

Over the course of time, every neighborhood association accumulates money for one reason or another. The association needs a management system in place for dealing with these funds. What kind of bank account should be opened and how do you go about opening one for your organization? Either a person or a corporation can open a bank account. If your association is a corporation and also has nonprofit status, you may be eligible to receive free banking privileges at some banks.

To Open an Account

- 1) Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS. An employer ID number is a federal tax number that is filed with the IRS. You must have this number to open an account with the bank and it enables the bank to report the earnings of your account to the IRS. If you don't have an EIN, you can open an account with a member's personal Social Security number. Often the Secretary/Treasurer will use his or her number. The money in the account is considered the personal money of the ID holder, and that person is liable to pay taxes on the interest income reported by the bank to the IRS. Also, if there is ever a lien against that person's assets, those monies are considered personal property and can be assessed. For an Employer Identification Number application (Form SS-4), go to www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/ss4.pdf or call your local IRS office at 747-5583 or 800-829-3676 for an application. The application is short and takes little time to fill out.
- 2) Signature cards must be signed by the Secretary/Treasurer of your neighborhood association and by anyone else who will be signing on the account. You will then also need a director's signature (an officer of the corporation or a designated director).
- 3) If you are a nonprofit corporation, you must bring a copy of your articles of incorporation stamped and "Filed" by the Corporation Division of the Indiana Department of the State. If you are not a corporation, bring a copy of your bylaws or minutes of your first meeting. You must also state the names and titles of people who are authorized to conduct business for the organization.
- 4) The bank will provide a card with wording for a proposed resolution to be passed by your Board or adopted by the members of an unincorporated association, authorizing the bank account.
- 5) Banks may waive service charges to the organizations that provide a necessary public service, but not all nonprofits receive waivers. The decision to waive the charge is at the discretion of the bank.

- 6) Personal identification such as a driver's license, credit cards, or a passport is required to open any type of account.
- 7) Determine your type of account. If you are a nonprofit organization and are eligible for a nonprofit account, there may be no charge for the service the bank is offering; however, you must take the account offered by the bank—you cannot choose the type of account. If you pay for an account, you can choose any account you would like, depending on your needs.

Types of Accounts to Consider

There are three things to consider when determining the type of bank account for your neighborhood association:

- 1) How often you will withdraw money.
- 2) The amount of money you have.
- 3) Do you have enough to keep a minimum balance in your account or pay service fees, if any?

Checking. Any account available to individual customers is available for a neighborhood association account. The least expensive usually have minimum deposit requirements. Your association should obtain pre-numbered checks. Using non-numbered checks is not an acceptable practice for neighborhood associations.

Savings. If you make limited withdrawals, you might be better off with a savings account rather than a checking account. The best arrangement is often a savings account with checking privileges. These usually require a minimum balance.

6. Getting the Word Out

Communication is one of the most important functions of a neighborhood association. People are interested in what is happening in their neighborhoods and need to know about activities in which they can become involved. Good publicity will inform your neighbors about the next scheduled meeting, the installation of a new traffic plan, or a successful neighborhood project. Announcing upcoming activities and identifying recent accomplishments is crucial to the success of your association.

Newsletters

A neighborhood association's newsletter is one of its most powerful communication tools. A newsletter can talk about specific issues facing the neighborhood or City issues that will eventually impact the neighborhood, positions taken by the neighborhood association, and ways for the membership to get involved in the various issues. It does not need to be fancy, but it does need to be credible. If you need help, ideas, or support, contact other neighborhood associations.

When launching a newsletter, read a variety of appealing newsletters to see what style best meets your association's needs. Newsletter ideas include:

- Quarterly or annual newsletter
- An emailed newsletter
- A column in a neighborhood newspaper
- Private donations to support monthly newsletter
- Annual occupant newsletter
- Hand-distributed newsletter

Some neighborhood associations supplement their newsletter budget by providing space for neighborhood business advertisements. These sponsorships can be an important resource for your newsletter, but the association may also be responsible for paying taxes on this income.

The following ideas may make the newsletter easier to produce:

16 Things to Keep in Mind when Writing a Newsletter

(from the City of Kirkland, Washington, Neighborhood Organization Workbook)

By Carlene Canton

- 1) Try to be clear about the purpose of each story. Generally, it's better to do separate stories rather than try to combine objectives or unrelated things.
- 2) Find a voice that is straightforward and concise. Save the flowery language for another time. Simple sentences communicate best when space is limited.
- 3) Avoid inflammatory language. As much as possible let the facts speak for themselves without editorializing (giving your own opinions) in the story.
- 4) Quote known individuals when you want to make a point instead of just giving your own opinion. It lends more credibility to your publication.
- 5) Don't throw around facts and figures that haven't been checked out. Once you lose the credibility of your readership, it can take many, many months to gain it back.
- 6) Avoid the temptation to exaggerate.

- 7) Try to step back from your work every so often and imagine how the stories you have written will be seen by your readers. Are you communicating what you set out to do or did you get sidetracked?
- 8) Try to avoid using the same names over and over again as “experts.” If you always quote Jane Doe, to the exclusion of everyone else, the publication will start to sound like a soapbox for Jane Doe.
- 9) Personalizing stories through anecdotal accounts is a good way to grab the reader’s interest, but be sure the person whose story you’re telling has okayed it to be used in print. Be respectful of privacy issues. A newsletter is not the place to offend or embarrass someone.
- 10) If diversity is a goal, check the content over frequently to make sure you have all the groups represented that you need (i.e. a publication for homeowners and apartment dwellers in the same neighborhood should have equal representation) or at least representation should be equal to the levels that both groups exist in the community. Similarly, do not only talk about businesspersons or homemakers. Be proactively sensitive.
- 11) Don’t try to slaughter opponents’ positions by attacking them in print. Invite them to write their own position paper with the goal of providing information on which your readers can make their own decisions. You can always add “an editor’s note” to the end of an opponent’s piece if you feel it’s misleading or inaccurate.
- 12) Whenever possible, give readers a phone number, name, or address where they can go for more information or to pursue a topic. You don’t want to get people all inspired and then leave them with nowhere to go. Be prepared to take advantage of any energy you may stir up.
- 13) Keep design simple and straightforward. Your readers aren’t looking for the latest in design trends—they want information that’s easy to read.
- 14) Double and triple check spellings in headlines. A typo in the body type of a story is bad enough, but a typo in headlines can haunt you forever.
- 15) Ask someone else to read over the publication before it goes to press. A fresh pair of eyes can catch things writers and editors miss.
- 16) Establish a conservative, manageable publication schedule and stick to it. It’s better to say you will do a quarterly and really do it than to promise a monthly and not deliver. You can always add in “special editions” along the way.

Organizing Committee Logistics

The following are basic organizational issues and guidelines for effective newsletter presentation:

- **Identify an editor**—This will probably be a person with a home computer and word processing or publishing software. This person will assign articles, collect and edit them, and organize the newsletter.
- **Develop editorial guidelines**—Whose opinions can be expressed as editorial opinions? Does the organizing committee want to check editorial opinions prior to publication? How are opinions going to be set off from fact?
- **Set an easy schedule**—Each phase of the newsletter (identifying issues, writing articles, checking articles, putting it all together, copying/printing, mailing labels) takes longer than it seems like it should. A good rule of thumb is to set a deadline at least two weeks before you want it to be delivered.
- **Develop a mailing list**—The newsletter should be mailed or emailed to all members. In addition, it is a good idea to send a copy to leaders of local organizations (PTA, City government,

business groups, sports associations, etc.). Most home computers have software that makes the creation and maintenance of name database very easy and mailing labels can be generated easily from the database.

- **Have a mailing party**—When it is time to stick labels and stamps, fold newsletters and mail, get people together, provide food, divide up the tasks, and have fun!

Bulk Mail

Frequent mailing of a long newsletter to many subscribers can eat up a Neighborhood Association's budget very quickly. To help avoid this, try these things:

- Set membership fees high enough to cover printing and postage of newsletters.
- Send it through an email.

Bulk mail permits. For more details (such as permit price and per item costs), contact the post office. Bulk Business Mail (BBM) is third-class mail. It includes bound printed matter and small parcels weighing less than 16 ounces. Examples of BBM include, but are not limited to, items such as catalogs and flyers. Material sent as BBM must contain a general message aimed at all who receive it and must contain the same material in each parcel. No personal messages may be included in the mailing.

There is an annual fee for a bulk third-class mail permit that enables the holder of the permit to mail at a single post office at the third-class rate for 12 months. For current rates, ask for the Current Rates and Fees Chart available at the post office or go to www.usps.gov. Each third-class bulk mailing must consist on a minimum of 200 pieces. All pieces in the mailing must belong to the same category—all letters, all post cards, or all small parcels. Bulk mail may not be dropped into collection boxes or left on a post office receiving dock. It must be deposited during operating hours at the appropriate department at the post office where the permit is held. Not all post offices accept bulk mail or issue bulk mail permits. All return addresses must be complete and include the official name of the bulk mail permit holder. The main Muncie post office (765-286-9623) can handle all of these requirements.

Each bulk rate mailing requires payment of postage. There are three indicators of postage payment:

- 1) Pre-canceled Stamps (issued in advance by the post office);
- 2) Permit Imprinted (printed in advance on each item or hand-stamped); and
- 3) Postage Meter (postal authorization required).

Payment for postage can be made by check or by establishing an account at the post office. A specific form must be prepared and signed by the mailer for each of the three methods of payment listed above at the time of each mailing.

It is legal to use Bulk Mail Permits belonging to other individuals or organizations. Before getting your own permit, see if someone in your neighborhood organization or another neighborhood organization has a permit that you can “borrow” for newsletters. This lets you avoid the annual fee for the permit, and pay only the reduced “per item” rate to the holder of the permit.

Bulk rate mail must be pre-sorted by zip codes. Other requirements on packaging, sorting, labeling, and all other facets of third-class mail are included in the postal publication “Third Class Mail Preparation”

available through the post office or by writing to Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 20402-9371. Always check with the post office for current regulations before proceeding. Go to pe.usps.com/businessmail101/ for more information.

Flyers

For many activities a simple flyer announcing the activity, location, date, and time is sufficient. Flyers are often the backbone of neighborhood association communications. They are the least expensive, the simplest to create and require no ongoing time commitment from neighborhood volunteers. Flyers are often used in conjunction with other forms of publicity. When writing a flyer, include:

- Name of the organization
- Event you are announcing
- Date
- Time
- Location
- Phone number for a contact person. If someone wants to get involved at a later date or simply wants more information, there should be a number to call.

Nice artwork and graphics are a plus for a flyer. However, in a pinch, or if your group lacks artistic expertise, don't fret. A simple flyer with the correct information will suffice. An easy trick is to cut out artwork that you find from other sources and paste it onto your flyer. (Be careful not to reproduce art that has been copyrighted, without permission.)

Flyers can be distributed in a number of ways. They can be hand-delivered, emailed, mailed, left in piles at locations throughout the area, or put up on bulletin boards in your community. A combination of methods is often the best approach.

Neighborhood Website

Consider creating a neighborhood website. Your website should include neighborhood contact information, meeting information (date, time, location, and agenda), minutes from previous meetings, and upcoming events pertaining to your neighborhood. (**Note:** several neighborhoods use part of their Neighborhood Matching Grant funds to support their website.)

Local Government Cable TV Channel

WIPB is East Central Indiana's local public television channel and broadcasts information from cities in the area. You can contact WIPB's program director (765-285-1249) with questions about broadcasting local information. It is requested that community information is received by the station two to three weeks prior to the expected air date. The approved information will be aired during a program break as part of their community calendar.

7. Instant Media Relations Program for Neighborhood Associations

The following tips, ideas, and suggestions can help neighborhood associations develop a positive approach and partnership with the media.

- 1) Don't underestimate the power of your own neighborhood newsletters. Add all local media outlets to your mailing list. Keep them informed on what is happening in your neighborhood. Also, add key community contacts to your list, including the mayor, city manager, United Way, legislators, civic clubs, etc.
- 2) Create a tour program. Because each neighborhood is unique, list landmarks, points of interest, and unusual highlights. Offer media representatives a personal tour of your neighborhood. Point out its assets and the things you are working to improve. This will help establish you as the neighborhood expert and spokesperson and help you build relationships. Find out which media people either live or used to live in your neighborhood and make them part of the process. Get to know the names of the media executives who make decisions for their organizations.
- 3) Invite media representatives to speak to your group. Give them an interested audience to deliver their message to and they will listen to yours. Don't assault them with complaints about the poor coverage you may have received in the past. Keep things on a positive, upbeat note.
- 4) Find a "news peg." If you are planning an event and want coverage, how can you sell the story? Does your event fit into a national or local trend, problem, or other newsworthy event? Give the media another reason to be interested in your event.
- 5) Develop a Media Kit. This doesn't have to be fancy, just functional. It should contain information on "Who's Who" in your neighborhood association and how to contact them, a brief history of the neighborhood, a map, and interesting facts and figures. Do you have any experts or specialists in your neighborhood? Send or give these kits to media as you meet them (reporters live and die by their list of contacts).
- 6) Be a welcome wagon. Offer to take television, radio stations, and newspaper staff a program on a tour. Don't criticize the coverage you get. If there has been an error in a fact, it is acceptable to point out the error and give a correction, but don't criticize the style or angle of the story.
- 7) Don't play favorites. Treat all fairly and equally. If you single out one reporter or media outlet you will create problems with the others.
- 8) Remember that "bad news" is easy to find. It is much harder to find positive news stories. Keep the media informed about your successes and your neighborhood's heroes.
- 9) Get to know the correspondents for the Neighbors Section of the newspaper. Feed them ideas and information.
- 10) Don't depend on the mass media. Develop your own newsletters, videos, and communications channels. Look for opportunities in your neighborhood. For example, can businesses help with signs, posting notices, or in other ways to get your message out? Use your neighborhood's churches and schools to pass the word.
- 11) Do not expect coverage. Even if a reporter shows up, that is not a guarantee that your story will run. Take a deep breath and wait until next time if it doesn't.

8. Neighborhood Watch

If you are concerned about security and safety issues, forming a Neighborhood Watch may be the answer. Contact the Crime Prevention Office at the Police Department for material and other assistance, and visit the National Crime Prevention Council at www.ncpc.org/topics/home-and-neighborhood-safety/neighborhood-watch.

A Neighborhood Watch is undoubtedly one of the oldest and most well-known crime prevention concepts. While the modern-day concept of Neighborhood Watch came into prominence in the late 1960s in response to an increasing burglary rate, its roots in America actually can be traced all the way back to the days of colonial settlements, when night watchmen patrolled the streets.

5 Steps to Building a Successful Neighborhood Watch in Your Area

Neighborhood Watch has had its profile raised in recent years as it became integral to the nation's homeland security strategy.

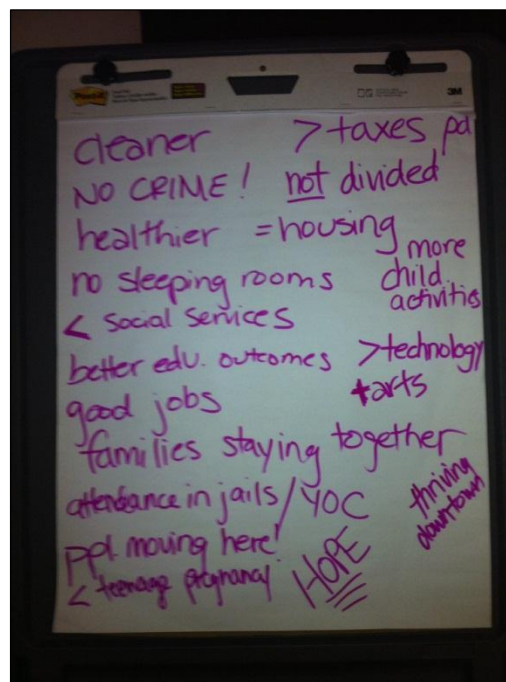
Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that stresses education and common sense. It teaches citizens how to help themselves by identifying and reporting suspicious activity in their neighborhoods. It also gives citizens the opportunity to give back to their neighborhood by working together to make the neighborhood safer and improve its quality of life. It's easy to start an effective and successful Neighborhood Watch. All you need to do is gather community partners at an initial meeting. Use the guide for conducting a successful meeting found in this packet and follow these 5 steps:

STEP 1

Talk with your fellow neighbors about their concerns regarding crime in the area and determine the level of interest they have in starting a Watch. While it is not necessary to have every household involved, incorporating as many of your neighbors as possible will increase your effectiveness and your likelihood for success in reducing crime.

STEP 2

Contact your local law enforcement agency and invite them to meet with your group at a time and place convenient to your Watch members. It is essential for your group to work in collaboration with law enforcement. A Neighborhood Watch is a cooperative effort. Law enforcement officials need to let the citizens know what is expected of them as Watch members, and citizens need to let law enforcement know what their concerns are within the community.



The 5 Steps

- STEP 1: Organize citizens
- STEP 2: Coordinate with Law Enforcement
- STEP 3: Identify the problems and develop strategies
- STEP 4: Train
- STEP 5: Take action steps

STEP 3

Working with a law enforcement advisor, your Watch should identify patterns of crime in the area and develop strategies to address these problems. Your group will need to appoint a block captain to coordinate these efforts and to design a phone tree for reporting crime and suspicious activities.

STEP 4

Have law enforcement train your Watch members in Emergency Preparedness/Emergency Response, Terrorism Awareness, and basic crime prevention techniques such as target hardening, eyes-and-ears, and CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

STEP 5

Take active steps in your community. Have a kickoff event to announce your formation and to encourage others to get involved. Post signs in and around your neighborhood. Start a Neighborhood Watch newsletter and schedule times for Watch members to do citizen patrols.

It is important to keep your group active and enthusiastic. Maintaining communication between group members and your law enforcement agency is very important. Be sure to schedule regular meetings so that your group remains focused. As concerns within the community change and crime patterns evolve, make sure you tailor your efforts around the new problems.

If everyone involved in the Neighborhood Watch program aims for the same goal, the program will be successful. This is not an overnight process; it takes patience, planning, and enthusiasm. Studies show that once a Neighborhood Watch program deteriorates, criminals notice and quickly resume their illegal activities.

The National Sheriffs' Association invites you to check out www.usaonwatch.org. Check out its Resource Center and Neighborhood Watch partners. You may subscribe to its newsletter. Of special note, is the ability to register your Neighborhood Watch.

Appendix A: Additional Information

Getting to Know your Neighbors

To get to know your neighbors better, try the following ideas:

Host a Coffee Hour

This can be arranged and hosted by one family or by two or three. Make a simple flyer, a friendly invitation for neighbors to stop by and meet each other and enjoy some light refreshments. Distribute it to every house on the block or the three houses closest to you on each side and across the street (or your apartment floor, building, etc.)

Serve coffee and donuts or cookies and juice—keep it simple. Distribute nametags and ask guests to include both their name and street address or apartment number. Addresses are a great icebreaker. "Oh, you live across the street from me? You just moved here two months ago? Where are you from?"

Organize a Block Party

Block parties require more organization than a coffee hour, but they are effective in getting neighbors together. Determine the number of families you want to participate (about 20-30 households is a good number). Form an organizing committee (4-8 people) to help organize the party.

- **Choose a location**—Consider someone's yard or the middle of a street, for example. You can get permission from the Police Department to close off a street for a specific period of time for such an event. (Be sure to request the street closure at least two weeks in advance.)
- **Choose a day and time**—For example, a Saturday or a holiday (such as July 4 or Labor Day), 11 a.m.–4 p.m. Make either dropping by for a short time or staying the entire time acceptable options.
- **Arrange for food and supplies**—The host committee provides paper plates and napkins, plastic forks, trash containers, can openers, and condiments; sets up tables and chairs; and provides several barbecue grills. A potluck is a good idea.
- **Arrange for entertainment**—Organize croquet, volleyball, Ping-Pong, lawn bowling, cards, bingo, races, and games for kids.
- **Prepare and deliver invitations**—Deliver one to each household approximately two weeks in advance of the party. The invitation should describe in detail how the event will work and what people should bring. Make it clear in the invitation that people may drop in for a short visit or stay the entire time. Include the names and phone numbers of the organizers, and invite others to help and/or call if they have questions or ideas. Even though the organizing committee is planning it, try to include others in providing assistance and ideas. The more people feel a part of the event, the more likely they will attend.
- **Plan for cleanup**—Towards the end of the event, start cleaning up. Those who are still around will help, but make sure you have at least four to six people you can count on to help with the cleanup.

Plan a Neighborhood Garage Sale

Invite neighbors to join you in holding a garage sale. This is a good way to work closely with neighbors on a short-term project. Many sales along a block attract more customers and add to the day's success. Most residents on your street (or in your complex) will show up to see what you are selling. You will meet some new neighbors, make a little money, and have a good time!

Write and deliver a flyer announcing your plans for a neighborhood garage sale and suggest possible dates. Invite neighbors to tell you what dates are best for them. When you decide on a date, ask someone to place an ad in the local newspaper. Make signs and, in consultation with your neighbors, decide where they should be displayed and who will be responsible for posting the signs and taking them down after the event. Usually, the participants share the cost of running a newspaper ad and making signs.



Directional sign on McGalliard Road

Volunteer to Help at your Local School

Muncie schools welcome your interest in volunteering to assist in the classroom. Contact the Muncie Community Schools to identify volunteer opportunities.

Organize a Disaster Preparedness and/or Fire Prevention Group

This is a great way to meet neighbors and learn helpful information. Depending on the amount of interest, this can involve a one-time presentation to a small group of interested neighbors, or it can consist of developing a neighborhood disaster preparedness plan over a period of several months that involves anywhere from 10-40 homes. Contact the Fire Department Office of Emergency Services for information on setting up your project.



Longfellow Elementary School in Muncie

Solving Neighborhood Problems

A fundamental role of a neighborhood association is helping to develop solutions to problems. Often, this simply means finding answers to residents' concerns before an actual problem arises.

Typical problems include traffic and vehicle speeds, difficult intersections, pedestrian safety, public works improvements, graffiti and other vandalism, code violations, developments or zoning changes that impact residents, and even private squabbles that might affect the entire neighborhood.

Solving problems before they begin includes being alert for potential irritants, reporting indications of illegal activity or dangers, and resolving abrasive situations before they become serious.

To play a positive role as a problem solver, a neighborhood association needs to maintain the confidence of its members and be a catalyst for working together toward common goals. Depending on the nature of a problem, a neighborhood association's role and actions might include:

- Staying abreast of planning, public works projects, and other proposed developments within the neighborhood and adjoining its boundaries.
- Gathering the facts and background about the problem.
- Promoting open communications and seeking consensus.
- Helping to identify possible solutions.
- Working with neighbors or City staff to implement solutions.
- Helping with follow-up.

Actions or follow-up steps might include identifying and implementing project mitigation measures, developing support for changes in future budgets or City codes, implementing projects such as a Neighborhood Watch and other law enforcement programs, and supporting long-range community improvement efforts.

In general, three kinds of approaches are typically involved in solving most neighborhood problems: voluntary compliance, actions by City staff, and legal action.

1) Voluntary Compliance

Many problems can be solved by meeting and talking with the people involved. A person who others feel is causing a problem may not even be aware of the impact their action is having. Getting the facts, concerns, and perceptions out in the open is often an effective way to obtain cooperation and voluntary compliance. For this step, the neighborhood association's assistance (or its help in arranging third-party assistance) is vital.

A mediation program can provide a trained mediator who can act as an unbiased party in a disagreement. By developing cooperative attitudes and striving for solutions, mediation can be an effective method of resolving differences without resorting to legal arbitration. A neighborhood association can help avoid confrontational situations that could do long-range harm.

2) Actions by City Staff

While a neighborhood association can be the key entity in finding or getting outside help for some situations, City staff must address certain problems, especially those involving enforcement. Examples might include: construction being done without permit, illegal parking, excessive noise, and storage of vehicles on landscaping. City departments, not neighborhood associations, should be the agent for actions that involve enforcing the law.

The role of City staff could include developing long-range solutions that require programming and budgeting—projects for streets, sidewalks, drainage, and utilities are a few examples. City staff would likely seek the neighborhood association's participation to help provide justification of details and review project specifics. The association would probably monitor progress and support the project in the City budget.

3) Legal Action

As a last resort in conflict resolution, legal counsel might be sought for advice, assistance, or action. Legal assistance can be costly and time-consuming. If the basic problem is between residents, special effort should be made to avoid legal action, long-range damage to relationships, and costs.

For certain types of problems, an association might desire limited legal advice, for example, to identify a full range of options and possible legal implications for a particularly complex problem. City staff might obtain the assistance of the city attorney in these special cases.

Robert's Rules of Order—A Short Summary

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business.

The Chair sets the meeting agenda, including when members may speak and for how long. A member may only speak when recognized by the Chair to do so. (**Note:** any complaints or questions must be made after the Chair recognizes a member. Most issues should be held until the end of the meeting.)

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. Individual members can: call to order, second motions, debate motions, and vote on motions.

There are four basic types of motions:

- 1) **Main motions.** The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.
- 2) **Subsidiary motions.** Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and is voted on before a main motion.
- 3) **Privileged motions.** Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.
- 4) **Incidental motions.** Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

How is a motion presented?

- Obtaining the floor:
 - Wait until the last speaker has finished.
 - Rise and address the Chair by saying, "Mr. Chairman or Mr. President."
 - Wait until the Chair recognizes you.
- Make your motion:
 - Speak in a clear and concise manner.
 - Always state a motion affirmatively. For example, "I move that we..." rather than, "I move that we do not..."
 - Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
- Wait for someone to second your motion.
- Another member will second your motion or the Chair will call for a second.
- If there is no second to your motion, it is lost.

- The Chair states your motion.
- The membership then either debates your motion or moves directly to a vote.
- Once your motion is presented to the membership by the Chair, it becomes “assembly properly,” and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.
- Expanding your motion:
 - The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
 - The mover is always allowed to speak first.
 - All comments and debate must be directed to the Chair.
 - Abide by the established time limit for speaking.
 - The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chair.
- Putting the question to the membership:
 - The Chair asks, “Are you ready to vote on the question?”
 - If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
 - A motion to move the previous question may be adapted.
- Voting on a motion:
 - Most motions are by hand vote, or voice vote.
 - If a ballot vote is taken, the ballots must show the name of the member and the organization represented on the ballot.
 - Each member organization and each charter member has only one vote on all matters.
 - If both the member and the alternate are present, only one may vote.
- Two other motions:
 - **Motion to Table.** This motion is often used to put a matter aside. If a vote is successful, the matter may only be brought up again by another motion to “take from the table.”
 - **Motion to Postpone Indefinitely.** This is often used as a means to allow an opponent of a motion to postpone a vote on the matter being discussed for a vote.

Parliamentary Procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. However, it will only work if you use it properly.

- Allow motions that are in order.
- Have members obtain the floor properly.
- Speak clearly and concisely.
- Obey the rules of debate.
- Be courteous.

Appendix B: Contact Information

City of Muncie, Community Development
Department

Contact: Connie Gregory
Phone: 765-747-4825
Email: communitydev@cityofmuncie.com

Muncie Action Plan
Contact: Larry Strange
Phone: 765-747-8229
Email: lstrange@munpl.org

State of Indiana, Business Services Division
Contact: Liz Keele
Phone: 317-232-6531
Email: lkeele@sos.in.gov
Website:
<http://www.in.gov/sos/business/2426.htm>

Task Force 2 Leader
Contact: Jim Wingate
Phone: 765-287-3123
Email: jwingate@midwestmetal.com

Zone 2 Facilitator
Contact: Diane Curtis
Phone: 765-288-5330
Email: ddcurtis@anderson.edu

Zone 3 Facilitator
Contact: Beth Quarles
Phone: 765-741-8332
Email: bquarles@futurechoices.org

Zone 4 Facilitator
Contact: Bob Ball
Phone: 215-1109
Email: bufbob@sbcglobal.net

Zone 5 Facilitator
Contact: Cornelius Dollison and Drew Shemeta
Phone: 765-288-1892
Email: cdollison@comcast.net

Zone 7 Facilitator
Contact: Gretchen Cheesman
Phone: 765-286-4202
Email: gbcheesman@yahoo.com

Zone 8 Facilitator
Contact: Donna Browne
Phone: 765-741-5155
Email: dbrowne@munpl.org

Neighborhood Volunteer Coordinator
Contact: Isabelle Sowers
Phone: 765-282-2294
Email: izzysidekick@aol.com

Mayor's Office
Contact: Sharon McShurley
Phone: 765-747-4845
Email: mayor@cityofmuncie.com

Building Commissioner
Contact: Steven Selvey
Phone: 765-747-4862
Email: sselvey@cityofmuncie.com

Community Development
Contact: Connie Gregory
Phone: 765-747-4825
Email: communitydev@cityofmuncie.com

City Controller
Contact: Mary Ann Kratochvil
Phone: 765-747-4828
Email: controller@cityofmuncie.com

Human Resources
Contact: Robert Weller
Phone: 765-747-4846
Email: personnel@cityofmuncie.com

Muncie Animal Shelter
Contact: Robert Jessee
Phone: 765-747-4851
Email: rjessee@cityofmuncie.com

Office of Human Rights
Contact: Yvonne Thompson
Phone: 765-747-4854
Email: ythompson@cityofmuncie.com

Muncie Sanitary District
Contact: Barbara Smith, District Administrator
Phone: 765-213-6412
Email: basmith@msdeng.com

Muncie Parks Department
Contact: Matt Bailey
Phone: 765-747-4858
Email: mbailey@cityofmuncie.com

Department of Public Works
Contact: Pete Heuer
Phone: 765-747-4847
Email: pheuer@cityofmuncie.com

Muncie Fire Department
Contact: Sean Burcham, Fire Chief
Phone: 765-747-4870
Email: sburcham@cityofmuncie.com

Muncie Police Department
Contact: Deborah Davis, Police Chief
Phone: 765-747-4822
Email: chief@munciepolice.org

At Large Councilor
Contact: Mike King
Phone: 765-282-3709

At Large Councilor
Contact: Linda Gregory, Council Reading Clerk
Phone: 765-286-2925

At Large Councilor
Contact: Alison Quirk
Phone: 765-288-5319

District 1 Councilor
Contact: Robert (Sam) Marshall, Council
President
Phone: 765-288-0478

District 2 Councilor
Contact: Mark Conatser
Phone: 765-744-8862

District 3 Councilor
Contact: Mary Jo Barton
Phone: 765-289-9494

District 4 Councilor
Contact: Brad Polk
Phone: 765-288-0571

District 5 Councilor
Contact: Jerry D. Dishman, Council Vice
President
Phone: 765-282-2797
Cell Phone: 765-215-9747

District 6 Councilor
Contact: Julius J. Anderson
Phone: 765-289-6639

Appendix C: Supplemental Information

While using this workbook, please add additional materials as you receive them.

