

BECOME A RECOGNIZED NEIGHBORHOOD

What is a Recognized Neighborhood?

A neighborhood organization formally recognized by the City of Des Moines, including City governmental boards, committees, and councils

Why should your neighborhood organization apply for recognition?

Your neighborhood would be:

- Presented with a Certificate of Recognition from the Mayor at a City Council Meeting
- Consulted by the City about issues of concern to residents in your area
- Given the opportunity to apply for Designated Neighborhood Program

How can your neighborhood organization become recognized?

- Complete a Neighborhood Application that asks for:
 - Name of your Neighborhood Organization
 - Neighborhood Boundaries
 - Names, telephone numbers and addresses of your contact people
 - Where and how often your neighborhood group meets
 - Copy of your neighborhood organization's by-laws

Where do you get a Neighborhood Recognition Policy?

Call the Neighborhood Development Division at 283-4182



NEIGHBORHOOD RECOGNITION POLICY

(AMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 3, 2014)

DEFINITIONS

This policy defines neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations that are Recognized by the City of Des Moines for the purposes of:

- 1) Establishing official points of contact for the neighborhood to receive communication and notification from the City and community.
- 2) Delivering various City department services and programs.
- 3) Eligibility for the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

Definition of a Neighborhood - A neighborhood can be defined by, but not limited to, the following: Geographic or man-made boundaries. Its residents share a common link such as a school, public street pattern, parks, architectural styles or time periods, or infrastructure. A neighborhood is typically not a single residential development. Neighborhoods may include businesses, churches, and other community entities.

Definition of a Recognized Neighborhood Organization - A recognized neighborhood organization is a group of people who identify with a common area, who share common goals and concerns, and who meet the standards for neighborhood recognition. Recognized organizations represent the position of the collective neighborhood and provide input to the City Council, Boards and Commissions, and City Staff on issues affecting neighborhoods.

Only one recognized neighborhood organization is allowed in an area. Boundaries for a newly established recognized neighborhood organization will not be allowed to overlap with the boundaries of existing recognized neighborhoods.

STANDARDS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD RECOGNITION

A neighborhood organization must provide the following information to receive official recognition from the City:

- A. Name of the organization;
- B. Neighborhood boundaries;
- C. Names, telephone numbers, and addresses of all officers, designating a primary and secondary contact;
- D. At least one of the following: By-laws, Articles of Incorporation, or 501.(c)(3) status. These documents should include A and B above in addition to:
 - Meetings** - State the location, time, and number of neighborhood meetings held during each year. The minimum standard is four (4) meetings per year with one meeting held to elect and/or appoint officers.
 - Membership** - State the requirements for membership in the organization, including any fees. Membership should be available to all residents, landowners, and business people who represent the social, economic, and ethnic make-up of the neighborhood.

Officers or Positions - List any elected and/or appointed positions, include a brief job description and any requirements for the position(s).

- E. **Open Meeting Policy** - All meetings shall be open to all interested persons and this shall be reflected in the by-laws.

BENEFITS OF NEIGHBORHOOD RECOGNITION

This Policy forms a direct link between neighborhood organizations and the City. Recognized organizations provide additional input on issues affecting neighborhoods to City boards, committees, and councils. Whenever an ordinance or policy requires the City to notify property owners, the City will attempt to provide notice to any recognized neighborhood organizations that are affected.

Recognized neighborhood organizations receive the following benefits, including but not limited to:

- Receives an official certificate of recognition from the Mayor and City Council, as well as annual recertification to maintain recognition status.
- Priority by City Leaders and Staff for attending regularly scheduled neighborhood meetings. For ad hoc meetings or special events, recognized neighborhoods will also receive priority by City Leaders and Staff over non-recognized neighborhoods or groups.
- Provide input on new and existing City programs and services on behalf of the collective neighborhood.
- Priority given for use of City Facilities according to department policies and City Code.
- Receive official communication and notification from City departments on a variety of programs, services, and development activities that directly impact the neighborhood(s).
- Opportunity to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, such as but not limited to Spring Cleaning to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB), Neighborhood Based Service Delivery (NBSD), Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program (NIRP), Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) lending, and other neighborhood planning services.

CAPACITY OF A RECOGNIZED NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION

Recognized neighborhoods must establish and maintain the capacity to represent the views of the neighborhood. Recognized neighborhoods must meet the minimum standards for meetings annually. Additionally, recognized neighborhoods must conduct ongoing outreach to all residents twice a year. This outreach can include newspaper announcements, public service announcements, mailings, and meeting notices posted in conspicuous places. Recognized neighborhoods must also maintain regular communication with members of the organization. Neighborhood meetings must be open to anyone who is interested in attending.

MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

Organizations charging membership dues must describe voting requirements in their by-laws. It is encouraged that voting be as inclusive as possible.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD RECOGNITION

Neighborhood organizations that meet the above standards can complete a Neighborhood Recognition Application. The Neighborhood Revitalization Board (NRB) will review the application and forward its recommendation to City Council. City Council then makes the final decision on recognition. Once formally recognized, the Mayor will present the neighborhood with a Certificate of Recognition.

1. Neighborhood boundaries;
2. Names and telephone numbers of the neighborhood's contact persons;
3. A statement encouraging all residents, landowners, and business people within the neighborhood to participate in meetings, and other activities providing input to the City.

SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL SURVEY

The Neighborhood Development Division will request that all recognized neighborhoods submit the following information:

1. Any changes in neighborhood boundaries;
2. Names, telephone numbers, and addresses of contact persons and officers elected and/or appointed at the annual election;
3. Dates of neighborhood meetings held during the previous calendar year;
4. Any changes to the approved by-laws;
5. Completion of the annual neighborhood survey form provided by the City;
6. Minutes from the organization's annual meeting or one regular meeting.

In 2011, the NRB established the following process for distributing and receiving the annual survey.

- March 1 Annual Survey distributed to all Recognized Neighborhoods
- March 30 Surveys due
- April 1 Remaining neighborhoods sent warning letter and given until April 30 to come into compliance
- April 30 Final notice letter sent to all listed neighborhood association officers with a due date of May 15th
- June NRB Vote to de-Recognize any neighborhood that has not responded to the Annual Survey
- June Council De-recognition of any Recognized Neighborhood that has not met the requirements of the Annual Survey or Neighborhood Recognition Policy
- July 1 Recertification of all neighborhoods that are found to be in compliance with the Annual Survey and Neighborhood Recognition Policy

The requested information will update the listing of recognized neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Development Division provides this information on the City of Des Moines website for use by City departments and the public.

If any neighborhood organization's update is significantly different from the neighborhood's original information, the NRB and the City Council will receive the changes for their review, comment, and re-evaluation of recognition status.

ANNUAL RECOGNIZED NEIGHBORHOOD RECERTIFICATION

The City of Des Moines will issue a letter of recertification to all recognized neighborhoods that are found to be in compliance with the Annual Survey and Neighborhood Recognition Policy. This will be done on or around July 1 each year. This recertification will show that the neighborhood is in good standing and will continue to maintain Recognized status for the next year.

LOSS OF NEIGHBORHOOD RECOGNITION

If the recognized neighborhood organization does not return the annual neighborhood survey, the Neighborhood Development Division will advise the NRB and City Council that the recognized neighborhood is not in compliance with the Neighborhood Recognition Policy and recommend that the NRB and City Council no longer formally recognize the neighborhood. The loss of neighborhood recognition or “de-recognition” requires approval by resolution of the City Council. This action does not prevent the neighborhood organization from reapplying in the future to again become recognized. To reapply, the neighborhood organization would have to submit a completed application and go through the necessary approval process.



Neighborhood Recognition Application

Complete the following application to become an officially recognized neighborhood by the City of Des Moines

Name of your neighborhood organization:

List your organization’s contacts. Please identify your primary and alternate contact persons.

Name	Title	Address	Phone	Email

Provide information on your organization’s public meetings:

Location	Day of Month	Time	How often you meet

Your boundaries (include which side of the street):

North:

South:

East:

West:

Detailed map of your neighborhood’s boundaries (call the Neighborhood Development Division at 283-4182 and ask for a print out of your area, verify our maps are correct and use it to highlight your boundaries.

Copy of your organization’s proposed or approved by-laws (see sample attached).

Mail to: City of Des Moines - Neighborhood Development Division
602 Robert D. Ray Drive
Des Moines, IA 50309

Once your completed application is received, your organization will be contacted by City staff.

Example Bylaws
Amended August 24, 2015

Article 1. Name

The name of the association shall be _____.

Article 2. Purpose

The purpose of the association is to enhance quality of life and value in _____.

Article 3. Boundaries

The boundaries of this association are; _____ on the north from _____ to _____, _____ on the south from _____ to _____, on the east from _____ to _____, and on the west from _____ to _____. These boundaries are indicated on a map attached to these bylaws.

Article 4. Membership and Voting

Section 1 – Membership in the association is open to all persons over the age of 18 who are residents or property owners, or who own or operate businesses or other organizations located within the boundaries of the association.

Section 2 – Any person who is eligible for membership in the association may become a member upon completing a form indicating the person’s desire to become a member of the association and satisfying any additional membership requirements as established by the neighborhood association. Each member of the association shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members; provided however, that business and other eligible organizations may have only one voting membership.

Section 3 – Voting Requirements. Votes shall be carried by a majority of members present and voting unless otherwise required by law. Members must be present to vote.

Article 5. Association Meetings

Section 1 – Annual Meeting. An annual meeting shall be held during the month of _____ in each year, with the exact date, time and place to be established by the Board of Directors, for the purpose of electing officers, collecting dues, and transacting other such business as may be necessary.

Section 2 –Regular meetings shall be held on (date & time) at (location). (See Article 6, Section 4)

Section 3 – Place of Meetings. The Board of Directors may designate any place within Des Moines, Iowa as the place of meeting for any annual, quarterly, or special meeting.

Section 4 – Notice of Meetings. Notice of each meeting shall be provided at least ___ days before the meeting. Notification will consist of the following methods _____. (i.e. mail, email, website, newspaper, Facebook, etc.)

Section 5 – Minutes. Minutes of Board meetings shall be available to members at all meetings and upon request can be provided to City and/or County staff. Copies of the minutes of the most recent meeting shall be available at the next meeting.

Section 6 – Open Meetings. All meetings shall be open to the public.

Section 7 – A financial report shall be available to all persons present at regular meetings, as well as the annual meeting.

Article 6. Board of Directors

Section 1 – There will be a Board of Directors which shall exercise all powers vested in it by the general membership. Those powers include the following...

Section 2 – The Board of Directors shall consist of _____ members, including the officers of the association, elected by the members. Directors shall initially be elected for staggered terms of __, __ and __ years. The Directors first elected to serve as officers shall fill __ year Board terms, the remaining __ Directors shall be selected by ballot. Subsequent Directors shall be elected for __ year terms.

Section 3 – The officers of the Board of Directors shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Members-At-Large. The Board shall include __Members-At-Large. Officers shall serve __ year terms and may be re-elected by the membership to serve up to _____ consecutive terms in that position. After an interim of __ years, former officers may again be elected to that particular office.

Section 4 – The Board of Directors shall meet no less than four times a year, one of which shall be the annual meeting. The Board shall schedule at the annual meeting the meeting dates for the forthcoming year. These meetings will be held preferably three weeks in advance of the regularly scheduled quarterly association meetings. In addition, special meetings of the Board may be called by the President and must be called by the President at the request of at least three Board members. The purpose of each meeting shall be stated in the notice to Board members in advance of the meeting.

Section 5 – Quorum. A quorum shall consist of 50% of the Board plus one (1) Board member. An affirmative vote of the majority of all Board members present and voting shall be required for approval of any action.

Section 6 – Members of the Board of Directors are expected to attend all Board and association meetings. Missing three consecutive meetings shall be construed as resignation from the Board. If extenuating circumstances arise that lead to three or more missed meetings, the Board absent member

may seek Board approval to have the absence be excused. If Board membership is terminated, it may only be reinstated by a majority of the general membership.

Article 7. Duties of the Officers

Section 1 – President. The President shall preside at all Association and Board of Directors meetings. The President shall present a progress report to the membership during the annual meeting. The President or the President’s designee shall be the Association’s representative on issues before the Des Moines City Council, any city board or commission, the media or a public forum.

Section 2 – Vice President. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President and other duties as assigned by the President or as determined by the Board.

Section 3 – Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and the Association. The Secretary shall be the custodian of all records of the Association, shall maintain an accurate list of members and shall provide notice of meetings to members and Directors. The Secretary shall be responsible for making copies of the minutes available to the members.

Section 4 – Treasurer. The Treasurer shall oversee and keep an itemized report of all funds received and spent on behalf of the Association. As funds accumulate, the Treasurer shall pay all obligations as authorized by the Board and shall make a regular report to the Board and the association. The Treasurer shall prepare and distribute a financial report for all meetings as well as an annual financial report and budget to be received at the annual meeting.

Section 5 – Members-At-Large. Members-At-Large shall serve as full voting members on the Board of Directors and such other duties as may be assigned by the Board or President of the Board.

Article 8. Committees

Section 1 – The President with the approval of the Board may establish committees as necessary for the purposes of the Association. The President with the approval of the Board shall appoint members to the committees.

Section 2 – All committees shall report to the President and the Board of Directors.

Article 9. Elections

Section 1 – The association’s original steering committee shall serve as the first nominating committee. Thereafter a nominating committee composed of not more than ____ members shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors.

Section 2 – The nominating committee shall secure consent of its nominees to serve before the election.

Section 3 – The chair of the nominating committee shall present a slate of nominees for all Board positions to be filled on an annual basis. The slate of nominees shall be provided to the membership with notice of the annual meeting. Additional nominations may be requested and submitted from those in attendance at the meeting.

Section 4 – The nominating committee shall submit a slate of nominations to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors that may occur between regular elections.

Section 5 – Regular elections shall take place at the annual meeting. The Board shall fill vacancies that may occur between regular elections, and additional nominations may be submitted from those in attendance at the next membership meeting.

Section 6 – Officers and other members of the Board of Directors shall assume their duties immediately following their election and shall serve until their successors are elected and take office. OR new incoming board members shall assume their duties at the next meeting of the association.

Article 10. Finances

Section 1 – Dues. Annual dues shall be established by the Board of Directors with the approval of the membership.

Section 2 – Treasurer’s Report and Budget. The Treasurer shall prepare an annual report and budget to be received at the annual meeting. The Treasurer shall also provide a report to be presented at all association and Board meeting.

Section 3 – Records. The financial records of the Association shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors on an annual basis. The financial records shall also be made available to the general membership at the annual meeting. The Board of Directors shall form an audit committee to review financial records annually. The Treasurer shall provide any and all Association financial records to the Board, as well as City and/or County staff upon request.

Section 4 - Financial safeguards should be considered to protect association finances. Associations should consider having more than one board member signoff or approve expenses, particularly those that are a higher dollar amount.

Article 11. Approval and Amendment of Bylaws

Section 1 – These bylaws, upon being presented to the membership shall become effective upon approval of a majority vote of the members voting.

Section 2 – Proposed amendments to the bylaws shall be provided to the membership at least ten days prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be considered. Any amendment of the bylaws shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present and voting at association meetings.

Section 3 – Amended By-laws will be dated and copies will be made available to the membership. *A copy of the amended by-laws will be sent along with the annual neighborhood survey to the City of Des Moines Community Development Department to have on file.*