

FARGO NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION 2025



WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION? AND WHY START ONE?

A neighborhood association is a group of homeowners, renters, representatives from neighborhood businesses, churches and schools who meet regularly (twice a year, every quarter, monthly) to accomplish goals by improving conditions in their neighborhood.

Neighborhood associations can identify challenges and problems in the neighborhood, support change and improvement efforts, help resolve conflicts, provide volunteers for community projects, and find and get resources to make the neighborhood a better place to live. Neighborhood associations can speak – with authority in representing a neighborhood – to local government and elected officials.

Members decide what goals to pursue, which may include:

- helping neighbors get to know each other by holding social events.
- making physical improvements such as installing traffic control and community signs.
- holding regular neighborhood clean-ups.
- · forming a Block Watch to reduce crime.
- organizing to share opinions with representatives of government.
- organizing to make a neighborhood a better place to live, work and play.

When neighborhood associations have broad participation, there can be a sustaining mechanism to work for the betterment of the neighborhood.



HOW TO START A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION:

- Identify neighborhood boundaries via City of Fargo website: https://fargond.gov/live/know-your-neighborhood
- Organize a core group of leaders of 5-10 people (you may recruit these leaders by knowing people in the neighborhood or by knocking on doors and explaining what you're trying to accomplish)
- Schedule an initial meeting of the core group at someone's home, at a school or church
- · Identify initial neighborhood concerns, issues and needs
- It may be helpful to speak with the City of Fargo Planning Department regarding the Core Neighborhood Plan. There were a number of issues identified through that process by neighborhood residents.
- · Plan for the first stakeholder meeting
- If there are common concerns identified (take only 1-2 to start with), encourage stakeholders to join the effort perhaps through committees
- Do a neighborhood survey (there's an example in the appendix, but it doesn't need to be that detailed – do what works in your neighborhood) or do a neighborhood walkthrough with a group of neighbors
- · Contact ALL (or as many as possible) of your neighbors to get the word out
- The City of Fargo Planning Dept can assist by getting you a mailing list of all property owners (phone number 701-241-1474)
- · Host a kick-off meeting and Continue with regular meeting determined by need

It isn't initially necessary to have formal bylaws, but you should consider developing those as the association grows. It helps to have a mission statement, officer elections, and rules for the group to abide by. Sample bylaws are included in the appendix.

In addition, the Fargo Neighborhood Coalition FNC) exists to provide support and encouragement. The group which exists of representatives from each neighborhood provides an opportunity to network with other neighborhood association leaders and learn from each other. To contact that group, the FNC email is ______

General membership (stakeholders) meetings should occur on a regular basis (biannually, quarterly, monthly) in a location that is centrally located if possible. The meeting needs to be managed well so as to not discourage people from attending. That means having an agenda, starting on time, managing the discussion so one person doesn't dominate and ensuring people's opinions are respected. Minutes should always be taken (could be a rotating role).

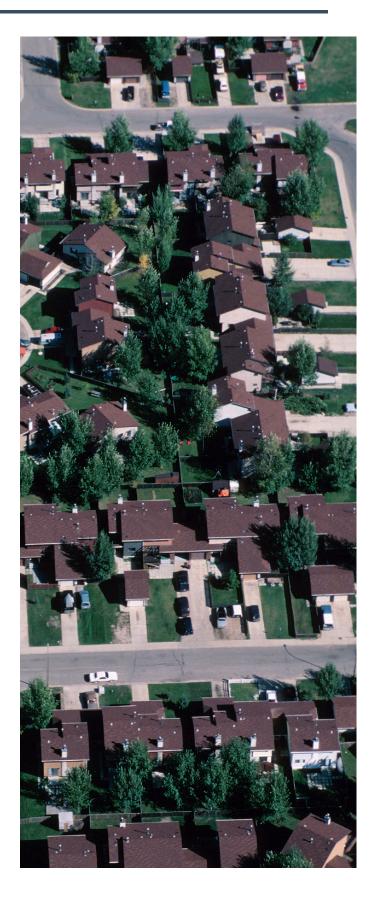
Building an organization like this takes time. It's important to be patient, identify priorities and build on them as you can. Set realistic goals, recognizing this is a volunteer organization. Start small and build up from there.

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POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Once you have surveyed your neighborhood — either by a written survey or a neighborhood walkthrough — construct a list of possible needs. Discuss them in some detail to fully understand the issues. Identify which are priorities and sort into long-term vs. short-term and start discussion regarding projects to address each issue. It's important to have a list of possible projects/issues to address so that the group doesn't get focused on one issue/project and when that's done, they drop off.

Focus on specific projects which will demonstrate action and results that will be visible in your neighborhood. That will attract people to get involved. It establishes your credibility and makes it worthwhile for people's participation.



PROJECT IDEAS:

- · Neighborhood clean-up
- Community garden, tree planting, flower planting
- · Back-to-school party
- · School supply drive
- · Mural or other neighborhood art project
- · Neighborhood scrapbook or video
- · Crime watch program
- · Block party
- · Neighborhood entrance signs
- Security lighting
- · Tool lending libraries
- Tutoring program for youth
- · Home tours
- Neighborhood cookout, picnic or potluck
- · National night out celebration
- Holiday celebration
- · Neighborhood T-shirts
- · Yard of the month award
- Neighborhood newsletter, web site, directory, email tree
- · Paint up/fix up projects
- Paint swap

- Speakers on topics of interest to neighborhood
- Representative to attend city commission, school board, or planning commission meetings
- Philanthropic projects, such as "adopting" a family needing help with holiday dinner etc.
- Designate block captains to welcome new residents





COMMUNICATION

Membership is built through consistent communication. A neighborhood walk-through gains attention and is a great way to get people interested. Organize a group of 4-6 people to cover a specific region of the neighborhood. That can occur by assigning pairs to go door-to-door, introducing the association and its goals and inviting people to the meetings.

Holding neighborhood gatherings, sponsoring a booth at an event and handing out information packets are ways to get the word out. Building a membership list over time, with email addresses and phone numbers, allows you to communicate regularly and easily when a topic/issue/event needs to get out.

The Forum will usually include an announcement of neighborhood events. All they require is a notice and contact person.

Eventually, building a website and having a presence on social media will assist in garnering interest from your neighbors.

Surveys are a key way to bring new people into your neighborhood association. It's good to use a survey when you are just getting started. <u>Sample questions:</u>

- What are the most important issues for you in the neighborhood?
- What issue(s) would you be willing to work on?
- What are the best times for meeting times and locations?
- · What is the age, racial and economic makeup of the neighborhood?



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A monthly or quarterly newsletters can be an effective way to communicate with your neighbors. Examples of short articles that are good to consider:

- Notices for important meeting dates and locations as well as your group events
- · Information about city services
- · Accomplishment of the neighborhood association
- · Notification of special events
- · Recognition of volunteers
- · Information about schools in the neighborhood
- Profiles of neighbors
- Crime/safety information
- · Graduation announcements
- Anniversaries
- · A welcome to new neighbors
- Articles of community interest
- Distribution is most easy by email, when you have a comprehensive list of email addresses. Consider using Boy/Girl Scouts for distribution. Appointing volunteer block captains is an option for distribution.



LEADERSHIP

Running Meetings:

The way meetings are run will affect how members become involved and stay involved. If meetings rarely start on time, are disorganized, or when one person dominates, people will get frustrated and not return. It's so important to be prepared and make everyone feel welcome and part of the group.

The best setup is to have a circle of chairs. Initially, meetings can be in someone's living room. Later, when your group grows, perhaps a church or school has a meeting room you can use.

Every meeting must have an agenda and a purpose for meeting - identifying issues to work on, establishing priorities, planning a project, etc. Assign time limits for agenda items to allow getting through the agenda and limiting the length of the meeting. Keep it under 90 minutes but an hour is a good goal to shoot form.

Have someone take minutes – you may want to ask for a rotating volunteer at each meeting or ask someone to serve as secretary of the organization.

When a point is being discussed too long, summarize it and conclude or suggest tabling it for a later time. If two members are getting into a heated discussion, summarize each person's points and move on. Don't allow one person to dominate — you may need to interrupt and re-direct. If the group is getting off the agenda subject, remind them of the topic and bring the discussion back to it. If someone isn't clear with their statements, reflect back to them what you heard — asking for clarification.

Be realistic about attendance. Initially, you may not need large attendance. Concentrate on how to get more people engaged and attending — don't focus on poor attendance. Consider a person or committee accountable for membership.

A meeting should end with a plan of action — what is the next step to be taken. Summarize what's been said and decided. Set the next meeting date/time and place.

Make the meetings fun – allow for people to visit after the meeting. Food is always a good way to get people to mingle.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS:

Most of all, enthusiasm is important. Show excitement about possibilities with your neighborhood association. Include people in preparing for meetings. Start off with small tasks. Explain your request concisely and clearly. Provide support and guidance for completing a task. Watch for people's interest in particular issues or tasks, etc.. Try to recruit them to a task that fits those interests.

Keeping volunteers is just as important as recruiting them. That will happen if you have clear goals for the organization and for the volunteer activities. Recognize volunteers – whether the task they completed is large or small.



FINANCING/FUNDRAISING

Consider membership fees to support the organization. Other options include donations and grants. Consider things such as garage sales, open houses, progressive dinners or other similar activities to raise money. If your association decides to publish newsletters, sell advertising. "Passing the hat" at meetings may bring in some money. Local merchants may be willing to give small donations.

In order to accept tax-deductible donations or grants, you must be awarded 501c3 status by the IRS. If you have determined to apply for 501c3 status, you must register with the ND Secretary of State. Their website has information on how to do that https://www.sos.nd.gov/business/nonprofit-services/register-nonprofit/north-dakota-nonprofit

A resource guide is available through the ND SOS to assist you in registering your neighborhood association (https://www.sos.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/business/nonprofit-guide.pdf). You will need to develop a purpose statement and have a description of anticipated activities.

Starting a nonprofit does not make you a charitable organization, which is a designation by the Internal Revenue Service. People can make donations to a charitable organization (501c3) and claim those donations as deductions on their personal income filings. Obtaining the status of a charitable organization through the IRS is a bit more involved https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/application-process. The advantage for having that status facilitates higher level of fundraising and obtaining grants for your activities. However, there is annual IRS reporting requirements. The Fargo Neighborhood Coalition is a 501c3 and can provide guidance to individual associations and may serve as the sponsor for fundraising or grant applications.

Opening a bank account may be necessary. The first step is to obtain a Employer Identification Number from the IRS. It's very simple, fast and online (https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number). It's important to ensure the tracking of all money going in and coming out of the account. You need to designate a treasurer who gives regular reports to the leadership/executive committee.

RESOURCES

An online google search will provide a number of examples of neighborhood bylaws. Included in Appendix are a Sample neighborhood survey, sample agenda and minutes and A sample Neighborhood Action Plan.

Your group may want to closely follow issues which directly affect your neighborhood. The following websites provide information on meeting schedules.

City of Fargo:

Fargo City Commission - https://www.fargond.gov/citygovernment/departments/city-commission/meeting-schedule includes agendas, minutes and video of past meetings

Fargo Planning Commission - https://www.fargond.gov/city-government/boards-commissions/planning-commission includes agendas, minutes and video of past meetings

Fargo Historic Preservation Commission - https://www.fargond.gov/city-government/boards-commissions/historic-preservation-commission

There are numerous other Boards/Commissions which you can access here: https://www.fargond.gov/city-government/boards-commissions

Fargo Park District:

To access Park Board meeting information - https://www.fargoparks.com/

Fargo Board of Education:

To access School District Board meeting information - https://www.fargo.k12.nd.us/school-board/overview
To view the Long Range Facility Plan -

https://www.fargo.k12.nd.us/departments/facilities/long-range-facility-plan

HAPPY ORGANIZING!!!

NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

Survey Property Address We are conducting a survey of residents to find out ways to improve this neighborhood. You can help us help the whole neighborhood by spending 5 minutes answering a few questions. All of your answers are completely confidential!		
What do you feel your neighborhood boundaries are?		
What are some of the assets of your neighborhood Community character and atmosphere Community events/activities Church communities Cultural opportunities Cost of living Employment opportunities High-quality building standards Low crime Parks, open space, and sidewalks Property maintenance What do you like MOST about living in your neighborhood What do you like LEAST about living in your neighborhood What do you like LEAST about living in your neighborhood Community character and atmosphere Community character and atmosphere Community events/activities Cultural opportunities Loud crime Parks, open space, and sidewalks Property maintenance	Proximity to shopping Access to schools Transit options Quiet / Peaceful Traffic Variety of housing types Public services (Police and Fire) Low or moderate taxes Activities for all age group	

NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

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Which of these statements best describes h	ow you feel about living in your neighborhood?	
l'm happy here and will probably stay f	or the next 5 years	
l'm unhappy here but will probably star	y for the next 5 years	
l'm unhappy here and will probably mo	ove in the next 5 years	
l'm happy here but have to move withi	n the next 5 years	
Do you know most of your neighbors?	Yes No	
In some neighborhoods, people do things to go their own way. What kind is your neighb	ogether and help each other. In other neighborhoods, people mostly orhood?	
One where people help each other	One where people go their own way	
Do you feel that your neighborhood is safe a	and crime free? Yes No	
In the area within a few blocks or streets of	your home, how safe do you feel alone on the streets?	
During the day:	Mostly safe Somewhat safe Not at all safe	
During the night:	Mostly safe	
Listen to the following problems some neighborhoods face and consider how they apply to this neighborhood. For each issue, please rate it on a scale from 0 to 5. (0 indicating it is not a problem in this neighborhood and 5 indicating it is a big problem in this neighborhood)		
0 1 2 3 4 5	Crime, drug or violence	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Unemployment	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Public schools not providing a quality education	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Cultural activities	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Recreational activities	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Affordable, quality child care	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Abandoned or run-down buildings	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Unsupervised children and teenagers	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Loose dogs and/or cats	
0 1 2 3 4 5	People do not get involved in efforts to improve the community	
□ 0 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5	Affordable housing	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Property Maintenance	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Lack of good places to shop for food and other items	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Noise	
0 1 2 3 4 5	Traffic/Speed	
	Other:	

NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

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What suggestion(s) do you have to make your neighborhood a safer and better place to live?		
Are there specific areas in your neighborhood that need to be cleaned up or repaired?		
Other Comments:		
We are wondering if there are people in the neighborhood interested in forming a group or association that would meet on a regular basis to discuss topics that affect the neighborhood.		
Are you interested in learning more about the neighborhood group?		
Name:		
Address		
Phone:		
Email:		
Preferred Communication: Phone Email		
Survey Volunteer's Name:Date:		

AGENDAS

All meetings should have an agenda to list the activities at the meeting. Here is a typical agenda:

- Call to order The Chairperson calls the meeting to order and makes brief opening remarks.
- Approval of minutes Members approve the minutes of the last meeting.
- Neighborhood success stories Invite members to share their successes since the last meeting.
 Recognizing even small successes encourages people to remain involved in the organization.
- 4. **Reports of officers** The Treasurer and other officers deliver the organization's business reports. No motion is needed for adoption of the reports. After each report, the chair asks, "Are there any questions or observations?" If not, the reports are filed.
- 5. **Reports of committees** Committee chairs give their reports. After each report, the Chairperson asks, "Are there any questions or discussion in regard to this committee report?" If not, then each report is filed.
- Committee recommendations for action Motions may be made and seconded by any member present.
 Each motion is discussed and disposed of before another motion is proposed. One way to keep a meeting moving forward is to limit time spent in debate.
- Recognition of guests Guests are invited to make their presentations to the organization.
- 8. Old and new business Old business from the last meeting is brought to the floor for action. The Chairperson asks, "Is there any old business?" After discussion and action, the Chairperson asks, "Is there any new business to discuss? Then new business is discussed.
- Open Forum Members in good standing are free to speak on any matter of interest to the community. Members must observe rules of decorum and not disrupt the meeting. Each person will have three minutes to speak. If they are in the middle of a sentence when time is called, they may finish their thought before sitting down. The time guidelines ensure that others will have an opportunity to speak. Speakers may not allot their time to someone else.
- 10. **Announcements** People making announcements should sit up front. The Chairperson asks "Are there any announcements?"
- Adjournment When the meeting's business is complete, the Chairperson recognizes a member who
 makes a motion for adjournment. Another member seconds the motion. A majority vote is required to
 adjourn.

Preparing an Agenda

- Strive to get agenda ready 5-10 days in advance. This could also serve as a reminder to the group about the upcoming meeting.
- The agenda should be as short and concise as possible.
- Identify and list each item on the agenda. Include who is responsible for the presentation and what kind
 of action is needed (when appropriate).
- Try to keep your meetings to ninety (90) minutes or less.

SAMPLE MINUTES

MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION June 6, 2014 Summary of Meeting

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

Motion to approve minutes made by Doug Evans and seconded by Elizabeth Jones. Motion passed unanimously.

Success Stories

Elizabeth Sutton announced that the City has granted a permit to place a new sign at the entrance to Midtown.

Roger Maples reported that a group of neighbors built a ramp for Louisa Smith, who is 86 and uses a wheelchair.

Janet and Jimmy Carr spent the weekend clearing trash from the vacant lot owned by an estate at the corner of Ash and Maple streets. The lot looks great!

Reports of Officers

Treasurer: The Association added \$165.34 to group's general fund from the sale of T-shirts at the last community festival.

Reports of Committees

Membership: Alexander Smith said that three new residents were contacted and asked to join the Association. So far one has joined, and this committee will contact the others.

Housing/Environment: Ms. Jones said the committee has contacted the City about the erosion on Golden Drive at South Creek. She also reported to the City Inspections Department about the building materials that have been left for many days on the side of Forest Drive.

Block Captains: Mr. Evans noted that several block captains from the Mills Street area attended the Community Watch seminar last month, and they are distributing information to their blocks.

Recognition of Guests

Council member Ryan Teague said the City Council is considering a bond issue for storm water facilities. The bond issue would finance water containment systems to prevent downstream pollution. He also received a list of concerns from citizens.

Old Business

Festival: Everyone is invited to the neighborhood festival at Herald Square on Saturday, Aug. 1, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. There will be free hot dogs and the fixings plus ice cream.

Trees: Five trees have been donated for planting along our streets. Please talk to John West at 555-4654 to volunteer to help with this committee.

Crime: Mr. Weaver said there have been reports of car break-ins at Glenview Shopping Center. He said the police advise you to hide your cell phones and any accessories in your car. He noted that daytime burglaries are a continuing problem in certain areas, and he reminded everyone to keep their windows and doors locked. He said a resident reported that a man in a dark blue construction truck was asking people if he could use their phone for directions. One resident did the right thing and said that she would get the cordless phone and bring it out to the man. The person then left, saying that he could not remember the number. Be on the alert!

New Business

Elections:

Nominations for the officers were as follows: President - Gene Williams and George Thompson

Vice President - Maria Elliot and Floyd Sutter

Treasurer - Brenda Adams, Debbie Davis and Anne Bradshaw Secretary - Terry Flowers, Jean Evans and Janice Young

Elections followed the nominations, and the new officers are: President - Gene Williams

Vice President - Maria Elliot

Treasurer - Debbie Davis

Secretary - Jean Evans

Open Forum

Lori White stated that she would like to see the Association work on getting all the resident's to keep the areas clearly visible from neighboring properties and the street free of clutter and junk, including carports.

Announcements

Gene Williams, the Association's new president, announced that Mayor Caroline Alston will take a walking tour of the neighborhood on Monday. If you would like to join the mayor on the walk, meet at a.m. at Washington Heights Park.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by George Thompson and seconded by Debbie Davis. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Nash Park Neighborhood Action Plan

Problem	Rising burglary rate and overall crime
Committee and goal	Crime Prevention Committee. Goal: reduce burglary rate and overall crime.
Resources and Strategies	Resources: Police Department, COMPASS Project and Milwaukee Police Department websites. Strategies: 1. Work to encourage the installation of motion sensor lights and timers. 2. Form Block Watch groups for every block. Have them operating within three months. 3. Have at least two residents from each block attend Police Department Block Watch captain's meetings and report back to the group. 4. Ensure residents have proper numbers to call to report crimes and encourage them to report all crimes and suspicious activities. 5. Monitor COMPASS and the Police Department's web site for crime updates. (www.milwaukee.gov/compass) 6. Work with other neighborhood groups on National Night Out events.
Problem	Need to reduce blight and graffiti
Committee and goal	Neighborhood Beautification Committee. Goal: improve appearance of neighborhood properties and public areas.
Resources and Strategies	Resources: Neighbors willing to help with clean up. Strategies: 1. Report all instances of graffiti promptly to city's Anti-graffiti hotline. 2. Obtain and disseminate information to homeowners on where to contact the city for special pick-ups, etc. 3. Hold a neighborhood clean-up within six months. 4. Identify problem properties and correspond with the owners. Set up neighborhood volunteers to provide assistance to those needing help. Work with DNS for those not rectifying problems. 5. Initiate an "Adopt a Block" Program.
Problem	Traffic problems near German Immersion School
Committee and goal	Traffic Committee. Goal: make intersections near German Immersion School safer
Resources and Strategies	Resources: Local Alderman; City Department of Public Works -traffic engineer; Milwaukee Police Department, Safety Commissioner. Strategies: 1. Discuss with local Alderman concerns over speeding traffic on 82nd Street. 2. Have city traffic engineer study traffic and speeds near school. 3. Explore possibility of flashing school walk lights being installed. 4. Work with Safety Commission to obtain traffic "speed board" to be placed in area.