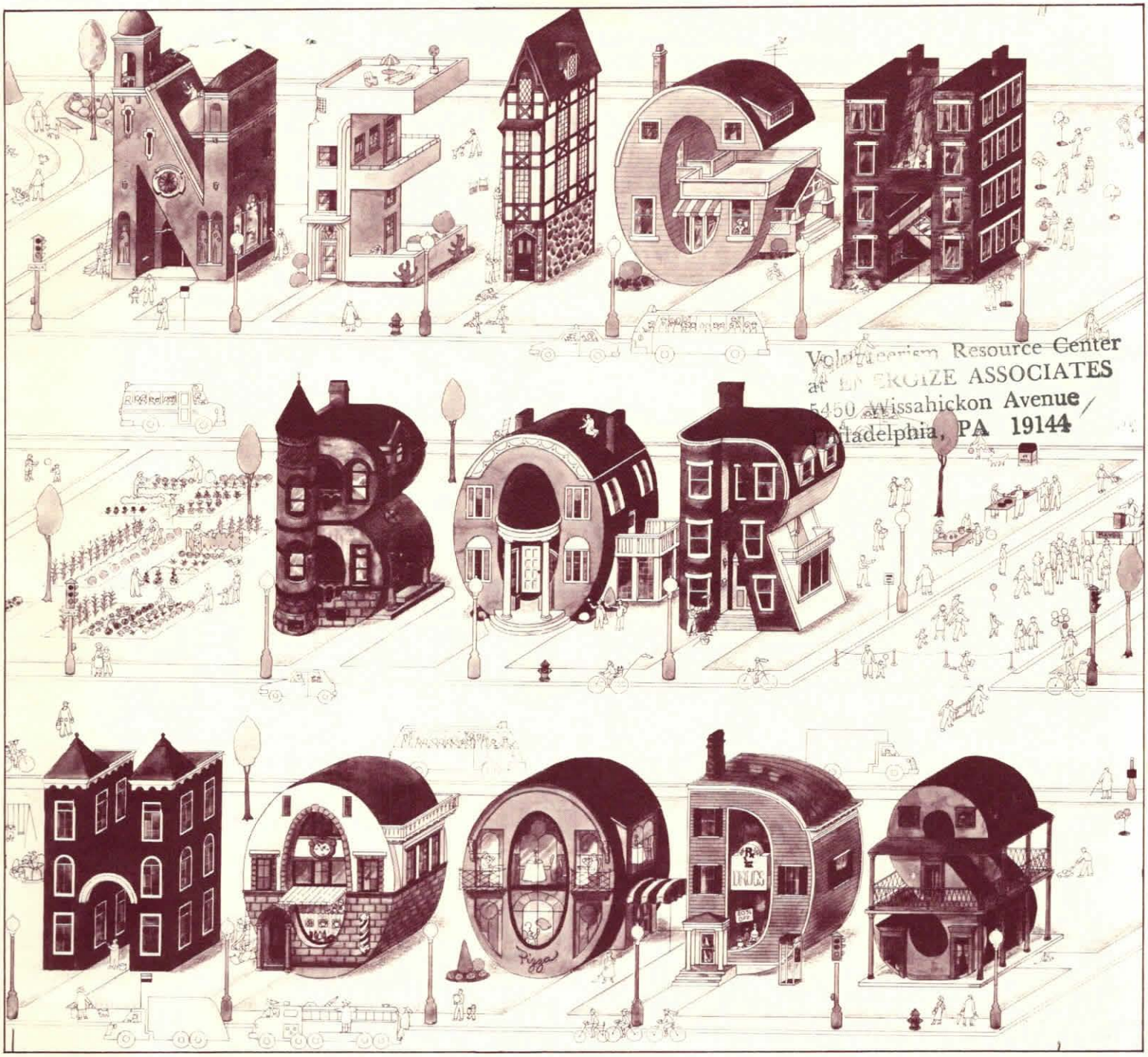


ORGANIZING GUIDE

Ideas for Bringing Your Neighborhood Together

Conserve Neighborhoods Special Issue *September-October, 1981*

Contents

Credits

The "Organizing Guide" was written by Henry McCartney and Maureen Ferris Pepson with research provided by Nancy Harper. The issue was designed by Barbara Leckie, illustrated by Nancy Van Meter, edited by Caroline Taylor and typed by Bob Williams. Special assistance provided by Sharon Reynolds, Mark Weinheimer, Carol Scates and participants of CN Short Course in Tucson.

The front cover is taken from the Preservation Week 1981 poster, "Conservation: Keeping America's Neighborhoods Together."

Why Neighborhoods Must Organize

Neighborhoods are an important part of our society. Most Americans live and raise their children in a neighborhood, or they work or own a business in one. Many people have an economic and emotional investment in a neighborhood and are greatly concerned about its welfare. Unfortunately, the very system of numerous owners and interests often works against a neighborhood despite well-intended individual efforts. Unless it is organized, a neighborhood is incapable of looking after its interests and dealing with basic American political and economic institutions.

Property values represented in neighborhoods are huge. A medium-size neighborhood can easily have a total assessed property value of more than $100 million. That exceeds the value of large companies found in many cities. Imagine, if possible, the stockholders of a company refusing to let their management deal with the government commissions and agencies that regulate its industry. Obviously, this would be intolerable, yet this very handicap is placed on unorganized neighborhoods. Residents can occasionally complain about inadequate city services or zoning practices, but no one individual has the means or legitimate right to represent a neighborhood or build a relationship with city hall.

The way most city governments are structured further compounds this problem. City departments are typically organized along functional lines, like parks and recreation, streets and highways, sanitation, housing, health and welfare. Such divisions may be the most efficient way to run citywide programs, but they also insure that each department has only a limited concern for any one neighborhood. Although all city services come together at the neighborhood level, no single department is responsible for coordinating the disparate services or overseeing the neighborhood's welfare. As a result, city services sometimes contradict rather than complement each other and bewilder residents.

By banding together, residents can overcome these handicaps. No neighborhood can match the lobbying budget of a major company, but a neighborhood organization can make positive use of the many residents concentrated within its borders--usually one political jurisdiction--to establish a political voice for the neighborhood and develop working relationships with city departments and agencies. Working at the grass-roots level, a neighborhood group can tailor

self-help projects to meet many local needs and muster volunteer support to carry them out.

The people most important for the neighborhood's future are the people who live and work there. By working as a team, homeowners, tenants and business people can reinforce each other's confidence in the neighborhood. Even a small neighborhood group can have a strong impact as its presence often spurs residents to initiate individual improvement efforts in their homes and on their streets.

Similarly, by working together residents can improve the image of their neighborhoods. Often older neighborhoods, despite many assets and positive features, can be easily overlooked or downplayed by lenders, real estate agents, potential home buyers and, worse, even by the residents themselves. The various owners and interests work against the neighborhood because no one individual has the economic incentive to promote a neighborhood. In contrast, in developing areas, a builder or developer has a direct and large economic incentive to promote a new subdivision. As a result, the public is constantly being bombarded by full-page ads, commercials and billboards that sing the praises of new development.

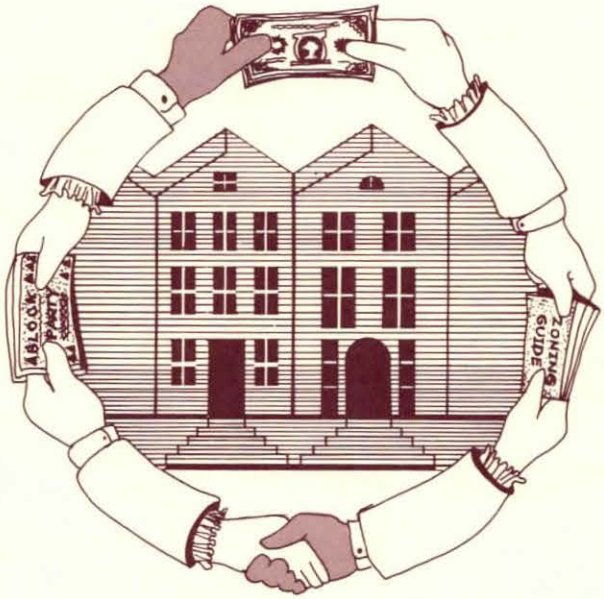
Fortunately, a neighborhood organization can generate positive publicity about its neighborhood and itself through meetings, work days, community events and similar civic activities. Such "people events" are usually more impressive and rewarding than any commercial advertisement.

By organizing, neighborhood residents can transform the divergent interests of owners within the neighborhood from a liability into an asset and create an organization that can effectively look after the neighborhood's political and economic interests.

Getting Started

Neighborhood organizations form in many different ways for a multitude of reasons. There is no correct way to get started.

Often neighborhood residents come together



because of a crisis, responding to a school closing, a rezoning controversey, a rash of burglaries or some other upheaval. Angry and frightened, they want to form a neighborhood organization to take action. Such a crisis can mobilize many people very quickly, but without a firm foundation the organization dies once the initial issue is resolved.

Even with many people involved in a crisis, few are actually committed to building a permanent organization. Where no crisis is involved and the neighborhood's problems are more pervasive, such as general deterioration or a decline in city services, the initial nucleus of people interested in forming a neighborhood organization will be even smaller, perhaps only a few neighbors. In either case, people who want to organize a neighborhood usually must be self-chosen. These organizers should not be deterred because they have not been selected by their fellow residents. Instead, they must possess the initiative and dedication to take action themselves. The critical test of these organizers will be whether they can form an organization their neighbors will support.

In the early stages, the organizers should decide whether the organization will encompass a large or small geographic area. There are advantages and disadvantages for both. Organizations covering a small area can operate on a more informal level that fosters a unified approach among members and encourages personal relationships. Organizations representing a large area can draw on more people for membership, volunteer efforts, and potential leaders as

Creating a Formal Organization

Many people believe that creating a formal organization, especially a state-chartered, nonprofit corporation capable of receiving charitable contributions, is a burdensome, bureaucratic exercise. However, most of the steps involve setting up logical and necessary safeguards that help protect a group's organizers, give assurances to the public, including neighborhood residents, that the group's funds will be properly used and establish an orderly procedure in electing the initial and future officers and board members. Below are elements to be considered in creating a formal organization.

Minute Book

From the beginning, organizers should appoint someone to take minutes at the meetings so that there will be a record of the group's early days and initial decisions. It is a good idea to keep the original minutes in one book, such as a loose-leaf notebook, that can be kept in a safe place with the pages numbered and never removed. Other important documents of the organization should also be kept in the book such as the charter, all Internal Revenue Service documents and financial statements.

Organizational Structure

A neighborhood organization can be legally established as an association or a state-chartered corporation. However, many neighborhood groups are neither as they operate without any legal documents. Technically these groups do not exist but are instead merely individuals acting together. Members of these organizations may be individually liable for the actions of these groups.

"Association" is the general word used to describe the joint efforts of a citizen group. Unfortunately, most state laws are vague on the precise definition of an association, and states differ as to the legal protection from liability an association provides its members. Therefore, this organizational structure should be used only by block clubs and small neighborhood organizations that do not plan to handle significant amounts of money, own property, seek grants, handle public funds or employ full-time staff. An association must develop written articles of association and, in some states, this document must be filed with the state or county. Corporations are clearly defined under state laws and offer freedom from personal liability.

To form a corporation, an attorney prepares a certificate of incorporation, based on information supplied by the organizers, about the purpose, name, nonprofit nature and powers, plus the names and signatures of the organizers. The certificate is usually filed with the state's secretary of state. There is a filing fee.

To qualify for a tax exempt status, the IRS requires both associations and corporations to incorporate specific language into their organizing documents (see below).

Tax Status

Nearly all neighborhood citizen organizations are nonprofit. This does not mean a nonprofit organization cannot raise money or revenue from its activities, only that "no part of the earnings of the organization should enure to the benefit of, or be distributed to, its members, trustees, officers, or any other private persons"...(excluding salaried employees). (IRS definition).

There are two possible classifications for neighborhood organizations: Civic leagues, also known as Section 501 (c)(4) organizations, operate to "further the common good and general welfare" and do not have to pay income taxes on revenue.

Contributions to civic leagues, however, are not tax deductible. A civic league may engage in legislative or lobbying activity if the activity relates to the group's basic objectives. Tax-deductible contributions can only be made to groups that the IRS has determined are organized and operated exclusively as Section 501 (c)(3) organizations, i.e., for religious, charitable, scientific or educational purposes. Charitable activity can include such functions as relief for the poor, advancement for education, eliminating prejudice and discrimination and combating community deterioration and juvenile delinquency. Charitible organizations also can qualify for special, lower third-class bulk mailing postage rates. They may also be eligible for exemption from a variety of state and local taxes. In addition, Internal Revenue Code regulations encourage charitable foundations to award grants only to publicly supported Section 501 (c)(3) organizations. Generally, a Section 501 (c)(3) organization cannot devote a "substantial part" of its activities to influencing legislation, though it may elect to lobby (Form 5768); this permits an organization to spend regulated portions of its budget on lobbying. Neither Section 501 (c)(3) nor 501 (c)(4) organizations can engage in partisan politics.

A civic league applies for an exemption on IRS Form 1024; a charity uses Form 1023. Both forms must be accompanied by the group's organizing documents (corporate charter or articles of association, bylaws, etc.) An exemption will not be awarded unless these documents contain certain statements and assurances. These details are explained in IRS pamphlet 557, How to Apply for Recognition of Exemption of an Organization. Interested groups can also call the toll free number in the telephone book and ask for these forms.

Information (tax) returns for exempt organizations are filed with the Internal Revenue Service, generally on Form 990. Exempt organizations (which are not private foundations) with a gross annual income not in excess of $10,000, may simply fill out the heading portion of the form (name, address, tax number).

Bylaws

Bylaws are detailed rules on how a corporation or association conducts its business. Usually bylaws are adopted by an organization's membership and can be changed only by that membership. Bylaws include a detailed description of the organization's purpose, membership rights and qualification, election and voting procedures, officers' and board members' titles, terms and responsibilities and rules for amending the bylaws. There are no pat formulas for developing bylaws. Small organizations may want to make all decisions at membership meetings, while large organizations might delegate most responsibilities to their board and officers.

Organizational Meeting

After its certificate of incorporation or association has been filed, the new organization should hold a meeting to adopt bylaws and elect officers.

well as generate greater visibility and clout from city hall. However, large areas require greater efforts to organize, and the organization must be more formal and impersonal. Communicating with everyone in a large area is more difficult. Residents in one part of the neighborhood may be unconcerned with problems that affect only other parts of the neighborhood. Regardless of the neighborhood's size, early organizers should reach out from the beginning to involve a cross-section of the community. It is natural for organizers to call on friends and neighbors for help. The danger is that such a group can be identified purely as a clique that does not truly represent the entire neighborhood.

Organizers should enlist people who reflect the different economic, racial and age groups found in the neighborhood. Natural leaders, people who are popular with their neighbors or who are known to be active in church or civic organizations, should be identified. Ministers, school principals and local business people can be called on to join the group and to supply additional names. Neighborhood issues and concerns should be discussed with these people with emphasis on the important role they can play in the formation of the organization. Many will respond positively to forming a neighborhood organization.

An expanded, although still small, core of people can commit itself to creating a formal organization. Fortunately, laws pertaining to corporations and associations recognize that there will be an organizing period prior to the time an entity takes on its legal form. During this time, the organizers can dub themselves the "temporary steering committee" or "organizing committee." If officers are desired, an acting chairman or acting secretary can be appointed.

The steering committee should discuss the problems and concerns of the neighborhood, keeping in mind the limitations of the fledgling organization. Organizers should not try to solve every neighborhood problem but concentrate on establishing an organization capable of dealing with current and future problems. For example, the new group cannot and should not make plans to eliminate poverty or prevent deterioration. Instead, the organizers should acknowledge these large problems while focusing on holding their first neighborhood meeting and sponsoring specific manageable projects. Initial activities should be designed to expand the number of people involved with the organization, give everyone a chance to work with and get to know each other, help identify leaders and establish a public image for the organization.

Holding the First Meeting

The first major event that organizers ususally sponsor is a neighborhood meeting. Properly planned and advertised, this first meeting can be an excellent way to publicize the new organization and get many residents involved.

Organizers should not be timid about publicizing this first meeting. Flyers can be delivered door to door. Announcements can be made at churches, clubs and civic events. Posters can be placed in store windows. Public service announcements can be sent to television and radio stations, and newspapers can be asked to run special feature stories.

The first meeting should be well-prepared. Organizers often make the mistake of opening an initial meeting with a simple, "We must do something, but what?" This is unfair to people attending the meeting, often with great expectations.

At the first meeting, organizers should present well-thought-out ideas about the scope, name, initial organization and first projects for the group. Final decisions should not have been made, but a prepared program should be given. With the organizer's recommendations and some possible options, neighborhood residents will have something tangible to discuss and evaluate. To insure that all people participate, index cards can be passed around soliciting written comments. It is also essential to collect the names, telephone numbers and addresses of all who attend.

Organizers should realize that they must sell themselves at the meeting. By making a good presentation, the organizers can show their own dedication and enthusiasm. Neighborhood residents are going to support a group and volunteer for projects only if they are confident the group is well-led.

Undertaking Small Projects

Often the first public meeting will create a great deal of enthusiasm. Organizers should capitalize on this initial enthusiasm by involving people in their committee or task force system and getting them to work on an initial project. A good idea is to have a simple, worthwhile project already planned prior to the meeting and use the meeting to recruit volunteers.

It is very important for a new group to undertake some specific projects. Many people quickly become bored with meetings and committee work, but they enjoy being part of a volunteer effort that actually does something. It is easier to get more people involved in separate, varied activities because some people enjoy planting flowers in the park, while others prefer trips to city hall.

Volunteers work best on projects of a specific, short-term nature. People are more apt to volunteer for a project and feel a strong obligation to carry it out if they know exactly what is expected of them. Projects with deadlines help stimulate people to get things done while allowing them to look forward to the time when they will be finished.

In selecting these first and future projects, it is important to establish some criteria that reflect the needs of the neighborhood while reinforcing the fledgling organization. Projects that rate high in all the following areas should be planned:

Timeliness: (Is it important to do this project now?)

Visibility and public relations value: (Will this project help build support?)

Potential for success: (Can we really do it?)

Potential for satisfaction: (Will enough people be able to sustain interest to carry it through to the end?)

Importance: (Is it worth doing? Do we have a consensus among our neighbors?)

To implement short-term projects, the group should avoid establishing a laborious committee system. Permanent committees should be kept to an absolute minimum. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for a new group to establish 6 or 10 or more committees. To have 10 committees with names like "Beautification" is to expect to have 10 separate ongoing programs. The group should understand that it does not have the resources, leadership or people to handle more than a few projects at any given time. If overcommitted, it is likely to have floundering committees and disgruntled members.

Often, task forces can be created for specific assignments and go out of existence after completion of the task. For example, once a decision has been made to clean up the park, an "Organize A Park Cleanup Committee" can be created. People who successfully complete one project can later be called on for similar projects. Those who organized a park cleanup may be

willing to do a landscape-the-median project at a later date. In the meantime, they are not under any obligation to maintain a committee.

A file should be kept on every project the group undertakes so that the leader of next year's cleanup campaign will know exactly what to do, when to do it, who enjoyed it last time and might want to help this year and how much it will cost. The file should include problems to avoid, sample news releases, copies of handouts and a record of the results of the activity. Thus, the organization can build on the experience of its first projects to sponsor similar or more ambitious ones in the future.

Developing a Public Image

In guiding a group through its first meeting and early projects, the organizers should realize that they will be establishing an initial, long-lasting image for the group. These early days will, it is hoped, establish the impression of a dynamic and successful organization. The repercussions of such an image--enthusiastic members, interested reporters, impressed city officials--can help the group live up to its image.

From the beginning, the group should make a concerted effort to look as professional as possible. At a minimum, the group should invest in some personalized stationery that can be used when sending notices or flyers to residents and letters to city hall.

A newsletter is the keystone of publicity and communication for many groups. Neighborhood residents, city officials and community leaders can be favorably impressed by a professional, informative newsletter. The prime reason for a newsletter is to inform members of upcoming events, projects and meetings. A newsletter also helps the group maintain contact with its membership. A large group, unless it has a newsletter, inevitably loses touch with members who are inactive or only occasionally participate. The newsletter also provides some people with a reason to continue being members and financial supporters.

There are many topics that make a newsletter interesting reading, including current happenings in the neighborhood, an events calendar, articles on the neighborhood's history and architecture, information on the lifestyles of earlier residents and more. Some expertise is needed initially to design and lay out a newsletter, but a dedicated volunteer editor can learn these skills (see next page for guidelines).

A logo can be developed for the newsletter and used in other ways, on flyers, signs, murals and on stationery. Many neighborhood groups have sought professional help in designing a logo while others have sponsored "design our logo" contests.

A neighborhood organization must also learn to deal with the media. Fortunately, people events like community workdays or festivals make interesting newspaper photographs and television film clips. The city editor of the local newspapers or the news desk at radio and television stations can be asked to cover an upcoming event. Newspapers also have special columns that announce upcoming meetings and programs. Letters to the editor can have an impact. When submitting materials to the media, it is important to write clear and concise press releases and public service announcements.

Other ideas for publicizing the group: Publish a neighborhood brochure; sell bumper stickers, buttons or T-shirts; develop a slide show presentation.

Recruiting and Involving Members

A group can initially attract members through well-publicized meetings and by getting people involved in its projects. However, many groups inadvertently restrict their numbers by having membership forms and sign-up sheets only at meetings. Although many people will appreciate what the group is doing, they may not attend meetings or come in contact with the group. To maximize

Producing a Newsletter

Many neighborhood groups prefer to have their newsletters printed rather than mimeographed or photocopied. Offset printing produces crisp, professional looking publications, allows flexibility in using photographs and line drawings and, for larger quantities, costs less than other duplication processes. If the newsletter is to be printed, all articles and artwork are first pasted down on a sheet of paper or bristol board. The printer photographs the boards, which are called camera-ready mechanicals, and uses the pictures to make metal or paper printing plates. These plates are then used to print the newsletter.

Layout and paste-up are the most technical aspects of newsletter production. Printing and typesetting shops provide layout and paste-up services for a fee, but volunteers can master these skills and become quite accomplished with a good how-to book and some practice. (An excellent handbook is LaRae H. Wales's A Practical Guide to Newsletter Editing and Design, Iowa State University Press, 1976. $2.95. Below are some guidelines for producing a newsletter.

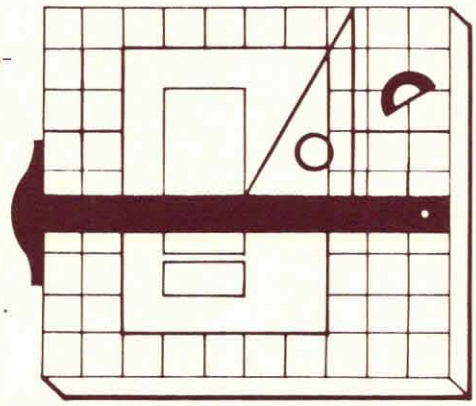
Organizing the Articles

The editor should organize the flow of articles and artwork in a readable and visually appealing manner. This can be done in a variety of ways, but it is generally best to reserve the front page for the group's logo and address and the important or timely articles. If the newsletter is to be a self-mailer, space should be reserved for mailing labels and the group's return address. Grouping complementary or contrasting articles, such as different points of view on a zoning issue, makes for easy and interesting reading. If articles are to be continued on another page, the title can be repeated or paraphrased along with the page where it began (e.g. Park Festival--from p. 1).

Preparing the Newsletter Dummy

A dummy is an actual size drawing of the newsletter that enables the editor to experiment with different arrangements of articles and artwork before final mechanicals are pasted up. This dummy will be based on the actual size of the newsletter (usually 8½" x 11"), and column widths and margins should be marked for each page.

The next step is measuring the length of the articles after they have been typed or typeset at the proper column width. Inevitably, some articles and artwork will not exactly fill the desired number of pages. If there are too many articles, it is possible to re-edit the most important ones or carry some of them over to a future issue.



To get more information into a typewritten article, it is possible to have it photographically reduced by the printer. (The printer can determine the exact dimensions that should be used.) If the articles do not fill an issue, the editor should keep a file of ready-to-go articles and artwork that can cover the gaps.

Selecting Headlines

The size and position of headlines are determined by the importance of the article. If the story is contained on one page, the headline can extend across the top of the page. If there are two shorter articles on the page, a one-column width headline can be used, but the editor should avoid beginning all articles at the top of the column. Headlines can be positioned against the left or right side of a column or centered.

Typeset headlines are attractive and inexpensive. A similar effect can be obtained with dry transfer letters which are available in most typefaces at art supply stores (prices range from $1.50 to $4 per sheet).

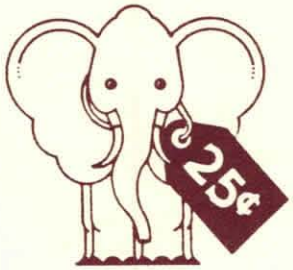
Using Photographs and Line Drawings

Both photographs and line drawings may be used to illustrate articles. Some printers will charge $6 to $8 for making each halftone. Other graphics can be inexpensively purchased in sheets from art supply stores (Formatt and Chartpak are two brands) or from Dover Books (For a book catalog, write Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick St., New York, N.Y. 10014). Properly sized black and white artwork can be pasted onto the mechanical and will not increase printing costs. Printers can reduce or enlarge a line drawing (or a photograph) for a modest fee if they are given the dimensions of the artwork as it will actually appear in the newsletter. The original photograph is not pasted down onto the mechanical. Rather, a box is drawn to match the size of the printed halftone, and an identification number or letter should be marked on the box and on the corresponding artwork.

Pasting Up the Mechanical

If a dummy has been prepared, pasting up the articles and artwork will be relatively easy and quick. After the articles have been carefully proofread, the editor, using a drawing board with a T-square, pastes the articles and artwork down onto clean bristol board that has been marked with the correct trim dimensions, column widths and margins (in nonphoto blue, except for trim lines, so the lines will not appear on the printer's photograph). The editor should check with the printer about the order in which pages should be pasted down onto the boards. Several adhesives, such as glue sticks and rubber cement, can be used to affix the articles to the boards.

Once the newsletter mechanicals have been pasted up, the editor checks them carefully to be sure that all articles and artwork are in the proper order. The mechanicals are now ready to go to the printer with instructions about the quantity to be printed, paper stock, ink color and other specifications.



Neighborhood Sales Day

Merchants of a neighborhood commercial district can be encouraged to sponsor a coordinated promotion and sales day, perhaps in conjunction with another neighborhood event. The promotion should be designed to strengthen the natural alliance between neighborhood business people and residents.

"What Style is It"

A team of local preservationists and architectural historians can be invited to present information on area architecture at a neighborhood meeting. Residents could be encouraged to bring a slide or photogrphy of their house to the meeting so that its style and architectural details can be identified.

Neighborhood Watch Meetings

A neighborhood group can help reduce crime by holding meetings on a block or blocks to inform residents about self-help techniques such as Neighborhood Watch and Operation ID. The local police department has information about these and other programs, as does the National Sheriff's Association, 1250 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

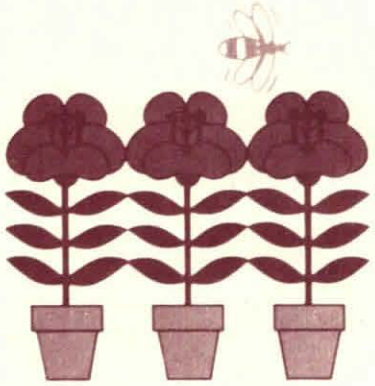
Old House Seminar

A neighborhood group can sponsor a neighborhood or citywide seminar on basic home improvement skills or on special topics like energy conservation. Local craftspeople and building materials suppliers can be invited to talk and videotape cassettes from "The Old House Works" can be shown. (They can be rented from the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting, Owings Mill, Md. 21117.) At this seminar, or another civic function, a House Doctor booth can be set up where architects and designers can give free 15 to 30 minute consultations. (Check with the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Interior Designers for volunteers.) This event could eventually evolve into a comprehensive Old House Fair, that could include craftspeople demonstrations, building material displays and booths for neighborhood organizations.

Neighborhood Guide

A neighborhood guide is a good consciousness-raiser for residents because it presents interesting, often little known, biographical, architectural and historical facts about an area. A guide can also include a walking, driving, or jogging map of the neighborhood. Guides are very effective, and they need not be expensive to produce. One group prepared a one-page mimeographed driving tour. Guides can also be distributed to real estate agents, schools, local merchants and others in the community.

In a similar vein, a group can prepare a guide to city services that includes such categories as property, water problems, trash collection and zoning. Such guides are an invaluable resource.



Green Revival

Trees and shrubs used to decorate fashionable hotels, restaurants and offices are often discarded once they become bruised or damaged. They can also be revived, with proper care, and planted in local community gardens and parks. Those florists and nurseries who supply trees and plants to business establishments can be asked to donate damaged plants to the neighborhood organization.

Cleanup Days

A cleanup day is an important way to boost community spirit. To organize one, a group can assign block captains to inform residents, post signs at local stores and hand out flyers around the neighborhood. Volunteers can be enlisted to help older residents clear their yards, driveways or curb areas of debris. Arrangements can also be made with the city for a special trash pickup for the day.

Green-Up Days

A green-up day can get residents into the spring spirit by providing them with flowers and plants for yards, curbing strips and window ledges. The neighborhood group can organize committees to locate a nursery that will provide plants in quantity at market prices (or below) and publicize the project and obtain prepaid orders from interested residents. Another committee can be responsible for finding a central delivery point where residents can pick up their orders and make home deliveries to senior citizens and others. The group might also plan to hold a cleanup day in advance of this event.

Potluck Suppers

Potluck suppers are festive neighborhood events and can be modified to suit any occasion. For example, a group could sponsor a holiday potluck supper preceded by a songfest or caroling in the neighborhood. A group could also ask residents to bring community specialties or dishes that begin with the initials of their last names. In addition to bringing neighbors together, potluck suppers can also be used to attract new members or thank volunteers.

Ideas Project Ideas Project Ideas Project Ideas

Awards Program

To recognize residents' contributions, a neighborhood group could develop awards for individuals and organizations and for the most improved block or area. The Louisville Times awards $100 to $300 for exemplary neighborhood actions. A group might suggest a similar program to the local newspaper or corporation.

Speakers Bureau

Setting up speaking engagements is a good way to publicize a neighborhood group because many civic groups, church clubs and other organizations often invite outside speakers to address their meetings. Many groups might find a lecture and slide show on the neighborhood interesting. Speeches can be based on the neighborhood's early development, information about early residents' lifestyles, architectural history of the area, the neighborhood group's activities or information about private restoration activities. Slides made from old photographs juxtaposed with current ones make a fascinating presentation.

Adopt-A-House

Elderly and handicapped residents often have trouble keeping their homes as neat as they want them to be. The group can help them and the neighborhood by organizing an adopt-a-house campaign. After identifying the residents needing this service, the group can publicize the campaign and solicit donations of needed materials--paint, brushes, rollers, brooms and other equipment. Next, volunteers can be mobilized to paint; sweep steps, drives and curb areas; trim shrubs; and perform other chores that help spruce up the neighborhood.

Restoration Celebration

By bringing do-it-yourselfers together for a social hour or a potluck supper, a neighborhood group can reinforce home improvement momentum and boost residents' spirits. These gatherings could be held on a regular basis, perhaps in newly renovated homes, so that guests can discuss mutual repair problems and exchange ideas on how to fix up older houses.

Block Party

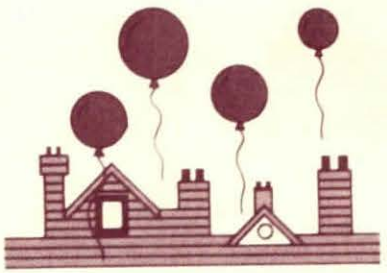
A block party is a sure-fire way to bring people out and get them together at a pancake breakfast, cocktail party, street festival or similar celebration on the block (or a combination of blocks). The block party encourages residents to get to know each other and to spread the word about current or planned neighborhood activities. It is useful to have neighborhood newsletters, brochures and membership forms displayed at the party.

Tours for City Officials

Briefing local officials on neighborhood problems and accomplishments is important for building rapport between city hall and the neighborhood organization. A walking or driving tour of one or more neighborhoods is a good way to show elected officials, department heads and members of the city board what the organization has accomplished and what city actions are helping and hindering the neighborhood. The tour can be concluded with a luncheon or refreshments served at a resident's house.

Logo Contest

Logos are an important part of a group's identity. Sponsoring a create-a-logo contest is a good way to involve residents of all ages and gain publicity for the group. Contest entries can be displayed at a prominent location, such as a local bank, and judged by a panel. Prizes, donated by local businesses, could be awarded to the winners and runners-up.



Neighborhood Fair

A group can organize a neighborhood fair featuring food, games, music and entertainment. The park can be reserved or a permit obtained to close a street. Committees for publicity, decorations, food, games and entertainment should be organized well in advance. The fair can be held to celebrate a holiday, it can be organized around a theme, such as Victorian Days, or it can just be a gathering to bring neighbors together.

Moving Display

A group can publicize its activities and neighborhood by constructing a simple display or using a large bulletin board. Photographs, posters, maps and other materials can be attractively arranged and held in place with pushpins. The display can be set up for conferences and festivals or placed in offices, banks or city hall lobbies.

Chalk-In

Teams of school children can compete for prizes or school honor by drawing sidewalk chalk murals depicting a neighborhood landmark or scene. Teams within a school can compete against each other, or a school-against-school chalk-off can be organized.

Steps for Organizing an Event

Exploring the Possibilities

It is important that the group identify activities that residents will support. A fish fry will work in one neighborhood; a cocktail party might be more appropriate in another. To determine what events the neighborhood will enjoy, the group can observe events sponsored by local churches and civic groups. These observations will aid the group in selecting a community event.

Selecting the Event

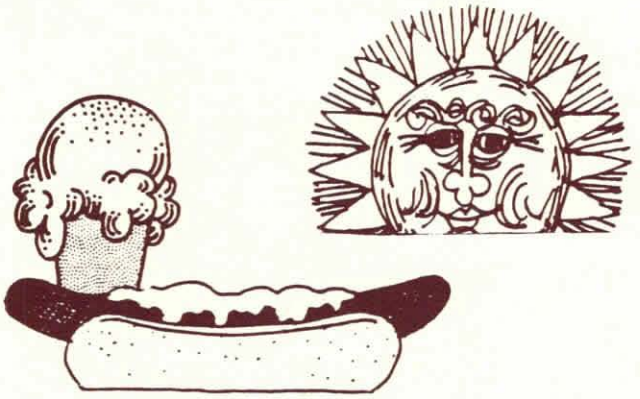
The group's governing body, its Board of Directors or equivalent, should make the final decision commiting the group to an event. The Board may have several interrelated reasons for sponsoring an event: to raise money, provide residents with a social or cultural occasion, publicize the organization or generate community support. Before deciding on the event, the Board should also ascertain whether the group has the commitment of its members and the financial wherewithal to undertake the project.

Appointing the Event Chairperson

The group's president or Board should appoint an event chairperson, who must be a willing volunteer capable of handling this major responsibility. Along with the Steering committee, the event chairperson will plan the event, prepare a budget, set a timetable and recruit committee heads. The event chairperson must also coordinate the event, make sure that all committees understand their duties, prevent duplications of efforts or omissions among committees, monitor committee progress and handle the inevitable crises.

Setting Up a Committee System

Most events require a lot of work. The use of committees breaks the workload into manageable tasks. Once the different tasks have been identified (publicity, entertainment, food, etc.), the chairperson can appoint the necessary committees. A small event may require no more than two or three committees of one or two members each. Larger events may require numerous committees with many members who are further divided into subcommittees. How an event is divided depends on the nature of the



event and upon the skills and interests of available volunteers and committee heads.

Forming a Steering Committee

Once organizing is underway, the event chairperson can form a steering committee to plan and coordinate the affair. The steering committee consists of the event chairperson and committee heads. The steering committee should meet regularly to plan and discuss details and ideas.

Defining Committee Tasks and Budget

Under the guidance of the event chairperson, each committee should list in detail what it has to accomplish. The list should include each task and any instructions for its completion, the person responsible, the date scheduled for completion and the estimated cost.

Developing a Timetable

It is important that the steering committee develop a timetable since many deadlines must be met. There are always tasks that have to be done immediately because other activities depend on their completion. A weekly schedule should be set up, counting backward from the date of the event.

Recruiting Volunteers

After identifying the specific tasks, the steering committee should try to involve as many members and residents as possible. For most community events, there is usually something for everybody to do, including older people and children. These volunteers can spread out the workload of an event so that all can enjoy themselves and not feel overburdened. In addition, when volunteers work on an event, their commitment to that event (and the organization) increases. It is quite likely they will attend and will bring their friends and family.

Holding the Event

If the earlier steps have been completed, the group should be organized to hold its event. This preparation will make it easier but not easy. To be successful, many people will have to work cooperatively together, learn new skills, shoulder responsibilities and be prepared to handle the unexpected.

Cleaning Up and Giving Thanks

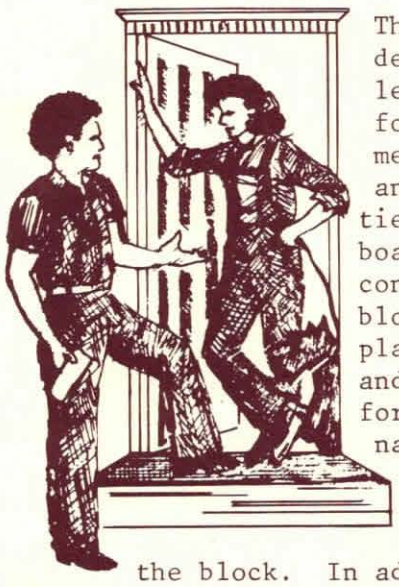
The event is not finished when the public goes home. The steering committee should plan to have volunteers available to take down decorations, remove signs and posters and clean up. "Thank you's" are essential. All organizers of an event should personally thank those who helped them.

Soon after the event, the steering committee and some Board members should meet to discuss what worked well, what could have been done better and how the event could be improved and/or expanded.

its membership potential, the group should undertake a membership drive that directly reaches every household.

A new group should wait until a few projects have been undertaken before launching a membership drive. If the new group is completely unknown within its neighborhood, the drive will be hampered by skepticism about whether the group is legitimate.

The best approach for a membership campaign is to have volunteers go door to door calling on their neighbors. The group can consider a week-long or one-day blitz to help volunteers maintain enthusiasm and then sponsor a party for volunteers where they can have fun and share experiences. All the arguments and appeals about why people should join and the benefits they and the neighborhood will gain from membership should be reviewed. Volunteers should be armed with printed matter to encourage residents to join. This can be a brochure or a simple letter from the group's chairman that explains the group, stresses why neighborhood support is needed, includes details of an upcoming activity and urges each contact to attend. A newsletter or brochure can also be given to each resident. Volunteers should carry membership forms with them and offer both immediate and mail-in membership opportunities.



The group can also develop a block leader network as a foundation of its membership campaign and other activities. Officers or board members can contact potential block leaders to explain their duties and to gain approval for publishing their names and telephone numbers in the newsletter and for other residents on the block. In addition to building membership, block captains can also welcome new residents, pass out flyers and newsletters, serve as a conduit for specific problems on the block and place volunteers in activities.

Getting members is only half the battle. For every member who is active in the association, there are probably two who would be involved if they were motivated properly. The following ideas can be useful:

Members can be helped to find a place in the organization. Not everyone is a self-starter. Many will offer to help, but have no idea where to begin. A list of volunteer activities that includes a job description and approximate time commitment for each task should be developed and made available.

New people should always be welcomed. The officers and steering committee members should watch out for new faces and welcome them assertively. Each new member or guest should be introduced to someone who lives near or who shares a similar interest.

The appearance of cliques should be avoided. New members who see the same people running every project will feel excluded and may not return. People who are not a part of the core group or steering committee should be appointed to leadership roles, and the background issues, decisions and projects should always be explained. It cannot be assumed that every member has been involved from the beginning.

Meetings should be well-organized. Busy people will not attend meetings or involve themselves in organizations that they consider to be a waste of time. A written agenda should be provided and followed. The meeting should have a time limit and end on time. The person who runs the meeting should be sensitive to new ideas and new people, should be able to answer questions and should attempt to limit the floor hogs without being offensive. Results of previous activities and follow-up on previous assignments should be announced at the meeting.

Membership records should be maintained. A volunteer can keep a card file on all members that lists names, addresses, telephone numbers, family member names, occupation, special talents and concerns and areas of interest. Cards can be filled out at meetings, and officers and membership volun-

teers can be asked to prepare cards for new contacts. These cards can be used to identify and call people to work on projects.

Activities and meetings should be fun. Making neighborhood activities a total and constant drudgery will quickly burn out organizers and volunteers. Sponsoring parties and celebrations to enjoy neighboring will allow members to get to know each other. Also, these activities should appeal to everyone. If projects and social events appeal only to the wine and cheese crowd, the group will never meet or involve the beer and pretzels people. Children should not be excluded. Activities can be planned that they, and their parents, will attend. The group needs the support and talents of everyone!

Raising Money

In the beginning, a new neighborhood organization will probably have more ingenuity and enthusiasm than money in the bank. The group can schedule only so many fundraisers and contribution drives in a year. Between fund-raising events, the group will have to pace its activities carefully or risk being vulnerable to emergencies and cash shortfalls. As soon as possible, the new group should develop a budget process that identifies future expenses and plans for ways to meet them. In planning a strategy the group should strive for diverse funding sources to avoid becoming dependent on any one source. Described briefly below are the major sources of revenue for neighborhood groups.

Membership Dues. Residents will realize that funds are needed to operate an organization and should be willing to pay a membership fee. Individuals who are otherwise inactive as members can believe they are at least financially supporting the organization by becoming members. The fee should be based on what seems right for the neighborhood. Lower fees can be established for elderly people or students.

Self-sustaining Projects. An organization can often develop one or more projects that

help improve the neighborhood or enhance its image yet have little or no net costs. By selling advertising to local businesses and merchants, the group can reduce or cover printing costs for a newsletter or brochure. Likewise, charging a small fee to participants can cover the cost of a home repair workshop, or using revenue from soda and ice cream sales and passing the hat can offset costs of a neighborhood picnic. Charging registration fees to participating artists is one way to underwrite costs for an art festival. As another approach, a group can cosponsor projects with others, offering volunteer help and enthusiasm instead of money to support the endeavor.

In-kind services. A group can greatly extend its resources by securing in-kind services, such as the free meeting hall provided by the church or school, door prizes, food and decorations contributed by local businesses, or even free music donated by a band seeking publicity. The city government can provide trucks and workers for a cleanup day or maps and advice to help with land-use survey. Other important sources for in-kind contributions are professionals, such as lawyers, accountants or carpenters, who are often willing to contribute their services pro bono for civic endeavors.

Fund-raising projects. Often fund-raising projects can be fun and can help neighbors get to know each other. Popular fund-raising projects that will appeal to neighborhood residents include the following: garage and rummage sales, flea markets, auctions, craft sales, bake sales, raffles, fashion shows, haunted houses, carnivals, follies, charity balls, house tours, beer parties, wine tasting, banquets, publication of a cookbook and potluck suppers. Revenue from some of these events will be small; however, events such as festivals and house tours can often grow into major fund raisers. The annual people's fair, sponsored by the Capitol Hill United Neighbors in Denver, has grown from a small neighborhood festival into a citywide summer attraction since it began in 1971. The fair attracts more than 100,000 people and nets the group approximately $10,000, which is used for neighborhood grants and seed money for the next year's fair.

An excellent book describing many fund-raising events and how to organize them is The Grass Roots Fundraising Book: How to Raise Money in Your Community by Joan Flanagan (available from the National Trust Preservation Shops, 1600 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. $4.75 plus $2.50 shipping and handling. Make checks payable to National Trust for Historic Preservation).

Contributions. If asked, affluent residents, nearby industries, banks, utilities and other businesses may be willing to make a monetary contribution to an organization or for a special project. Normally an organization will need to have Internal Revenue Service 501 (c)(3) status as a charitable organization to receive such support. In addition, a group can add special contribution categories to its membership appeal (special friends - $25; donor - $500). Also, the group should become acquainted with the trust departments of local banks; these often handle charitable giving for trusts and estates.

Public Support. Some cities offer direct support for neighborhood organizations or small grant programs using community development funds. Despite federal cutbacks, there are still many public programs that can often be used to aid the neighborhood. Although the competition may be stiffer, it is possible for neighborhood groups to get contracts to run such programs directly, but administering public funds can be a burdensome and frustrating experience.

The mayor's office, a state representative or a member of Congress can help a group gather information on local, state and federal programs. A good guide to federal programs is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (available from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Stock Number 041-001-81001-3. $20. Includes periodic updates).

Private Grantsmanship

Some projects require a combination of funds from local and national foundations in addition to in-kind donations and local contributions. Before pursuing grants, however, a group should thoroughly investigate local resources for the needed money. A group that has not done any projects or raised money locally will have a difficult time getting a grant. With recent federal cutbacks, many foundations are being overwhelmed with requests, and the competition among nonprofit groups for these grants has greatly increased. To receive a grant, it is necessary for the group to have Internal Revenue Service 501 (c)(3) status as a charitable organization. The following steps for researching foundations and writing proposals should be taken.

Defining the Project

The group should formulate goals and objectives of the project and define the amount of money needed to carry it out. Looking at the project from every angle will help identify funding sources and quickly eliminate others. With the increased demand for philanthropic dollars, most foundations are carefully scrutinizing the benefits of a project and the group's ability to carry it out. Foundations will also be looking at the group's ability to use its grant to attract or leverage funds from other sources

Researching Funding Sources

At least 39 states have one or more community foundations that are locally endowed and make grants only within a community or region. Similarly, many cities and states have small foundations that serve only their communities. The telephone directory, local library or trust department of a local bank will have these names. A group can also seek out local corporations with corporate giving programs. The best source of information is a person well-connected with local corporations. The group can also request copies of the annual reports of local corporations. Branch offices should not be ignored, since the corporation's giving policy may favor areas where it does business or employs workers.

The Foundation Center is the best source of detailed information on foundations, their patterns of giving and fields of interest. The Foundation Center is actually a network of major libraries in New York, San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and Cleveland with cooperating collections in every state. The center and its cooperating collections have copies of the Foundation Directory, Foundation Grants Index, state foundation directories and state attorney guides to foundations. (For a list of cooperating libraries, write The Foundation Center, 1001 Conn. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.) The group should select a small number of likely foundations and research their boards, assets, projects funded and rules or restrictions. The information can be found in annual reports or in foundation tax returns (IRS Form 990 AR) available at center libraries and regional collections.

Unfortunately, there is no similar guide to corporations, although there are a few books available, including the Public Service Materials Center's The Corporate Fund Raising Directory and the Public Management Institute's Corporate 500: The Directory of Corporate Philanthropy.

Making the Initial Contact

The group should develop a small list of the most promising foun-

dations and corporations. The ideal way to approach a foundation, and especially a corporation, is to make an appointment to discuss the project and organization with the chief executive, responsible staff person or board member. The group's own board of directors, friendly city officials or other contacts can be used to set up this meeting. A letter of inquiry can be sent if such a meeting cannot be arranged or is inappropriate. Either in person or in writing, the group should briefly describe the proposed project, stressing the facets that should be most interesting to the funding source. The source's response should be considered carefully; any hints or offers of help should be used in preparing a proposal.

Preparing the Proposal

If encouraged, the group can prepare a formal proposal. Rather than just asking for money, the proposal should state specifically how the project will use it, what it will accomplish and why the organization is qualified to undertake it. The proposal should be concise, specific and well-organized. Photographs, resumes, letters of endorsement and plans can be appended, if appropriate, but the proposal should not contain an overwhelming amount of information.

Following-Up

After a reasonable period, the group should contact the foundation to learn the status of its request. If it receives the grant, a thank-you letter should be sent, and the foundation should be kept up to date on the progress of the project. If the request is turned down, the group should try to find out why and place the foundation on its mailing list for information.

Working with City Hall

A neighborhood organization should aim to build a productive relationship with both elected and appointed officials and city employees. However, the group should realize it cannot become the spokesperson for neighborhood residents on all political issues. Neighborhoods are too diverse to make such a role possible. The issues that affect neighborhoods most--city services, zoning, planning, capital expenditures and others--cut across traditional party or ideological lines. When a neighborhood with an issue that might split the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, elected officials have become familiar with citizen groups that spring up during a crisis only to quickly fade away. Thus it is unrealistic to expect the instant and unquestioning support of city hall. As is true within the neighborhood, it takes time for elected and appointed officials to trust a group's legitimacy and long-term commitment. The group should try to meet with elected officials before a crisis occurs to brief them on the neighborhood's goals and seek their advice on plans and projects. To keep them informed about continuing act-

consensus can be achieved on such issues, the neighborhood organization can present this position effectively at city hall.

Occasionally an organization will be confronted with an issue that creates a controversy in the neighborhood. In such cases, the group should appoint a spokesperson and perhaps a study committee to review the issue objectively and seek as large a consensus as possible within the membership. Before taking any action, the group should carefully consider the long and short-term consequences of dealing

ivities, elected officials and department heads should be placed on the VIP mailing list and sent copies of the newsletter or announcements on a regular basis. These officials can also be invited for a tour of the neighborhood, asked to give a few remarks at a meeting or invited to an informal lunch or dinner with neighborhood residents.

During an election, candidates for office can be asked to appear jointly at a nonpartisan neighborhood forum and can be asked for funds to help publicize the meeting.

Getting to know city officials presents an opportunity to learn how the city government works. Understanding the different roles and powers of the mayor, different agencies, commissions, and the city council and city departments will prove valuable because few officials respond favorably to pleas based on faulty information or addressed to the wrong body.

Learning how to deal with city departments can also help improve city services in a group's neighborhood. A simple telephone call can solve some problems, but the organization should be prepared to be persistent. Unresolved complaints should be followed up with a letter to a specific official within the appropriate department. The letter should clearly identify the problem, urge a prompt resolution and indicate that a reply is expected. If the problem still persists, a small delegation from the neighborhood should arrange to meet with the responsible department head. Such meetings can spur the department into action, particularly if both sides tackle the problem objectively.

In some cases, a group can assist a city department in carrying out its duties. For instance, if street cleaning is impossible because cars are always parked on the streets, the group can urge residents to move their cars through neighborhood meetings, circulating flyers and door-to-door canvassing. By working with a department and its employees, it will be easier to seek that department's help in the future. Cooperative departments and deserving city employees should be sent thank-you letters with copies sent to the mayor or other top brass. Such courtesies will help create even better relations. Persistent problems with a city department, however, should be brought to the attention of the appropriate elected official. By this time, the group should be able to document the problem and the failure to solve it through normal channels. Most important, by having already developed a good relationship with its elected officials, the group will have laid the groundwork to insure that its complaints get a sympathetic hearing.

Neighborhood groups should also be prepared to appear at public hearings. The group should present sound arguments to support its side of a political controversy or its request for support. Aids such as colored maps, enlarged photographs or a slide show can help illustrate these arguments.

Petitions and letters are also helpful although supporters in attendance are the best show of support. The block leader network, membership files, newsletter or posted flyers can be used to get supporters to a hearing. However, the same faces cannot be relied on each time. Parents can attend a traffic-safety hearing, and the elderly or nondrivers can support a street light presentation. T-shirts or buttons can help identify supporters, and they can be asked to stand at the start of the presentation.

Planning for the Future

Before too long, the group's organizers will be able to look back on the organization's early days with a great deal of pride. It is hoped that neighborhood residents and local business people are enthusiastic about the organization, some funds have been raised, the first projects were successful and inroads have been made at city hall.

The group should feel proud, but it should not overlook its strengths and weaknesses. The organization's resources are--and probably always will be--very finite and vulnerable, so it is essential to determine how those resources can best be used.

A new group should strive to learn as much as possible about its neighborhood. A survey is a good tool. With the help of preservationists and city planners, a group can survey its neighborhood, identifying land uses and the physical and cultural resources in the area. At the same time, the group should continually build on its knowledge about city officials, lenders, residents themselves and others who influence the neighborhood.

This information will enable the organization to understand the problems and opportunities that face the neighborhood. These insights should then be coupled with an honest appraisal of the organization itself. With this knowledge, an organization can establish short and long-term goals and objectives

that recognize both the neighborhood's needs and the organization's capabilities. This process should help the group expand its resources and use them more effectively.

The planning process should never end because neighborhoods and organizations change. At least once a year, neighborhood organization leaders should put aside immediate activities to discuss the neighborhood and the organization and evaluate where they are going.

Neighborhood organizations should also make plans to address one special problem: burnout. Initial volunteers, especially the most active, may give of themselves unselfishly to help the organization. Most likely, this fervor will last only a couple of years. To compensate for the burnout factor, constant attention should be made to involve new members and delegate responsibility to them. New people will help ensure a continued future supply of energetic members and new leaders.

In this way, the original organizers of the group will have built a firm foundation that will permit the organization to serve the neighborhood for many years.

Best wishes.

Thank You!

This issue marks the end of our two-year grants with New York Life Foundation, Pew Memorial Trust, International Paper Company Foundation, Ford Foundation and Bird Companies Charitable Foundation, Inc. Thanks to substantial support from these organizations, the neighborhood conservation program has been able to produce 12 issues of Conserve Neighborhoods and make them available free to citizen organizations and at reduced rates to others, while also helping to support the CN Short Courses. A recent grant of $5,000 from Bird Companies Charitable Foundation, Inc. will enable the neighborhood program to provide CN free to citizen organizations this year. It is hoped that other grants will be forthcoming so this service can be continued. The Pew Memorial Trust has also given a major grant to the Inner-City Ventures Fund.

The neighborhood program is also grateful to New York Life Foundation whose grant made it possible for the National Trust to sponsor Preservation Week 1981, "Conservation: Keeping America's Neighborhoods Together" and distribute the poster to all CN readers.

Many thanks again to our corporate and foundation supporters for their assistance.

Be a Good Neighbor

Many CN readers will be familiar with the information contained in this issue. However, many readers may know of new groups now forming that could use the "Organizing Guide." Be a good neighbor and pass along this special issue. Bulk quantities of the "Organizing Guide" are available for 20¢ per copy (minimum order $4).

Interested groups can also obtain one free CN Organizing Kit which includes this issue, "Community Events and How to Organize Them," the "Bibliography for Neighborhood Leaders" and the "Directory of Useful Organizations." (Special arrangements can be made to obtain the kits in bulk quantity.)

To order these materials, write CN, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Make checks payable to National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Bibliography

Non-Profit Corporations, Organizations and Associations. 4th ed. Howard L. Oleck. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974) 1,000 pp. A comprehensive text that explains how to form a nonprofit organization or association. The public library should have a copy; if not, ask it to order the latest (4th) edition. $49.95.

How to Apply for Recognition of Exemption for an Organization. Internal Revenue Service Publication 557. 28 pp. Call the nearest IRS office. Also ask for forms SS-4, 1023, 1024 and 990. All FREE.

Financial and Accounting Guide for Non-profit Organizations. 3rd ed. Malvern J. Gross, Jr and William Warshauer, Jr. (New York: Ronald Press, 1979) Good guide to bookkeeping for small groups, emphasizing good procedures while minimizing bureaucracy. $23.95.

The Grass Roots Fund Raising Book: How to Raise Money in Your Community. Joan Flanagan. (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1977) 220 pp. Imaginative fund-raising projects for neighborhood groups. Available from the National Trust Preservation Shops, 1600 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. $4.75 plus $2.50 shipping and handling. Make checks payable to National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Developing Skills in Proposal Writing. 2nd ed. Mary Hall. (Portland, Ore.: Continuing Education Publications, 1977) 339 pp. Excellent manual on developing information for a project and writing a sound proposal with a checklist for each step, guides to research and a timetable. Available from Portland State University, Community Services, P.O. Box 1491, Portland Ore. 97207. $12.50 prepaid.

A Practical Guide to Newsletter Editing and Design: Instructions for Printing by Mimeograph or Offset for the Inexperienced Editor. 2nd ed. LaRae H. Wales. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1976) 50 pp. The title explains it and the price is right. $2.95.

CONSERVE NEIGHBORHOODS

A newsletter for citizen organizations published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Guarding America's Heritage

1785 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 (202) 673-4000

December 8, 1981

Dear Friend:

We are pleased to send you the Conserve Neighborhoods Organizing Kit. Developed by our neighborhood office, the kit is part of the National Trust's continuing effort to support homeowners, tenants, business people and others interested in improving their communities and creating decent, affordable housing for all. These materials were originally issued as part of Conserve Neighborhoods, the bimonthly newsletter for citizen groups. Begun in 1978, the newsletter is an ongoing how-to-do-it manual that gives citizen groups access to projects, ideas and experiences pioneered by others working in the field of neighborhood conservation.

In addition to Conserve Neighborhoods, the Trust offers other resources to aid citizen organizations. The neighborhood office operates the CN Short Course, a week-long training program to help neighborhood groups build skills in management, fundraising and project development. The course also emphasizes techniques that aid low and moderate income areas. With support from the Department of the Interior and the Ford Foundation, we recently developed the Inner-City Ventures Fund, a grant and loan program for neighborhood groups that are tackling urban housing and rehabilitation projects. Our network of Regional Offices in Washington, D.C.; Chicago; Boston; Charleston, S.C.; Oklahoma City and San Francisco is also a resource for citizen groups.

We hope you find the kit a useful tool. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact the neighborhood office at headquarters or one of our Regional Offices (addresses are listed on the enclosed brochure).

Sincerely,

Michael L. Ainslie
President