

# How To Start A Neighborhood Association

## 1. EDUCATE YOURSELF

- What are the benefits of starting a neighborhood association (see *Neighborhood Associations 101*)? What is the process to start one (see below)?

## 2. IDENTIFY CORE LEADERS

- The long-term success of a neighborhood association depends on the commitment of its leaders and participants.
- **Bring a few other interested neighbors together and canvass the neighborhood to explain the importance** of organizing a neighborhood association in your area. Be sure to gather contact information from interested neighbors. Plan a meeting soon after canvassing to discuss ideas for a neighborhood association and strategize how to encourage more participation.
- Choose a place and time for the first neighborhood-wide meeting. Some neighborhood associations meet in resident's home, while others meet in a civic building located within the neighborhood.
- Consider ways to break the ice and encourage interaction, such as having refreshments.

## 3. MEET & DECIDE

Once the core leadership has drummed up interest in starting a neighborhood association and planned its first meeting, what topics should the neighborhood association discuss at its first few meetings?

**Issues of importance:** What issues matter to residents? How could the neighborhood association address these issues in the future?

- **Bylaws:** Bylaws help determine how often the association will meet; when it will hold elections; voting procedures; and the area that the neighborhood association represents. Draft bylaws are available from the City of Greenville's Neighborhood Liaison/Ombudsman.
- **Executive board:** An executive board— president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer—is the elected leadership of the neighborhood association. The bylaws outline each member's responsibilities and how to elect each member.
- An election for the executive board should be held as soon as possible (within the first few meetings).
- **Dues:** Dues are voluntary, but help offset the costs of social events, projects, and association operations, like printing a newsletter.
- **Means of Communication:** How will your neighbors communicate about upcoming events and celebrate past accomplishments? A quarterly newsletter (either paper or electronic) is a popular way to communicate.
- Other neighborhood associations have a website or use social networking tools, such as Facebook, to keep residents up-to-date.

## 4. SUSTAIN

**Meetings:** Invite speakers to educate residents on topics that relate to the neighborhood or officials to express concerns about neighborhood issues. **Social events**, such as cookouts, holiday open houses, can or coat drives, or a back-to-school block party.

**Beautification activities**, such as landscaping or gardening projects, neighborhood clean-up, or Adopt-a-Street.