



NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION RESOURCE GUIDE



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Introduction

The Importance of Neighborhoods to Norfolk

In Norfolk, neighborhoods are foundational to civic involvement. People do and should care about their neighborhood. Families with children care about the quality of schools and the safety of their kids playing or riding bikes. Housing expenses are the largest monthly expense for many and so most care about their financial investment. Numerous studies connect the quality of neighborhoods to health. Neighborhoods are important to people who care about their physical, social and mental health. Neighbors checking on each other, providing emergency babysitting, doing backyard barbeques, sharing home maintenance tips, participating in block watches, or helping during storm events all add priceless value to the quality of life.

With so much at stake, it is no wonder why so many are active volunteering, protecting, and advocating for their neighborhood. Knowing and seeing the value of neighborhood involvement, City Council and City agencies give special credence to neighborhood organizations when making decisions. When making a change—from a stop sign to a new development—City Council nearly always ask for the neighborhood's opinion. Traditionally this is through civic leagues.

About This Guide

This guide is written with neighborhood civic leagues in mind, but it is for anyone who cares about their neighborhood. It is not intended to be read cover to cover but is more of a topical reference for issues that may affect neighborhoods. It attempts to address some of the most frequent questions posed to Neighborhood Development Specialists in Norfolk's Department of Neighborhood Services. It is compiled primarily from two sources: 1) courses from the department's Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Academy, and 2) courses brought to Norfolk through the national NeighborWorks America organization. It doesn't cover every possible subject or go into comprehensive detail but will hopefully point readers in the right direction. It is also expected to be fluid and updated as necessary to keep up with continual change.

For assistance you may always contact your Neighborhood Development Specialist (www.norfolk.gov/norfolknsa), visit the Department's main page (www.norfolk.gov/neighborhoods) visit the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Library (www.norfolk.gov/nbnlibrary), email neighborhoodengage@norfolk.gov or call (757) 664-6770.

A Positive Example

Behind the bus stop in the middle of the busy Five Points intersection is a memorial plaque dedicated to Jackie Lee "Shorty" Hilton who took a very active part in his East Norview block watch. Even after back and heart surgery, he resumed his neighborhood walks through the neighborhood. At Christmas, he was known to dress up as Santa and give out gifts to the needy. Part of the plaque reads: "Let us remember what one person can do to better a community. Take up the work he started and do your part to make Five Points a safer and better place for us all." This guide is to assist all the other "Shorties" to take up their work and do their part to make their neighborhoods safer and better.



What is Neighbors Building Neighborhoods?

A Philosophy and a Set of Programs

Booker T. Washington encouraged teachers to recruit the community when building schoolhouses. If community members couldn't donate cash, they could donate supplies. If they couldn't donate supplies, they could donate time hauling wood, hosting fundraisers, or assisting with construction. When starting Tuskegee Institute, one woman donated six eggs because that is all she could afford. Her donation was still appreciated. Every member of a community was asked to contribute. In this way, "they will have all the more interest in the schoolhouse because they have had a hand in its erection" (Booker T. Washington, *Character Building*, the chapter titled "To Would-Be Teachers"). Washington knew the importance of community ownership.

"Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) is a community ownership and community building initiative aimed at creating neighborhoods of choice throughout the city of Norfolk."

NBN as a Philosophy

As a philosophy, NBN believes that nearly every resident has something to contribute to their neighborhood. NBN guides neighborhood work to promote community ownership and community building whether the activity is by neighbors or the City. NBN acknowledges government's history of sometimes doing more harm to neighborhoods than good by taking away a sense of community ownership. NBN seeks a healthy balance in the relationship between local government and neighborhoods as partners.

NBN as an Initiative

As an initiative, NBN is a set of programs with the aim of creating neighborhoods of choice. Neighborhoods of Choice are places where people want to live and not have to live. They are where it makes sense for people to invest their time, money and energy, and where neighbors manage neighborhood issues and change successfully. Key outcomes are neighborhoods where neighbors working together:

- Assume ownership
- Identify and mobilize the positive attributes
- Know and care for each other
- Create beautiful and clean blocks
- Invest in their homes
- Position their neighborhoods as vibrant places to live, work and play

NBN Related Programs

This guide is a product of the NBN Academy. NBN Academy (www.norfolk.gov/nbnacademy and www.norfolk.gov/nbnlibrary) is one of several programs intended to implement NBN. Other programs include Block-By-Block Neighborhood Pride Grants, NBN Conference and Awards Luncheon, and the Norfolk Neighborhood Expo. For up to date information, visit www.norfolk.gov/neighborhoodengagement.



Section I: Organizing for Effectiveness

Civic leagues are a huge part of Norfolk's democratic process. In healthy civic leagues, they are where neighbors join each other, build relationships, share their aspirations, and protect their personal and community assets. Civic leagues, or in some cases homeowners' associations, form the grassroots backbone of community activism that dates back decades. Healthy, inclusive civic leagues are where neighbors form a collective voice, strengthen resilience against shocks and stresses, and advocate for equitable resources. They are nearly always consulted by city and state government before undertaking any neighborhood activity.

Rich Harwood, founder of the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, suggests a healthy thought exercise for neighborhood organizations. What would happen if neighborhood leaders assembled 300 random residents from their neighborhood and presented them with a list of the neighborhood's shared aspirations and concerns? Would the overwhelming majority of the 300 residents agree? If not, the leaders may have more work to do.

The material that follows holds out as the ideal inclusive neighborhood organizations that truly represent neighborhood residents. Realistically, it is nearly impossible to represent every individual and every opinion within a neighborhood, but it is still a healthy ideal for which to strive. The material in this first section is primarily concerned with the internal organization of civic leagues. It is offered to new and existing civic leagues and is compiled primarily from interaction and guidance from Norfolk's many thriving, diverse civic leagues.

Getting Started

Forming a Civic League or Neighborhood Group

“How do we start a civic league?” This is a question the Department of Neighborhood Services receives several times every year. Because the City of Norfolk does not regulate civic leagues (as other cities may do), there is no official process. Below are suggestions for starting a sustainable civic league or neighborhood group. In a few instances, groups form a civic league to fight one issue, but then disappear when the issue has passed. Sometimes a small group of members splinter away from a larger group over disagreements. These too have a history of not being sustainable. The suggestions below are from watching civic leagues that are sustained over time. The Neighborhood Development Specialist for your area can always assist.

1. Gather socially.

The best neighborhood groups are sustained over long periods because of strong social bonds. Put simply, they like being together and can work together for a goal. Choosing a president, writing bylaws, deciding on a name are far less important as a starting point than building relationships in the neighborhood. An important issue effecting the neighborhood may be a good stimulus for neighbors to get together, but if they don’t like each other, it is unlikely the group will be sustained after the issue.

2. Hold a small neighborhood test event.

Holding a small event is a good way to get know each other and give your group an idea of how well you can work together. The event can be used to establish relationships and contact information.

3. Gather residents around shared aspirations.

A next step is to hold a group meeting with invitations to the whole neighborhood to draw out shared aspirations from residents. How do residents envision the future of the neighborhood? What would residents like to improve in their neighborhood? What drew residents to the neighborhood in the first place? What are neighborhood strengths on which to build? Who in the neighborhood is doing positive things that might also want to be part of the group? Well facilitated conversations are important to establishing an organization’s purpose, gaining trust, recruiting volunteers, and developing leaders from the very beginning. Too often civic leagues struggle and are not truly representative of a neighborhood because it is a one or two-person show.

4. Organize around purpose.

As a group of neighbors begin to appreciate each other and share similar aspirations for the neighborhood, it is time to start organizing. A purpose statement, vision statement, and goals can be established. Bylaws and officers can begin to form. Regular meeting times, locations and frequency can be determined. Committees can be created. Dues, financial procedures, and a bank account can be established. Groups planning on formally organizing can incorporate as a non-stock corporation with the State Corporation Commission (see <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/clk/busdef.aspx> for entity types), but this is not required by the City of Norfolk unless seeking grants. Boundaries for the neighborhood can be set. Once boundaries are determined, they can be



put in writing through your bylaws or official communication with the Department of Neighborhood Services. By also providing your officers, meeting times, location and other contact information, your Neighborhood Development Specialist can assist with your neighborhood being added to the map, the city's database of civic associations, and recognized by city departments. It should be noted, however, that if boundaries conflict with another group every effort will be made to reconcile the differences. If not, the standard is to prioritize the earlier boundaries. Boundaries are not able to overlap in the City's geographic information system.

If soliciting funds from the public, leaders should be aware of laws regarding solicitation of funds and consider registering or filing for an exemption with the Commonwealth. See <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/food-charitable-solicitation.shtml>.

5. Engage and involve residents.

Key to the democratic process is that a neighborhood civic association makes every attempt to be inclusive of the whole neighborhood. Early priorities as a new organization should include establishing a plan to communicate with residents, holding social functions, networking, and other ways of involving residents. Ed Culpepper, while president of the Lafayette/Winona Civic League, made a great point. He noted the gauge of a civic league is no longer how many people come to business meetings, but how well it networks the various social groups in the neighborhood. They networked the dog park group, hold an annual holiday progressive dinner, and schedule a tour once a year in addition to their regular meetings. Creating websites or social media channels is another way to establish a presence.

6. Build a voice.

Another important step to amplify the voice of neighbors in your neighborhood is to build connections. Representatives from your group should introduce themselves to their elected representatives and attend a City Council session or Planning Commission Public Hearing to become familiar with the process. Different members of your group may want to specialize in different areas. The Planning Department recommends designating at least one person or a committee to learn zoning issues and track items that may influence your neighborhood. The NBN Academy can provide guidance on various topics, and your Neighborhood Development Specialist can help connect you to various city departments. It is also important to network with neighborhood partners, other neighborhoods, and key assets in your neighborhood.

7. Have fun.

Neighborhoods sometimes face very serious and contentious issues. Therefore relationship building and finding ways to enjoy each other as neighbors is crucial. In other words, don't forget to have fun along the way.

8. Keep the City informed.

The Department of Neighborhood Services maintains a database of civic associations which includes civic leagues, community associations and business associations. There is a webpage accessible on www.norfolk.gov/neighborhoods called "Civic Associations". This link will lead to a page with an online registration form. Use it to keep the city informed of any changes.



Governance and Bylaws Notes

Items to Consider

Combined notes from NBN Academy courses on November 10, 2018 and March 30, 2019.

Introduction

An organization's bylaws are flexible but following them is legally required once adopted. Bylaws should identify your organization's purpose and be organized around achieving that purpose. Planning out the goals for your organization and having productive discussions in the beginning will help your organization avoid hasty decisions and benefit the organization in the long run. It is suggested that bylaws address the following items.

Statement of Purpose

This section communicates why your organization exists. Questions to consider in advance of bylaws include the following. Who is your organization serving? What is your target population? What makes your organization meaningful to the neighborhood? What is it going to do? How will you do it? These questions will help craft your purpose.

Membership

This section identifies membership requirements. Who are members? Who can vote? How often is membership determined? What are rights and responsibilities? Is there a disciplinary procedure for removal?

Board of Directors and Duties of Officers

Bylaws spell out who is responsible for what in the organization. How are they elected or appointed? What are their qualifications? What is their term? How often are they required to meet? Who is the designated spokesperson to represent the organization? What offices are required and what are their duties? Who is the official representative to government, and are government officials aware of the designated representative? If an existing civic league, it is suggested that the immediate past president should be on the board for healthy transition and continuity. Committees can do much of the work outside of membership meetings, and an organization can have as many or as little as needed. They can be standing or ad hoc. Chairpersons or representatives can be but are not required to be part of the executive board.

Meetings

This section establishes meeting times and location. How often do you meet? Are there a set number of meetings per year? How are special meetings called? What notification is required for meetings? What are attendance requirements for members? When does the organization not meet – summers or holidays?

Indemnification

This section identifies how to handle legal action, liability, and legal fees. Does the organization agree to hold the officers harmless and provide for their legal fees, damage or other loss in the event they are named in a lawsuit? Legal risk for small organizations like civic leagues would include injunctions against certain actions and intentional harmful acts (such as harassment). It is wise to purchase liability insurance for public events.



Conflicts of Interest

This section outlines how officers will deal with conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest section clarifies when officers are representing the organization or their own interest. Conflict of interest procedures help avoid the appearance of impropriety and preserve trust in the organization.

Amendments

This section determines how bylaws will be amended. What notice is required of any change to the bylaws? What constitutes a quorum?

[Note: When an organization's bylaws are lost or missing, it is important to clearly document who, why and how new bylaws were established. It is also important that more than one person have access to the bylaws.]

Dues

Are dues required? By whom? For how long? How much?

Voting Rights and Procedures

This section outlines how decisions are made. How is voting conducted? What constitutes a quorum? Can votes be cast by proxy? Proxy votes usually require a representative to be in attendance in order to vote by proxy for another. Good bylaws may also provide for parliamentary authority. How are meetings conducted and decisions made? Roberts Rules are suggested. Structure should be provided within the organization for respecting and handling different opinions. Such considerations would include fair notice of meetings, giving members ample time to deliberate, and being fair to all sides. How can technology be used in governance? Should it be used for voting or making decisions? Bylaws should give this consideration.

Waiver of Notice

This section make allowance for a waiver of notice. A waiver of notice is a provision that asks directors or members to waive formal notice in a decision-making process. It clarifies that they were informed of the decision but chose not to participate.

If you require additional assistance, it is recommended that you connect with other established civic leagues in the city. There is a wealth of resources in the community. Your Neighborhood Development Specialist can help you make connections or locate sample bylaws from other civic leagues.



Communicating with Your Neighborhood

Forming a Communications Strategy

Communication with as many residents as possible is important to being an inclusive civic league that is truly representative. The most important and effective neighborhood communication strategy is still neighbor to neighbor. Realizing that is not always possible, here are some suggestions for attracting attention. The average person is bombarded with anywhere from hundreds to thousands of messages per day so your neighborhood group may want to give thought and develop a strategy for how to get your message out. Below are some guiding questions.

1. Goal Statement.

What is your organization trying to accomplish with your communication or an individual project? What is its purpose?

2. Intended Audiences.

Who is/are the intended audience(s)? Is it seniors, youth, parents, English speakers, foreign language speakers, etc.? Knowing the audience is very important. Different audiences respond differently to different tactics.

What research can be done to better understand your audience. Demographic research can be done online. Interviews of intended audience members can be even more helpful. Who do you have who can help communicate important messages? Seniors, for example, can recruit teens such as grandchildren to help communicate messages to younger generations. Is there an important issue coming up? What stakeholders need to be involved? How do you expect people to react? Knowing the neighborhood context and intended audience helps set the stage for good, democratic, civic involvement.

3. Messaging.

Besides individual events or activities, what are key messages about your neighborhood that you want to communicate at every opportunity? You can make a list of strengths or values that can be highlighted such as “friendly” or “peaceful.” If you are passing out flyers for a civic league picnic, for instance, it is an opportunity to communicate key messages about your neighborhood even to people who don’t attend the picnic.

4. Tactics.

What tactics can you employ?

flyers	newsletters
phone calls	postcards
mailings	email
texts	website
Facebook	NextDoor.com
other social media	paid advertising
press releases	banners & signs

The key is knowing what works best for your intended audience.

Welcome to the Lake Whitehurst West Civic League



The Lake Whitehurst West Civic League, Inc. is the second largest civic league in the City of Norfolk, with over 1,000 households in five neighborhoods: Lawrence Leans, Meadowbrook Forest, Meadowbrook Terrace, Blue Chip Park, and Willow's Edge. We are a neighborhood friendly, non-profit organization.

SEARCH

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email newsletter

SUBSCRIBE

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 [Nextdoor](#)

EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT: Kristen Merley

VICE PRESIDENT: Jennifer Parker



5. Action Planning.

A next step is to establish a plan. Timelines are usually helpful. Professionals in marketing and communications often use a table.

	Tactic #1	Tactic #2	Tactic #3	Tactic #4
Audience #1				
Audience #2				
Audience #3				
Audience #4				

For significant neighborhood or organization issues, it may be important to consult the organization's bylaws or the city's zoning ordinance about required notice. Bylaws may require members be given a certain amount of notice before important meetings.

6. Designated Spokesperson.

Does your organization have a designated spokesperson to officially represent the organization? This is frequently the president, but not necessarily. Will the designated representative be prepared to handle delicate situations and speak positively of the neighborhood and the organization, especially if given the chance to be interviewed by the media? Is there a designated representative to speak to elected leaders, and do elected leaders know who the designated representative is?

7. Emergency Communication.

Does your neighborhood have any contingency plans for communicating and helping neighbors during a disaster or other emergency? Being prepared is one way neighborhood groups can increase their neighborhood's resiliency.



Good Financial Management

General Principles and an Example

Good financial management is one key to building public trust. Transparency, accountability, safeguards and good decision-making processes can go a long way in earning trust of members and non-members alike. The material below is from an NBN Academy Course on May 17, 2018 given by Kimberly Malone, Chief Financial Officer at The Planning Council and Ann Bolen, President of the East Ocean View Civic League.

I. Good Financial Management General Principles.

- Organize around purpose and make finances match the purpose/mission.
- Think like a big organization concerning accountability. Be every bit as accountable for \$100 as \$1 million. The same laws (for accountability) that apply to businesses apply to non-profits.
- Accurate and timely record keeping is important.
- Evaluate financial needs. Write out expenses and income. Monitor where money is going. It is important to see it on paper and be able to analyze finances.
- Maintain a budget and use discipline to stay within it.
- Keep a separate bank account for the organization. Keep finances separate from personal spending. To open an organization bank account, an EIN (Employee Identification Number) can be obtained by calling the IRS.
- Minimize cash. Reimbursing individuals by check after submitted receipts for organization expenses is preferable to giving cash in advance. Keep cash locked up.
- Keep controls to the extent possible. Separate duties. No one person should have control over all pieces of the financial process. The person writing checks should be different from the person reconciling the account and different from the person making deposits.
- Track volunteer hours. This can be helpful for grants that require match funding. In most cases, an in-kind match is just as acceptable as a cash match.
- Evaluate whether to apply to the IRS for a 501(c)(4) designation. Organizations with \$5000 or more in gross annual receipts will be treated as a taxable entity regardless of the organization's mission and should consider filing for a 501(c)(4) designation for an income tax exemption. Organizations with the 501(c) designation are required to file an annual form. For small organizations, it may just be a post-card.
- Be as transparent as possible. Over-communicate rather than under-communicate.
- Track everything you do and analyze whether it is achieving the greater good and is sustainable.
- Be aware of federal, state and local laws such as permits, sales and use tax, yard sale permits, Health Department permits, etc.
- Contact a professional before getting in over one's head. Professionals will usually offer some level of free advice.



II. East Ocean View Example

- Board members are elected every two years but are staggered. Officers are elected every year.
- EOV makes a budget based on the previous 3 years with approximately 30 lines. Their treasurer happens to be a CPA.
- Expenses include the utility costs for the community garden, welcome packets (\$350 per year), and \$750 per quarter to print the newsletter.
- They support 3 neighborhood charities including a food program for youth in the after-school program at the local community center.
- EOV has the 501(c)(4) designation which allows tax deductions by businesses but not individuals. It qualifies them for grants and discounts from businesses. They have applied for and received several grants, including a shoreline restoration grant.
- Their budget is presented to their membership one month in advance of a vote.
- Their bylaws clearly state the treasurer's responsibilities.
- Revenue from dues is approximately \$1250 per year. Revenue from newsletter ads is about \$4500 per year. Dues are \$25 per family.
- A three-person panel audits their books at the end of the year. Two are board members not related to the finances, and one is a general member.
- The board makes many financial decisions. An agenda for the general membership meeting is set by the board the week before. Paid membership is required for voting at least one month prior to a vote. Members in good standing are given white cards in which to vote.
- Businesses can be members and introduce their business.
- One street with a cul-de-sac did a huge yard sale and donated the proceeds to the civic league.

Grassroots Development

Development vs. Fundraising

If a neighborhood group has a long-term vision, it may want to take a long-term view of development rather than fundraising for individual projects. The material that follows is from a presentation by Ellen Selig, a member of Friends of the Norfolk Public Library, given to the Neighborhood Leadership Breakfast on January 26, 2019.

Elements of Development vs. Fundraising.

Fundraising is the short-term act of attracting money to your organization. It may be through a bake sale, yard sale, raffle, straight donation, or other mechanism. Development refers to the bigger picture of adding value to your organization not just through short term fundraising activities but by long term relationships and resources.

Establishing Overall Goals for Your League & Vision.

Development asks strategic questions. What is our organization's overall goals? What is our vision? What are we trying to accomplish? What is distinct about our neighborhood? Development then seeks out people who are interested and gives them the opportunity to participate in those goals and vision.

- How do we engage more neighbors? Is there a specific project or issue in which we need to advocate before City Council?
- How do we communicate our goals and mission? Do we have tools and multiple outlets for showing off what we're doing and what we want to do? Do we have a way of communicating our needs? People are more likely to share their resources when they believe in a successful cause.
- What City and other resources are already available?

Identify “Who Are My Neighbors?”

- Residents, their families, businesses, vendors to the neighborhood (electrical, HVAC, realtors, doctors, restaurants, vets, shops, etc.)
- Council members and other elected officials
- Friends who are similarly impassioned

Know What Participation Can Look Like From Them.

Ask neighbors how they see themselves participating? Face to Face contact is best for the first interaction.

- Lending expertise or experience
- Making contacts with others for your cause
- Leadership involvement for a short-term project
- Time and energy on day of a project
- In-kind donation of resources - manpower, food, supplies, service
- Cash



Continue to Update/Communicate With The Community.

Provide names and phone numbers for people to contact you. Email, Facebook, Nextdoor and websites reach many but also eliminate many neighbors who may get involved if a personal contact is not an option.

Stages of Community Life

A Great Tool from the Harwood Institute

Like most volunteer organizations, neighborhood groups naturally ebb and flow over time. The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation calls this “community rhythms.” They have created a great tool called “Stages of Community Life” for sensing the rhythm of a given community. Neighborhood leaders can use this tool to take the pulse of their community and lead appropriately. Harwood provides a list of dos and don’ts which may be helpful. A [YouTube video](#) is also available.

The Waiting Place

- In the Waiting Place, people sense that things are not working right in their community, but they are unable to clearly define the problem; the feeling could be described as a "felt unknown."
- People feel disconnected from leaders and from different processes within the community for making decisions; the community itself is fragmented; discussion about common challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive.
- Community discussion about challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive. People want to create change, but negative norms for public life keep them locked into old patterns.
- People often are waiting - for issues to become clearer, for someone else to "solve" their problems. People in this stage often say, "Everything will be better when we get the right mayor to save the community!" So, people just wait.

Impasse

- At Impasse, the community has hit rock bottom, and people can be heard saying, "Enough is enough! It can't go on like this any longer!"
- In this stage, unlike in the Waiting Place, there is a sense of urgency in people's voices; people are tired of "waiting." But while people want change, they lack clarity about what to do.
- The community's norms and ways of working together keep the community stuck in an undesirable status quo. The community is mired in turf wars; it lacks of leadership at different levels of the community; and people seem fixated on their own individual interests.
- People's frustrations have hit the boiling point but the community lacks the capacity to act.

Catalytic

- The Catalytic stage starts with small steps that are often imperceptible to the vast majority of people in the community.
- Small numbers of people and organizations begin to emerge, taking risks and experimenting in ways that challenge existing norms in how the community works.
- The size of their actions is not the vital gauge. Their actions produce some semblance of results that gives people a sense of hope.



- As this stage unfolds, the number of people and organizations stepping forward increases, and links and networks are built between and among them.
- A key challenge in this stage is the emerging conflict between a nascent story of hope and the ingrained narrative that “nothing can change” Even as change appears, the old narrative will still dominate people’s communication and outlook until more progress is made and trust builds.

Growth

- During the Growth stage, people begin to see clearer and more pervasive signs of how the community is moving forward.
- People in the community are able to name leadership at all levels and where such leadership is expanding and deepening - from the official level to neighborhoods, within civic organizations and non-profits. Networks are growing and the sense of common purpose and direction are taking deep root.
- People feel renewed spirit of community. More people are working together. Efforts are taking place across the community and are targeted to more concerns.
- A feature of this stage is that you can randomly ask people on the street what kind of community they live in, and they provide similar answers. A common story has emerged about the community.

Sustain and Renew

- In Sustain and Renew, the community is ready to take on, in a deeper and more sustained way, the tough, nagging issues that may have been tackled before but were not adequately addressed.
- Such issues might include the public schools, racism and race relations, and economic growth in all neighborhoods' change on these concerns typically requires sustained, long-term effort.
- Lessons, insights and new norms that have emerged over time now pervade the community.
- But the community may be struggling to maintain its momentum. It must find new ways to bring along a new cadre of leaders, civic groups, and active citizens, as others tire or move on.
- There is a danger that community will fall into a new Waiting Place as it comes to rest on its laurels.



Recommended Dos and Don'ts by the Harwood Institute

Be careful not to	What to do	What to think about
The Waiting Place		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflate expectations by announcing grand plans Start visioning exercises that fail or don't have enough community support for action Try to engage people by making them feel guilty they are not involved Rely on one-shot projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create forums for conversation and interaction where people feel they belong and can crystallize feelings of frustration Connect community actions to realities in people's lives Demonstrate small signs of progress Keep working, despite feelings of limited progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you really know how committed your partners are? What small things could help us move forward?
Impasse		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflate expectations by announcing grand plans Convince yourselves there are strong networks and organizations to support new civic work Shut out community members because they are frustrated Try to develop action plans too quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let people share their concerns and discover common aspirations for something different Identify taboo issues that contribute to impasse Find language that helps people imagine an alternative future Look for windows to pull people into small efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What issues are citizens most immediately concerned about? Are those issues being worked on? What is being done to bring people back into public life?
Catalytic		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate activities too quickly, stifling innovation and action Rush to visioning exercises before the community is ready Do too much, too fast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try lots of small things with room for failure; emphasize learning Build Boundary-Spanning Organizations that can generate change Encourage informal conversations, networks, and new engagement norms Develop a new cadre of leaders Tell authentic stories of progress over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is motivating folks to work together? Where are the Boundary-Spanning Organizations in the community? Who supports them? What are we learning? How do we know if our work is grounded in the community's aspirations?
Growth		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miss parts of the community left out of progress Let "official leaders" drive the action Neglect the need to continually strengthen networks, leaders, and organizations that can keep the community moving forward Ignore underlying community issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use community-wide engagement activities to coalesce and spring forward from the Catalytic stage Do bigger projects, building on natural progress and collaborations that have come before Reinforce positive norms for working together and continue to develop Boundary-Spanning Organizations and new leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is doing the hard work? Are community members involved? Are new people getting involved in the efforts? How are the new efforts connected to the work done before?
Sustain and Renew		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think "success" has been achieved Assume others know the story of progress and norms for action that have been built Become arrogant and feel you have solved it all Start to rest on laurels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new leaders across the entire community and new Boundary-Spanning Organizations to create progress Continue creating opportunities to bring community members into processes—especially new residents Look for challenges not yet tackled to focus energies, and use lessons learned to expand progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the new leaders? Who is still missing from the community's progress? How are we feeling about ourselves: pride, fully humble, or smugly self-confident? How are we consciously strengthening our norms of working together?

For more information, see <https://theharwoodinstitute.org/>.



Becoming a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4)

Frequently Asked Questions

The material below contains highlights from a presentation given at a NBN Academy Course on August 28, 2018 by Jeff Lewis, of Lewis Accounting and Treasurer of the East Ocean View Civic League. For more detailed information consult www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits, an accounting professional, or an attorney.

When and Why is seeking a 501 designation a good choice for a civic league?

- When an organization wants to accomplish more, but the ability to accomplish those goals can no longer be obtained without a higher level of organization.
- Everything revolves around money but money can be scarce. Having a 501 designation can help open some funding sources or allow some reduced expenditures that are not available to non 501 designated organizations.

What is the difference between a 501(c)(3) and a 501(c)(4)?

- **501(c)(3)**
 - Religious, Educational, Charitable, Scientific, Literary, Testing for Public Safety, to Foster National or International Amateur Sports Competition, or Prevention of Cruelty to Children or Animals Organizations.
 - Lobbying: no more than 5-10 percent of organization's resources can be devoted to lobbying
 - Contributions: deductible
 - Postage: eligible for reduced cost
- **501(c)(4)**
 - Civic Leagues, Social Welfare Organizations; and Local Associations of Employees.
 - Promotion of community welfare; charitable, educational, or recreational
 - Lobbying: no more than 40 percent of organization's resources can be devoted to lobbying
 - Contributions: not deductible. There are two exceptions: one is for donations to 501(c)(4) volunteer fire companies, and the other is for war veteran organizations (such as the VFW) — those donations ARE deductible. But otherwise, you can't deduct contributions to a 501(c)(4). Businesses that make donations to a 501(c)(4) might be able to take a deduction as a business expense, such as an advertising expense, depending on the nature of the donation.
 - Postage: not eligible

What are the qualifications for 501(c)(4) status?

- Before you can take advantage of the tax benefits of 501(c)(4), you must ensure that the operational and financial activities of the organization satisfy IRS requirements.
- Your organization's earnings must not provide its owners/officers with payments of any profit. Rather, all funds must be reinvested in furthering the organization's nonprofit mission.

How does one apply for 501(c)(4)?



- An organization must be a legal entity [usually a non-stock corporation for civic leagues in Virginia]. It must be able to identify its officers, describe its past, present and planned activities, submit documentation, and provide financial statements or proposed budgets. The application process can be found at www.irs.gov.

What does it cost? [Figures given were accurate at the time of the presentation but may change.]

- For an exempt organization that has had annual gross receipts averaging not more than \$10,000 during the preceding 4 years or a new organization that anticipates gross receipts averaging not more than \$10,000 during its first 4 years, the cost is \$150.
- For an exempt organization that has had annual gross receipts averaging more than \$10,000 during the preceding 4 years, or a new organization that anticipates gross receipts averaging more than \$10,000 during its first 4 years, the cost is \$465.

How long does it take?

- The IRS will usually acknowledge receiving your application in writing within 21 days of the postmark date on the application form.
- Generally they assigned applications in the order they are received.

What are the possible outcomes?

- The IRS review may conclude that you qualify and will send a letter.
- The IRS review may request additional information or changes.
- The IRS review may conclude that you do not qualify and will send you a letter explaining their position.

What is required to maintain it?

- The original conditions must continue to be met.
- A yearly update form is required. The form depends on the size of the organization.

What are some examples of its value?

- For EOVC, having 501(c)(4) status allows them to receive cheaper rates for certain goods and services such as printing the newsletter.
- Most government entities (libraries, colleges, schools, rec centers) will rent space or provide a service (custodians at a non-profit event, police for traffic direction, etc.) at reduced rates to non-profits.

Does the City of Norfolk require civic leagues to become designated as 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4)?

No. Norfolk neither requires nor makes any recommendation. Each civic league must determine the level of organization required to accomplish its mission.

Neighborhood Services is only making the information available to those interested.



Section 2: Conducting Neighborhood Business

Section 1 is intended to provide suggestions for internal management of the association. Section 2 is intended to offer suggestions for conducting business with association members and the general public. Although the work of neighborhood groups and civic leagues may sometimes seem small and tedious, it is so important to the city's civic life. Over time, Norfolk has witnessed civic leagues and other groups work together to make a significant, long-term difference. Fairmount Park has improved the quality of its housing stock by educating residents, working toward code compliance, zoning changes, and marketing itself to quality builders. Olde Huntersville generated a strategic plan and created its own pattern book to preserve existing architectural standards. Civic leagues in Wards Corner actively work together and promote their business corridor. Berkley and Lamberts Point have large annual reunions that attract thousands. East Ocean View supports three charities per year. Other civic leagues offer scholarships to high school seniors each year. Never underestimate the power of what neighbors can accomplish together.

Facilitating Meetings

The Facilitator Role

Conducting neighborhood business is a very important role to civic life and democratic process. The role of engaging volunteer residents is different from many top down leadership roles in the business sector or military. How business and meetings are conducted is a key determinant in whether residents will stay involved and the overall quality of community life together. The following outline for neighborhood meeting facilitation was developed by Alternatives, Inc. and used with permission by the City of Norfolk. Their suggestion is to think of a group facilitator as a traffic cop keeping residents moving at key intersections. To accomplish this well, facilitators manage themselves, manage the event, manage people, and manage a fair process.

The Group Facilitator Role

- A neutral servant of the group
- Clearly defines his/her role as facilitator
- Develops and uses a written agenda
- Gets agreement from the group on “what you’re working on” and “how you’ll approach it”
- Focuses the group on a common task and keeps the group’s conversation on track
- Encourages the group in their efforts
- Checks the decisions of the team
- Encourages everyone to participate
- Upholds the norms of the group
- Supports the recorder
- Coordinates pre and post meeting logistics

Meeting Basics for Facilitators

Before the Meeting

About a week or two prior to a meeting, send out the minutes from the previous meeting for members to review. Minutes should include:

- Who was there
- What happened
- What decisions and/or assignments were made
- Time and date of upcoming meeting, and agenda to be discussed

A facilitator and recorder should arrive early to:

- Set up room in a circle or horseshoe (members should be able to see one another)
- Post group’s purpose and goal in a visible location.
- Post the agenda in a visible location
- Layout and organize supplies such as nametags, markers, paper, etc., so that you can easily get to them
- Create visible space for recorder if necessary



During the Meeting....

- Begin on time!
- Welcome and introduce all members (perhaps an icebreaker)
- Explain your role as facilitator and norms of group
- Review what the group worked on last time (based on minutes)
- Review goal(s) for today and how it relates to overall group purpose
- Review the meeting agenda
- Suggest a way to 'start' working and get agreement from the team. (ex: "20 minutes of discussion on the pros and cons of each idea, and then we'll try and move towards consensus.")
- Ask someone in the room to serve as timekeeper
- Once discussion begins, use active listening to clarify what is being said
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Keep the group focused on the task
- Use facilitator techniques to build group consensus
- Uphold the norms of the group
- Check in with recorder periodically to assure accuracy
- Before meeting ends, review all decisions made
- At end of meeting, set date and agenda for next time.
- Thank people for coming...a little courtesy goes a long way

After the meeting...

- Meet briefly with recorder to review key themes/decisions
- Make plans to send out minutes and agenda for next time

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary Procedure, most often in the form of Roberts Rules of Order, is a common tool for conducting organizational businesses. Your organization's bylaws may even require their use or provide other guidance on how business is conducted. Although too lengthy to include here, Carlos Clanton, a certified Parliamentarian, has created a guide, "Parliamentary Procedure for Civic Leagues" available in our NBN Academy Library available at www.norfolk.gov/nbnacademy.



Breaking the Ice

Ideas for Fostering Interaction

Team Building Ice-Breakers

Snowball Fight. Provide paper (8.5x11) and writing instruments for everyone. Ask participants to write their name on their piece of paper and answer a small number of open ended questions. Examples might be: Why are you here today? What talents and strengths do you bring to the group? What do you love most about the neighborhood? What do you know about the topic

_____ . Have participants stand in a circle, wad up their papers into a ball and throw into the middle of the circle. Then ask participants to select a “snowball” and read the responses on the paper. Ask them to read 4 to 5 responses throwing the snowball back into the pile each time. Finally, ask volunteers to summarize a few things about what they learned from the snowballs.

Pair Share. Ask participants to pair up and share their opinions/feelings about a topic. This is far less threatening and much more personal than trying to conduct a discussion with your entire group. To build the listening skills of your group, have them ‘report out’ on the key points made by their partner. Add these ideas to a group list.

Circle Within a Circle. Form 2 concentric circles where members of the inside circle sit to face members of the outer circle. Pose the topic to be discussed. Allow 1-2 minutes for sharing. To change partners, ask the outer circle to move one or two seats to their left, forming a new partner pair. Pose a new question and repeat the process. Discuss the key points heard and add them to a group list.

Brainstorming/Issue Discovery

Gallery Walk. Post discussion questions on separate sheets of easel paper around room. Supply markers to each person and have them silently write responses to these topics on the hanging sheets. After you call time, ask members to take a silent ‘gallery walk’ and place a check mark by their top 2 responses on each sheet of paper. Add these ideas to a combined group list.



Brainstorming. Have members take 5 minutes to come up with a list of all the possible answers to a given question or problem. Then write answers on a shared sheet or easel pad. Five rules should be followed: 1) No judgment of yours or other’s ideas. 2) No discussion of any ideas until everyone has put their ideas on the board. 3) Go for quantity, not quality. 4) The crazier the idea the better. 5) Build off the ideas of others.



Narrowing/Consensus Building

Sticker Voting. After using the above brainstorming technique, give members a limited number of stickers (3 to 5) and ask them to place stickers next to their top ideas. This helps narrow the list to top priorities.

Continuums. Place a 20 foot piece of masking tape on the floor, one end representing strongly agree, the other end representing strongly disagree. Have members physically move their bodies to the spot on the tape that best represents how they feel about an item on the list.

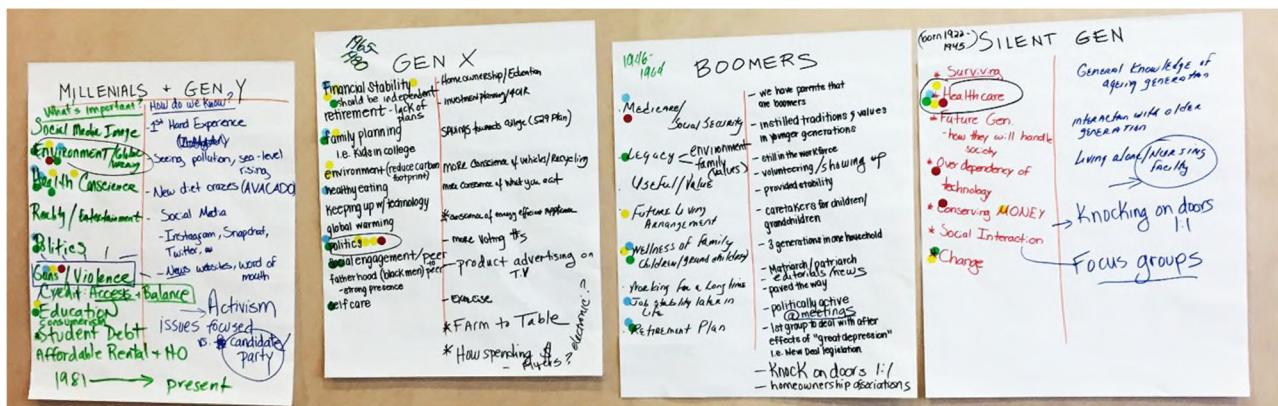
The Great Cash Stash. Place individual issues or topics on separate pieces of paper on a table or set of tables. Give members play money and ask members what ideas they like the most by putting their money behind it. Narrow the list to 2 to 3 items based on the highest amount of money paid for each item.

Exploring Diversity

Examining Class and Race. Paul Kivel has an exercise that asks participants to step forward or backward based on their responses to a set of 43 questions about individuals' different experience of class and race. It asks members to do so in silence and then follows with discussion questions. The full exercise can be found www.paulkivel.com/resource/examining-class-and-race.

Step to this Side of the Room. A variation of the above exercise can be used to explore others' experience by having enough space in a room to move from one side to the other. It simply asks a series of questions about experience. Here are some examples. Move to this side if you're from the country. Move to that side if you're from the city. Move to the middle if you're from the suburbs. Move to this side if you are in the military. Step forward to this side if you're from another country. Step forward if you've ever felt discriminated against.

Generations. With a mixed generation audience, place easel pads out with a different generational cohort written on each pad. Ask members of different generations to write down significant influences on them while growing up. Influences include historical events, art/music/entertainment and culture of the time period. Have one or more representatives of each group then highlight major influences. Generational Cohorts are as follows by birth years: Silent Generation (1922-1945); Baby Boomers (1946-1964); Gen X (1965-1980); Millennials (1981-2000); Gen Z (2000-).



Constructive Conflict

Tools for Handling Differences

If your neighborhood is successful at engaging residents, it can be expected and viewed as a sign of health that there will be differences of opinions, personalities, and cultural practices. How conflict is viewed and handled is very important. Alternatives, Inc. offers the following guidance which is used by permission.

Facilitating Conflict

Managing the Participants. Consider these tips:

1. Prevention is the best way to go
 - a. Set norms/ground rules with your group and go over them at each session. Talk about the seriousness of them. A Discussion Agreement is a helpful tool. If an easel pad, white board, or chalk board is available, ask the group in the beginning, "What are some guidelines we should follow for the meeting?" Write down responses and ask if everyone agrees to follow them. Once there is consensus on the rules, ask the group to allow you as the facilitator to hold the group accountable. Remind or point to the agreement as necessary.
 - b. Uphold the norms IMMEDIATELY to show the group you are serious about them
2. Reinforce constructive participants and their behaviors
 - a. "Thanks for sharing your ideas."
 - b. "I love how everyone is sitting so calmly."
3. Safeguard ideas and comments of participants.
 - a. "Remember our norms...everyone's ideas are valued."
 - b. "Thanks for asking that great question!"
 - c. "I will not tolerate anyone disrespecting another person or their ideas."
4. Avoid prolonged one-to-one participation (remember....maximum participation of all members.)
 - a. "Let's hear what others might have to say."
 - b. "How do other people feel about what _____ is saying?"
5. Use "I" statements to correct behavior.
 - a. "I feel disrespected when I am interrupted. I need you to listen to whoever is speaking."
 - b. "I feel concerned that you put down Mary. Respect is one of our norms. If you can't show respect for others, I will have to ask you to sit out."

Managing Yourself

- I. Maintain your role as neutral facilitator, not as a participant.



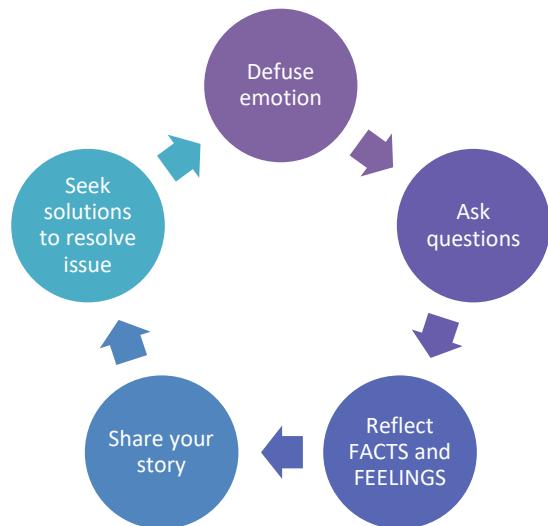
2. Know your personal triggers and have some strategies for dealing with them. Consider these possibilities. What if...
 - a. A young person confronts my authority?
 - b. I make a mistake?
 - c. Things don't go exactly as I planned?
 - d. I have to deal with conflict or anger in a group?
3. Identify strategies to manage yourself include being mindful of your...
 - a. body language
 - b. tone of voice
 - c. facial expressions
 - d. interactions with the group and/or your coworker
 - e. ability to be flexible

Common Meeting Problems. Even in the best of groups, there are times when you, as Coach, will need to address certain behaviors. Below are some tips to help keep the discussion focused while upholding group rules.

- Everyone Talking at Once: “Remember our group rules? If we’re all talking at once, we may miss a great comment from someone.”
- Off the Subject. “Thank you, Lisa. That’s interesting. Now, let’s review what we’ve talked about up till now.”
- Side Conversations. “There are some side conversations going on. That makes it hard for the group to stay focused. Let’s remember our group rules and respect one another as we talk.”
- Losing Attention. “I feel like some members of this group are not really listening. Let’s take a short break. Then I would like to give this another chance.”
- Long-Winded Speaker. “You’ve raised lots of interesting points. Does anyone else have something to add?”
- The Clown. “I really enjoy a good laugh, too, but I was wondering if you have anything else to say about what we were discussing?”
-

Three F's of Communication

- Focus. What is your body language saying? Are you giving your undivided attention to the speaker?
- Listen for Facts and Feelings. In addition to the facts, what feelings (spoken or unspoken) might the speaker have?
- Reflect. In your own words, or using a sentence stem, summarize the main point and feelings of the speaker. “You felt _____ when _____. ” Or “When _____ happened, you felt _____. ” Ask if you heard the other person accurately and are on point. If not, try reflecting again.



Mediation

When conflict is severe between different parties, it may be beneficial to bring in an external, neutral facilitator to assist.



Strategic Direction

Asking Important Questions

Keeping an all-volunteer group like a civic association moving in the same direction can be a challenge for leaders. Strategic goal setting can occur yearly or every three to five years. Goals can help keep members moving in the same direction and respond to changing environmental conditions.



Mission

- What is our neighborhood context and real estate market?
- What are critical conditions?
- Who are key stakeholders who should be involved in planning?
- What is our mission and vision?
- What are the assets available to our neighborhood?



Planning

- What are the top three to five priorities for the next ___ years?
- What are our strategies, objectives, and goals?
- What will we focus on this year?



Action

- What are action items?
- Who will be responsible?
- What is the timeline?
- When will the plan be reviewed?

This information is often compiled into a strategic plan. A strategic plan is usually succinct, is easy to read, and lays out a preferred future for the organization. It usually contains a brief history of the organization, vision, mission, core values, environmental analysis, critical issues, priorities, goals, and an action plan. It is often worthless, however, if enough of the right stakeholders are not involved in the process and adequate time is not given to its development. The next page is the process Olde Huntersville used.



Olde Huntersville Strategic Planning Process Model

Pre-Planning and Community Building by the Olde Huntersville Civic League (2014-2016)

- Social and community events to increase involvement and engagement
- Team building and leadership development training
- Asset based development training
- Civic league board and committee development with updated bylaws
- Olde Huntersville Resource Fair to connect providers with residents and using a Block By Block grant to pay for the event
- Review of relevant City documents such as City Priorities and the Norfolk Plan to Reduce Poverty

Planning Process (6 months in 2016)

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) group exercise
- Identification of all the diverse audiences who should be included in the process (especially renters)
- A project focused group formed and met for six months outside of civic league meetings
- Neighborhood events and activities continued
- Goals were identified
- Actions steps were identified to meet goals
- Council members and City staff were partners in the process
- The plan was approved by the civic league and presented to neighborhood partners.
- The plan was submitted to City Council

The Olde Huntersville plan is a work/commitment that continues. It is a living, breathing document apt to change and will need to be maintained by the community. It also involves residents working hard to expand their partnerships across various sectors beyond local government.



Strategic Direction Template

Executive Summary

A high-level overview of your organizational strategy once it is finished. It also identifies the expected time frame, usually between two and five years.

Your Organization

This provides a brief description of your organization. It would include any or all of the following:

- Vision
- Mission
- Values
- Key history or accomplishments
- Who is leading the organization at the time of publication

Strategic Issues and Context Research

This section summarizes key points (rarely more than five) in short form about what you have discovered about your context that is relevant to your goals. Full reports could be included as an appendix or as separate documents. This section could identify any or all of the following.

- Demographics of your audience or membership
- SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
- Surveys and identified needs
- Assets and Resources
- Competition and Constraints
- Other research or relevant external documents

This section helps establish credibility that you have done your homework.

Goals, Strategies, Action Steps

Terminology here can be confusing because it differs among organizations. Similar words include focus areas, objectives, and outcomes. Regardless of word choice, the intended result is to provide an organized picture of how your organization will turn its abstract vision into reality during a given time period. It begins with a few (five to six at most) big picture, abstract values and progresses into smaller, but still high-level actions. One goal statement example is provided below.

EXAMPLE:

Goal 1: To foster enthusiasm for civic involvement among young citizens within the _____ neighborhood.

Strategy: The civic league will proactively engage youth and families in decisions that involve their neighborhood and city.

Action step 1: The civic league will hold at least one joint meeting with the local PTA(s) and provide childcare or activities for children.

Action step 2: The civic league will create a board position for one young citizen under 20.



Action step 3: The civic league will schedule at least one trip annually to a City Council meeting and introduce young citizens to their Council representatives.

This is also a statement of your organization's priorities that fit within the constraints and context discovered above. By spending time and having robust discussion with members and stakeholders in choosing these priorities on the front end, it frees your committees and your regular meetings to be spent working on the actions and not debating what should be done.

Finally, your organization earns credibility by accomplishing goals, so it is important to set goals that stretch the organization but are also reasonable.

Special Events

Getting Started

Neighborhood get-togethers are important to building relationships, networks, and learning to work together. However, the location, size, and number of people invited to an event bring several considerations for protecting the public's safety and your organization's liability. Some neighborhoods are old pros and have special committees for special events like the Berkley Reunion. To those just starting out, however, navigating city government may be a new adventure. Multiple City departments are involved with special events.

- Planning – Private property event permits
- Recreation, Parks and Open Space – Picnic shelter, athletic field and open space permits for events in parks and at community centers
- Public Works Division of Right of Way (ROW) – Safety closure permits (street closure with no physical setup in the right-of-way – street is closed to create safe crossing between event spaces)
- SevenVenues – City property event permits

Seven Venues is glad to guide residents toward the right department. Their main phone line is (757) 664-6880. The Seven Venues webpages are a helpful tool that should be referenced for events on City property: www.norfolk.gov/sevenvenues. They also have an online questionnaire to determine the correct permitting office: www.norfolk.gov/FormCenter/SevenVenues-54/Questionnaire-for-Outdoor-Event-Planners-470 .

The information below is guidance for those just getting started.

1. Start small. The bigger the event, the more logistics coordination needed, the higher the cost, and the greater need for risk management. A few members of your organization meeting in a backyard, a community center or place of worship will be easier than holding a big public event. Meeting together at the zoo or botanical gardens is also a simple alternative to big events.

2. Weigh private property vs. public property. Holding an event at a private facility that already has the infrastructure for events, a commercial kitchen, its own security plan, and that doesn't require restricting traffic frees your group from many requirements on public property. Events on City property will always require a permit. An event on private property may need a permit if it is outside of the normal operations of the facility or space. Reach out to City departments for guidance and to gather information on the application deadlines, requirements and costs for different properties.

3. Weigh who is invited and how. An event just for your members is legally viewed differently than an event where the general public is invited. Your group should discuss whether the event is by invitation before anyone posts anything to social media or a bulletin board for the whole public. Be prepared to provide accommodations such as parking, restrooms and waste removal for your event based on the projected attendance.



4. Think about Food Risks. Potlucks were popular in the old days when the public had less knowledge about foodborne illnesses. Close neighbors may know to avoid Ms. Jones casserole because her pet cats helped her make it, but the public doesn't have that knowledge. As your event grows, the more your food should be commercially pre-packaged or prepared by professionals. The Norfolk Department of Health is also involved in permitting events advertised to the public.

5. Contact an insurance agent. Insurance may be required for an event on public property, but it is a good idea to make sure you are covered even if on private property to protect your organization.

6. Grow your event. As you learn to work together, you'll be ready to take on bigger challenges. You'll be ready to handle small and large event permits, fire code requirements, Norfolk Public Schools facility lease applications, health permits, vendor agreements, and special event business licenses. When you're ready for it, go for it and have fun!



Working with Developers

Six Tips for Neighborhood Organizations

Norfolk's Planning Commission considers an average of 260 applications per year pertaining to rezoning, conditional use permits, and amendments to the City's general plan. When applications require approval by the Planning Commission and City Council, applicants are required to contact the neighborhood civic league to explain their request or to set up a separate neighborhood meeting. A five minute video is available on the City's YouTube channel, youtube.com/norfolktv, but here are the six tips summarized.

1

Meet the Planning Department.

- Visit www.norfolk.gov/planning, call (757) 664-4752, or schedule an appointment.
- They value your questions.
- A more informed public is better for everyone.

2

Know the current zoning and guiding documents for your neighborhood.

- Use the Norfolk Air application - <http://norfolkair.norfolk.gov/norfolkair/Search.aspx>
- plaNorfolk 2030 is the City's general plan and is available on the Planning website.
- Civic leagues can designate a member to monitor zoning activity.

3

Engage your neighborhood in conversations about the future.

- It is better for a neighborhood to have a unified vision for the future than to approach development proposals with no vision or goals.
- The whole neighborhood should be involved, not just a few.

4

Give Developers a fair hearing to the whole neighborhood.

- Developers should be given a timely response and an opportunity to meet with the neighborhood/civic league.
- The whole neighborhood should be invited, and good facilitation skills are beneficial.
- Neighbors should not be intimidated to make reasonable requests to developers.

5

Be prepared to make your case to the Planning Commission and City Council.

- Prepare with facts, avoid personal attacks, and give a timeline of how decisions were made.
- Be engaged with the Planning Commission during the process and beyond to establish a mutual relationship.
- If possible, send representatives to hearings rather than just letters.

6

Shoot for the best, but have realistic expectations.

- Developers are attracted, not forced. Earning a good reputation and neighbors taking pride in their neighborhood attracts good developers.
- Build positive relationships with developers to attract the development you want.



Promoting Neighborhood Values

Being Good Neighbors

Being neighborly is a learned behavior learned most of all from watching others. Positive behavior can be established by modeling and communicating neighborhood standards. Standards vary regionally especially if moving from rural areas to the city where more rules are required. This is where your neighborhood group can help neighbors feel welcome but also set common standards of behavior. State and city codes set minimum requirements for health and safety (see www.norfolk.gov/neighborhoodquality) through building maintenance codes (porches, roofs, gutters) and nuisance ordinances (no trash and debris), but hopefully your neighborhood wants higher standards than minimum legal requirements. Below are ideas for promoting good, neighborly behavior.

Model Positive Behavior

If neighborhood leaders want others to emulate standards, they should be the first to model it. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

Welcome New Residents and Communicate a Positive Vision for the Neighborhood

Baking a traditional pie may not be necessary but building relationships with new residents helps establish rapport and mutual respect. Some neighborhoods provide welcome packets with helpful information such as waste regulations and who to contact for information, city codes, etc. This is especially helpful to new residents who are not familiar with life in the city of Norfolk. Some neighborhoods take it a step further and provide a neighborhood history, neighborhood contacts, neighborhood vision, and quality of life standards (see next item). This introduction to the neighborhood is much more welcoming than reporting new neighbors for code violations. If a new resident leaves their garbage can out longer than allowed, pulling it in for them with a kind word is usually a welcome gesture.

Target the Middle

A neighborhood might be thought of in thirds. At one end are homes in great shape that need no attention. At the other end, almost every neighborhood has one or more houses in severe condition that require government intervention. Owners go through divorce,

Owner / Renter Responsibilities

- Be respectful! Loud noise could result in a noise violation. For renters, repeated violations could result in an eviction.
- Dog waste must be removed from your property. Waste should be removed every two weeks at minimum. Tall grass will result in a fine from the City.
- Trash must be removed from your property after 5pm for Thursday pick-up and then removed by 11:30 pm Thursday. **Lots must be closed and secured** so that trash (including dog waste) can be picked up every other week. **All cans must be stored behind the front fence of the property.**
- ANY bulk item (couch, large items) must be called in for a BULK Pick-up by Wed at 3pm for removal. Failure to do so will result in a fine. **Failure to call in for a bulk item will result in a fine. Call 441-8113.**
- Please keep your property free of trash including dog waste. **Failure to do so is a Waste/Stormwater Violation of the Norfolk City Code and is finable.**
- All trash must be placed on the curb for pickup on a street, sidewalk or park land. Also, please pick up after your dog when on public property. This is a city ordinance.
- Dogs must be leashed for longer than a 3 hour period outside by City Code. Any dog living outside must have shelter and water at ALL times.
- Street cleaning day is the first Tuesday of every month. Please, remove your car from the street.
- Observe the posted speed limits.
- Park at least 3' from any driveway entrance. This is a city ordinance.
- Do not leave items in your driveway safety.
- parking on grass in a front or side yard is illegal. It's a \$25 fine per incident by City Code.
- Do not block the sidewalk with a vehicle.

About the Fairmount Park Civic League

League History
The Fairmount Park Civic League formed in May of 1960 and presides over the Fairmount Park, Willard Park, and the surrounding neighborhoods of Jefferson Manor, Layfayette Terrace, Belmont Plaza, Bell's Farm and Kent Point neighborhoods. Today, the Civic League represents over 2,000 households and is the second largest Civic League in Norfolk. The League represents the largest voting block in the city.

League Role

Throughout the years, the League has played a vital and pivotal role in shaping the planning and revitalization of the neighborhoods. The Civic League meets monthly for a general membership organized meeting to discuss neighborhood planning, on-going projects, and any resident issues. The input of all citizens is highly valued and the Civic League strives to be of the highest priority of the Civic League.

Message from Your President
We are committed to making a positive difference in our neighborhood. We welcome new members and new residents to join in on the successes of our community. The Fairmount Park Civic League is a great place to meet our elected officials, and feel by our neighbors. Come and join us when you are a part of the Fairmount Park Civic League. We are a group of people who've got good citizens and neighbors on your side.

I hope to see you in the neighborhood.

Taylor Gould
President, Fairmount Park Civic League

For more information visit:
www.norfolk.gov
www.fairmountparkcivicleague.com

Welcome to the Fairmount Park Neighborhood!



A Guide for Home Owners, Businesses and Renters

The Fairmount Park Civic League

Old Huntersville Civic League
We're on the Web!
www.ohcivicleague.org
Visit our website and like our Facebook page to learn about upcoming events in our neighborhood!
Stay connected!
www.facebook.com/ohcivicleague
www.covestinc.org

Helpful Phone Numbers

Hamilton Roads Utility Billing Service (HUBS)	(757) 668-6700
Virginia Dominion Power	(757) 668-6107
Cox Cable	(757) 324-1111
Virginia Natural Gas	(757) 668-236-3578
Norfolk Cares	(757) 668-6510

**Health with all City Of Norfolk concerns is to talk to your City Health and Safety, Inc.*

OLDE HUNTERVILLE COMMUNITY STANDARDS
Olde Huntersville Residents building in partnership a better neighborhood or family, growth and future by...

- refraining from using profanity or consuming alcoholic beverages in public
- discarding litter, garbage, cans and bottles properly
- not using porch railings and fencing to dry laundry
- keeping noise and music at a respectable level
- supervising children at all times
- placing and storing trash containers as required by city code
- storing trash containers at least 5 feet behind front corner of home
- scooping your pet's poop
- observing the residential speed limit
- reminding your neighbor of the community standards

Practicing our standards for a happy and healthy neighborhood!

JOIN US AT THE CIVIC LEAGUE MEETINGS!
The 2nd Tuesday of EVERY MONTH
ALL residents are invited (renters, owners and youth)

Meetings are held at the Huntersville Community Center
630 Golf St. Norfolk, VA 23504 at 6pm.



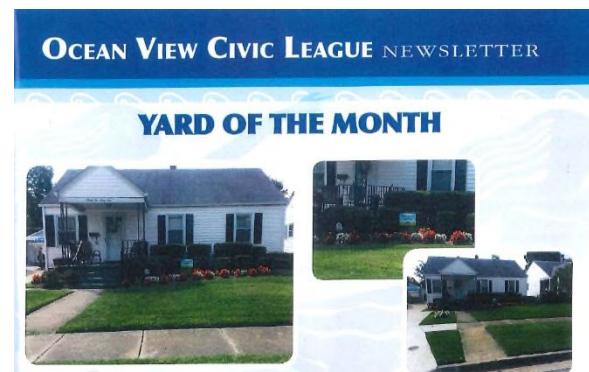
bankruptcy and foreclosure leaving home maintenance in legal limbo. Sadly, some owners die with no relatives. Other owners move out of state or become bad landlords. Some just quit caring about the neighborhood. Some are incapacitated by health problems. All of these involve government interventions which can be lengthy. These can be reported using the MyNorfolk app or calling Norfolk Cares at (757) 664-6510. These usually represent the least healthy third of a neighborhood. Where neighborhood groups can have greater influence is in the middle third of residents who just need a little social incentive. The following two ideas help.

Develop Neighborhood Standards in Writing

Olde Huntersville, for example, (see previous page) created door hangers promoting their vision and good neighborly behavior. This includes supervising children, guarding against foul language, noise, and other standards. Many of these may not be enforceable by the city (Homeowners, Condo Associations, and apartment buildings may have their own enforceable rules), but they communicate the positive behavior expected. Examples are found at www.norfolk.gov/nbnacademy.

Reward Positive Behavior

A form of positive reinforcement is to give recognition to neighbors demonstrating the standards in which you want others to emulate. Some neighborhoods do Yard of the Month contests and reward winners with a removable sign or picture in a neighborhood newsletter.



Healthiest

Middle

Less Healthy

Strategies for Strengthening the Middle

- Emphasis falls on community building such as neighbors having fun together, forming positive relationships, and building pride in their neighborhood
- Neighborhood communicates and educates residents positively through mixed media (newsletters, email, website, social media, etc.) to insiders and outsiders (potential investors)
- Peer networking and best practices are promoted (landlords and businesses for example)

Strategies for the Less Healthy Third

- Emphasis falls on government targeting worst for enforcement and resolution through legal means
- Education and connection to resources
- Citizens are eyes and ears
- Sometimes the legal process takes a while



Marketing Your Neighborhood

Attracting Good Neighbors

Housing expenses, whether a homeowner or a renter, are usually a household's largest ongoing expense. Because individuals seek the best value for their money, choosing a neighborhood is competitive. Neighborhood marketing is about building confidence in your neighborhood so that you can attract good neighbors. Marcia Nedland, an instructor and consultant with Fall Creek Consultants, provided instruction in Norfolk through a 12 hour NeighborWorks course on how neighborhoods can help shape the real estate market, attract private investment, and create a positive image for neighborhoods. Here are some of her principles summarized.

1. Neighborhoods compete with each other in the real estate market for good neighbors. As residents move or transition out of the neighborhood, who do you want to replace them? Symptoms of decline begin to show when the neighborhood's ability to attract replacement households begins to lose to more competitive neighborhoods elsewhere in Norfolk or surrounding cities. Weakening market demand fosters an increase in predatory landlords, vacancy and abandonment. No government has enough subsidy to change neighborhood conditions without private investment by homeowners, landlords and others. Neighborhood health is not just about reducing problems, it is about generating enough value to beat competing neighborhoods. Neighborhood marketing is intended to communicate the value of your neighborhood as a good, safe investment to potential new neighbors.



2. Have a tough conversation about what you want the real estate market in your neighborhood to be. Talk of revitalizing neighborhoods often raises fears about gentrification. Before neighborhood marketing will do any good, neighborhood residents should be in agreement with what they want to see in the future. It may involve difficult conversations on how to attract private investment while reducing fears and discussing safeguards to reduce gentrification. Neighborhood residents and business owners should be in general agreement about what kind of image they want to develop for their neighborhood. Some organizations develop a vision statement for the neighborhood.

3. Prioritize neighborhood confidence building. Many neighborhoods undermine their effort to attract good neighbors by focusing public or media attention on deficiencies. A guiding question in your neighborhood activities and the way in which you talk about the neighborhood should be, "What will this project about our neighborhood to our target market?"

4. Be open to the possibility that your target market for replacement households do not prioritize the same things. To effectively market the neighborhood to replacement households, neighborhood leaders need to know what your potential neighbors in your target market are after and be able to see the neighborhood through the target market eyes. Being competitive means appealing to the priorities of potential neighbors, not just long time residents. Contrasting examples might be something like these: code compliance vs. curb appeal; affordability vs. a great value; reduction in crime rates vs. friendly neighbors and fun activities.

5. Speak positively about your neighborhood and city. Words matter. Use opportunities to build a positive image for the neighborhood. Even good intentions can get in the way. For example, talking about fighting crime gives



the impression crime is a big problem. Some neighborhood organizations have a designated spokesperson and/or develop key messaging points that highlight assets.

6. Sell the neighborhood. Some neighborhoods network with real estate agents, quality contractors, and others to promote the value of their neighborhood. Others make presentations to schools, faith groups, and other institutions to make a positive appeal for good homeowners and renters.



7. Develop Communication Tools. Having a quality internet or social media presence, newsletter, logo, banner, sign or other options shows off neighborhood pride.

8. Celebrate Good Things and Have Fun. Research shows that strong social relationships foster more home maintenance and add value to the neighborhood. Giving opportunities to have fun benefits everyone.

For More Information see

- <https://www.neighborworks.org/Community/Revitalization/Stable-Communities/Neighborhood-Marketing-Program/Neighborhood-Marketing-Guide>
- <http://www.fallcreekconsultants.com/neighborhood-branding-and-marketing-2/>

Ideas for Reinforcing the Message

- Quality photos on social media
- Showing amenities of any kind: restaurants, rivers, movie theaters, businesses, etc.
- Profiles residents and especially new homebuyers about why they love the neighborhood
- Flower sales
- Positive stories about schools
- Neighborhood festivals or parades
- Neighborhood banners/flags for houses
- Good Neighbor Awards
- Block parties and other social events or clubs
- Youth activities led by neighbors
- Artwalks or PorchFests featuring neighborhood artists or musicians
- Block improvement projects
- Pie-Baking Contests
- “Best House on the Block” contests
- “Yard of the Month” contests
- Information on design services, rehab loans, quality contractors/repair people
- Home improvement workshops
- Bicycling or walking tours
- Other outdoor activities
- Farmers’ Markets
- Community gardens and urban farms
- Public transportation stories
- Feature story on community police officers



Placemaking

Turning Spaces into Places

Adapted from a NeighborWorks course titled “Strategies for More Livable Neighborhoods”

The Power of Ten

Placemaking is the idea of turning spaces into community places. Experts say that a desirable area should have ten spaces that are special to people. These form a critical mass that make an area attractive. Because neighborhood size varies and Norfolk's waterways make for some strange neighborhood configurations, it is difficult to prescribe in what proximity the ten spaces should be within each other. In other words, the Power of Ten may go beyond just your individual neighborhood. Great places could be something big like a park, recreation center, popular restaurant or business, but it doesn't have to be big. Willoughby has unique art. A resident in Freemason provides dog treats and a watering dish for neighborhood dog walkers. A resident in Ghent decorates an ODU Monarch Lion in their yard. Lindenwood residents created a giant LOVE sign that changes with the season. Fairmount Park residents cleaned up a wetlands area and won grants to install a bench, nature signs, and bird houses. It is now a quiet place to sit and enjoy nature. Heritage Point has two canons at their entrance. A community space might be a church that hosts a popular fish fry for the neighborhood. Several neighborhoods have a Free Little Library box. Estabrook places flags during patriotic holidays. A few neighborhoods now have farmers' markets or community gardens.



Looking for Places

As you think about place making, here are some questions for doing a neighborhood area place audit.

- Where do people socialize and interact? How does the neighborhood support community building?
- What is the natural environment? What aspects of nature can be enjoyed. What do I hear, smell, and see? How do I feel? Where can I enjoy nature?
- What is the physical structure? How are buildings and physical elements organized. What is unique? What potential canvases exist for placemaking? Is there any unique architecture?
- What economic spaces are present? Are there any special businesses or employers that are special places and can be celebrated?
- What heritage does the area have? What parts of the neighborhood represent the past – either good or bad?
- What are cultural sites? What places in the neighborhood express different cultures?

“Today’s placemaking represents a comeback for community. The iterative actions and collaborations inherent in the making of places nourish communities and empower people”.

Places in Making Guide by The Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT

Making Places

The more important part of place making is the making part – coming together as a community, involving neighbors, interacting together, and making something. Fred Kent, of the Project for Public Spaces, emphasizes the importance of working together: “Placemaking is an act of doing something. It’s not planning, it’s doing. That’s what’s so powerful about it.” What can neighbors do in your neighborhood? Could a vacant lot become a summer yoga studio? Could an empty parking lot become a summer outdoor concert venue? Could a popular neighborhood sidewalk be a place for a kid’s sidewalk art contest? Could an empty church yard become a labyrinth for meditation? Could you do an outdoor palette furniture contest? Could you place a bench somewhere to watch birds in the wetlands? What can be done to activate space and add to your power of ten?



Resources for Place Making

- Block By Block Neighborhood Pride Grants. Each year the Department of Neighborhood Services makes \$500 grants and up to \$2500 matching grants available to neighborhood civic groups. See www.norfolk.gov/blockbyblock.
- Keep Norfolk Beautiful. They are networked with the Norfolk Agricultural Extension of Virginia Tech to help guide community gardens. See <https://www.norfolk.gov/3994/Grow-Norfolk>.
- Places in the Making Guide from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <https://dusp.mit.edu/sites/dusp.mit.edu/files/attachments/project/mit-dusp-places-in-the-making.pdf>
- Project for Public Spaces. www.pps.org



Section 3: Special Issues

The third section is a reference for special topics that may emerge. Most neighborhoods are concerned with safety so a one-page reference is provided. Some neighborhoods are governed by legally established community associations (also known as homeowners' associations) or condo associations. A reference page is included. Sometimes a new development is referred to as affordable housing which has many connotations. A factual presentation is provided for reference. In addition, special circumstances arise such as Covid-19 which has drastically changed the way neighborhoods conduct business. Tools for virtual meetings are now included in the guide.

Neighborhood Safety

Resources from Norfolk Police and Norfolk Fire

Norfolk Police and Norfolk Fire-Rescue have many programs which residents are not aware.

Norfolk Police Department

Community relations is a top priority for the Norfolk Police Department. The word cloud to the right contains some of their programs. For a full list, visit their website at www.norfolk.gov/police or contact Community Affairs at PD-CommunityAffairs@norfolk.gov. Of special importance, each neighborhood has a Community Resource Officer assigned to it.

Norfolk Fire-Rescue

Likewise, Fire-Rescue's job is safer and easier the more educated residents are about health hazards. They offer several programs. See www.norfolk.gov/NFR for more details.

- Smoke Alarm Request
- Hands-Only CPR Training
- PulsePoint App
- Stop the Bleed Training
- Presentations/Speakers Bureau
- Youth – Explorer Post 116,
- Fire Station Visits for Groups and Apparatus Displays

Camera Registration
Police Athletic League
E-Commerce Exchange Zones
Cops and Curls
Speakers' Bureau
NPD T.R.U.E Youth
Crime Line Clergy Patrol
LGBTQ Liaison Five-O and Fades
Trunk or Treat
Scholastic Chess
Youth Academies
Virtual Block Watch
Security Surveys
Business Watch
PLUS - Police Leadership Unveils Success
Building Relations Before Graduation
Norfolk's Finest and Furriest
Citizens Police Academy
Stand Up and Speak Out
Crime Mapping
WE are ONE



Neighborhood History

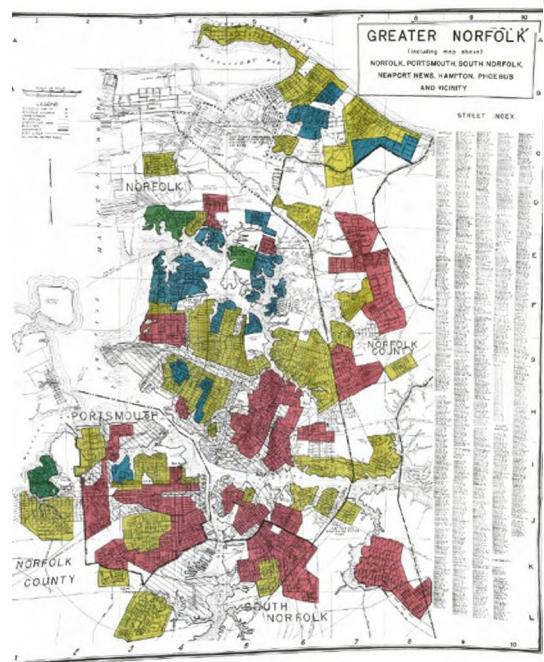
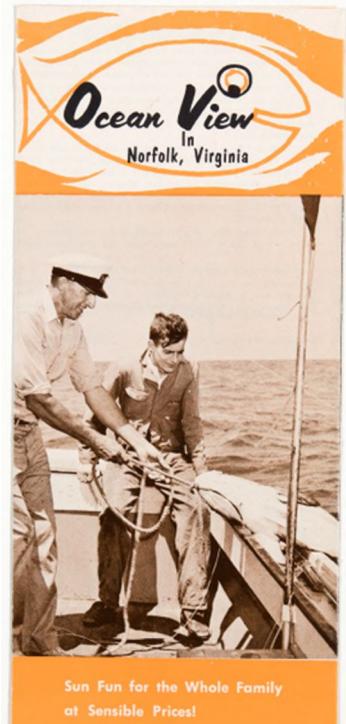
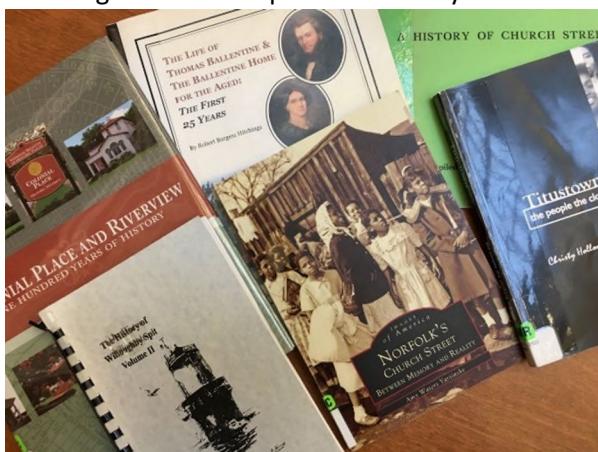
Preserving and Presenting Your Neighborhood's Story

Did you know that Berkley was once named Powder Point after gunpowder stored there? Did you know that the streets in Colonial Place are named after the original 13 colonies? Did you know the Norview High School Pilots are named after an airfield that used to be in Norview, and JANAF Shopping Yard aligns with a runway to an airfield that it replaced?

“History is WHO we are, and WHY we are the way we are.” – David McCollough

Neighborhood history helps explain street names, layout, architecture, and hidden gems. It highlights victories and struggles that brought your neighborhood to the present and shapes its future. Does your neighborhood have secret cemeteries or forgotten memorials from the past? Was your neighborhood redlined? Who are schools, libraries, and other buildings named after? All these questions are exciting topics for exploration. A webpage on the City's website has been created with a few key resources for studying history at www.norfolk.gov/neighborhoodhistories. Here are a few activities to consider.

- Neighborhood history walking or bike tours.
- History show and tell. Set up a meeting or event for residents to bring in pictures or artifacts from the neighborhood's past.
- Write a neighborhood history or feature it on your website.
- Collect oral histories. Record short memories of the neighborhood from the past and present via writing or video. A neighborhood in Memphis used summer youth interns to collect oral history.
- Photograph the neighborhood today.
- Take an active part in historical preservation. Work with local organizations to preserve history.



Community Associations

Special Info for Condo and Homeowners Associations

In Virginia, state government has jurisdiction over community associations and has specific laws related to both Homeowners Associations and Condo Association. The Community Association Institute developed the Community Association Governance Guidelines to help community association boards govern fairly, responsibly and successfully. Embracing these 12 basic principles can help any association board increase harmony, reduce conflict and build a stronger, more successful community.

- 1. Annual meetings.** Conduct at least one membership meeting annually, providing at least two weeks notice to homeowners and more than two weeks if specified in the governing documents or dictated by state statute.
- 2. Assessments.** Collect assessments and other fees from homeowners in a timely and equitable manner and in accordance with state statutes and board-approved procedures.
- 3. Communication.** Provide at least one form of regular communication with residents, and use it to report substantive actions taken by the board.
- 4. Conflicts of interest.** Disclose all personal and financial conflicts of interest before assuming a board position and, once on the board, before participating in any board decisions.
- 5. Elections.** Hold fair and open elections in strict conformance with governing documents, giving all candidates an equal opportunity to express their views and permitting each candidate to have a representative observe the vote-counting process.
- 6. Financial transparency.** Share critical information and rationale with residents about budgets, reserve funding, special assessments and other issues that could impact their financial obligations to the association. Give members an opportunity—before final decisions are made—to ask questions of a representative who is fully familiar with these financial issues.
- 7. Foreclosure.** Initiate lien and foreclosure proceedings only as a last step in a well-defined debt-collection procedure—and only after other, less-disruptive measures have failed to resolve a serious delinquency issue in a specified period of time.
- 8. Governance and the law.** Govern and manage the community in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. Conduct reviews of governing documents to ensure legal compliance and to determine whether amendments are necessary.
- 9. Grievances and appeals.** Allow residents to bring grievances before the board or a board-appointed committee and follow well-publicized procedures that give residents the opportunity to correct violations before imposing fines or other sanctions.
- 10. Records.** Allow homeowners reasonable access to appropriate community records, including annual budgets and board meeting minutes.
- 11. Reserve funding.** Account for anticipated long-term expenditures as part of the annual budget-development process, commissioning a reserve study when professional expertise is warranted.
- 12. Rules.** Uniformly enforce all rules, including architectural guidelines, but only after seeking compliance on a voluntary basis. Distribute proposals for new rules and guidelines to all homeowners and non-owner residents. Advise them when the board will consider new rules and encourage input. Once adopted, new rules and effective dates should be distributed to every owner and resident.

Note: Laws governing common-interest communities vary considerably from state to state. Association boards should consult with attorneys to ensure their association is governed in accordance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations.



Affordable Housing

Frequently Asked Questions

Common terms

Affordable Housing: Definitions vary, but it usually describes the relationship between the cost of housing to prevailing incomes in a given area. It is often expressed as a relationship to an area's median income, to a housing affordability index, or as a percentage of household income. The rule of thumb for the federal government is that basic housing, including utilities, should not consume more than 30% of household income. A lack of affordable housing for some constrains other life necessities such as food, health care, etc.

Mixed-Income Housing: is housing designed to offer housing for range of incomes so that neighborhoods are not segregated by income. When done well, this has been shown to improve outcomes for everyone.

Subsidized Housing: is housing that is made available at below market rates through government support.

Workforce Housing: is housing for those employed in occupations (teachers, firefighters, nurses, police, etc.) needed for every community but whose incomes are a mismatch to the local cost of housing. Housing costs that are mismatched to local service occupations cause those employees to move further away, spend more time commuting, and increase traffic congestion. Workforce Housing assists them in living closer to work.

What is considered low income?

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determines low income in relation to a region's Area Median Income (AMI) from the Census Bureau. For Norfolk, this includes Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Chesapeake. At the time of writing, the AMI for the Norfolk area is \$70,900. See a partial chart to the right from NRHA at NRHA.us

Number of Occupants	Extremely Low	Very Low	Low Income
	30% of AMI	50% of AMI	80% of AMI
1 Person	\$14,900	\$24,850	\$39,700
2 Person	\$17,000	\$28,400	\$45,400
3 Person	\$20,090	\$31,950	\$51,050
4 Person	\$24,250	\$35,450	\$56,700
5 Person	\$28,410	\$38,300	\$61,250

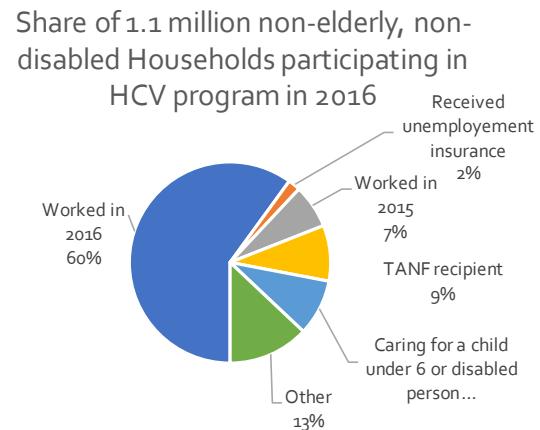
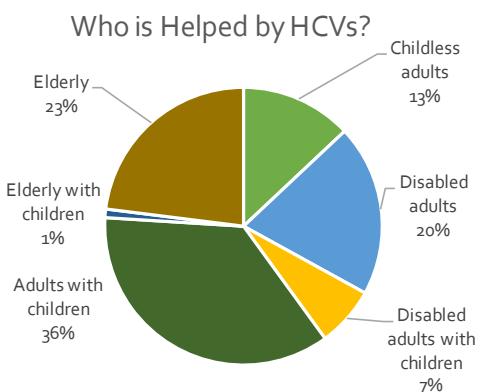
Why mixed income neighborhoods?

The Supreme Court ruled in 2014 that the placement of low-income residents only in low income, low opportunity areas can have the effect of illegal, discriminatory segregation even if that was not the intent. Local governments nationwide have both an ethical and legal obligation under Fair Housing laws to further mixed income neighborhoods.



What are Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) [formerly Section 8]?

Through HCV, the federal government provides rent payment assistance to a limited number of qualifying low income residents for a percentage of their rent. The privately owned property is inspected before a HCV tenant moves in and once annually during the duration of the lease. The tenant and the property are recertified annually using federal criteria. The tenant signs an approved lease with the landlord and is subject to the terms of that lease. NRHA administers the HCV program in Norfolk. HCV tenants are protected by federal privacy laws. Rumors about assumed HCV tenants are difficult to contain because NRHA can neither affirm nor deny whether any particular tenant is a HCV tenant.



What is the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC)?

LIHTC is a program from the U.S. Department of Treasury as an incentive for high quality developers to build rental units for lower income tenants. Investors receive a percentage of tax credits used to reduce their taxes for ten years by investing in the development. Tax credits are divided by state on a competitive basis so that only the highest quality developments win the credits. Winning applicants must have an approved property manager, meet strict building standards, and maintain compliance for 30 years. In Virginia, LIHTC is administered by the Virginia Housing and Development Authority. A minimum of 40% of units must be for lower income residents, but many elect to have all units qualify as low income in order to capture the maximum tax credits. A map is available of existing LIHTC properties at <http://vhda.maps.arcgis.com>.

Will it bring crime?

Other factors make it difficult to study, but studies show a trend. When vouchers are concentrated in already low income neighborhoods with high crime, crime goes up. When they are disbursed in mixed income neighborhoods with low-crime, crime, as a general trend, does not go up.



For more info:

Nrha.us
Vhda.com
Housingvirginia.org
Furmancenter.org
www.youtube.com/novogradaccpas
Supremecourt.gov
Considertheperson.org



Keeping Communities Connected

Staying Engaged While Physical Distancing

Video Meetings



Zoom - Cisco Webex - Skype - Facebook Live - Google Hangouts - GoToMeeting - FaceTime

- Protect your privacy- Use passwords and/or unique ID numbers for each meeting
- Keep the video conferencing software up to date
- Don't open unexpected video conference invitations
- Make sure your background is appropriate
- Do use waiting room feature
- Don't allow participants to screen share or screenshot by default
- Do lock a meeting once all the participants have joined the call
- Inform participants before you start recording the meeting

Audio and Non-Verbal Platforms



Free Conference Call - Group Me - WhatsApp - Newsletters - Emails - Next Door - MailChimp

- For audio meetings, use the mute feature to regulate excess noise and talking
- Newsletters & emails should have concise information and contain proper grammar
- Encourage participants to be respectful on social media platforms

Surveys



Google Forms - Doodle Polls -Typeform - Survey Monkey - Survey Plant

- Define a clear, attainable goal
- Hold the more personal questions to the end
- Encourage one response per question
- Focus on using closed-ended questions
- Keep surveys to 10 questions max
- Keep your answer choices balanced
- Preview your survey before you send it
- Opt to offer surveys by invite link only



Notes

