

# CITY OF WEST LINN

## PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION STANDARDS

### PREFACE

Historically, the City of West Linn Neighborhood Associations (NA) have relied almost entirely on West Linn Municipal Codes (Sections 2.150, 2.155, 2.170, 2.175) to ascertain City requirements and guidelines pertaining to operating a NA. Upon review of these codes, accompanied by other supporting research, it's been ascertained these codes do not provide clear and complete guidance to the City of West Linn NAs.

For example, a NA recently requested to change their NA name and boundaries. No such process or procedure exists in the current codes on how to approach such a request. Hence, in order to maximize the ability of NAs to accomplish their goals and mission, more robust and comprehensive policies and procedures should be provided to the NAs. This is one of the intentions of this document. Its contents strive to equalize participation in NAs, develop reasonable processes that are currently unavailable, bring unity and conformity to the NA program and strengthen the support NAs receive from the City.

The idea to create a "Standards" document for NAs is not new. Portland's NA program creates precedence for this approach. Instead of incorporating such detail on policies and procedures into their municipal code, Portland simply refers to a stand-alone 'Guidance' document as the requirements NAs are to follow.

The Guidelines for Neighborhood Associations, District Coalition Boards (DCBs), and the Office of Neighborhood Associations outlined in great detail the expected functions of each tier of the system and the procedures for the smooth functioning of this neighborhood program. Shortly after the Guidelines were adopted, City Code Chapter 3.96 was rewritten to reflect program changes. (PORTLAND'S NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS PART I – HISTORY. League of Women Voters of Portland Education Fund October 2005 (Revised December 2006).

<http://www.lwvpdx.org/leagueinfo/NAUpdatePart1.pdf>,

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Additionally, Gresham has developed an administrative document that incorporates NA standards to enhance their municipal codes.

In an effort to provide consistent and useful information to neighborhood associations, the City has developed the *Neighborhood Association Guidebook*. This guidebook offers the best practices of successful neighborhood association programs. We hope that this guidebook provides useful information and answers many of the questions citizen volunteers have when participating in their neighborhood association. As established in City Code the program manager may establish administrative procedures for neighborhood associations. These procedures are in addition to the recognition standards outlined in City Code.

(<http://greshamoregon.gov/city/city-departments/governance-and-management/neighborhood-associations/>)

Thus, a Standards document may be all inclusive, incorporating both requirements (standards) and procedures (administration) and referring back to the municipal code that mandates its use.

This document implements such an approach. Thirty-one sections, covering such issues as meeting management to a boundary change process, provide both policy and administrative procedures by utilizing the words 'shall' and 'may', respectively. A combination of recommendations from the City staff, residents, NA presidents, and other research conducted by Decker Business Consulting have been integrated into this proposed document. And although these Standards attempt to cover all aspects of NA business and needs, some recommendations could be deemed as not a 'good fit' for the City of West Linn, while other ideas that this document omits may be deemed appropriate to include. The primary goal of this document is to provide a starting place to further the City's discussions on improving the effectiveness of the Neighborhood Association Program.