

# Review of Neighborhood Association Chair Packets

---

**Documents reviewed:** Neighborhood Association Chair packets mailed monthly by the City to Neighborhood Association chairs

**Date of Mailings:** May, June and July 2008

**JLA staff:** Christine Egan

The following is a summary of JLA's general observations after reviewing three sets of monthly packets. Comments are grouped by category:

## **Neighborhood Associations**

- Packets provide good contact information on reverse side of enclosed calendar. Facilitates networking between neighborhood association leaders.
- Review of Neighborhood Association Co-chairs Directory
  - 9 female, 22 male.
  - Question: What motivates more than three times as many men to participate in and lead neighborhood associations?
- Several neighborhood association newsletters included articles about dwindling community involvement in neighborhood association boards and meetings.
  - Idea: King Neighborhood Association (Portland) recruited non profit organizations within neighborhood boundaries.
  - Idea: King Neighborhood Association hosts subcommittee meetings at businesses within neighborhood boundaries: coffee shops, restaurants and non profits.

## **Neighborhood Matching Grant Program**

- Question: In addition to notices to neighborhood association members via list-serve and articles in neighborhood association newsletters, what tools is Neighborhood Services/Michael Kinnison using to promote the program with groups not affiliated with neighborhood associations?
- Do neighborhood associations and groups not affiliated with neighborhood associations compete for grant funding? What is the breakdown between types of grant recipients (neighborhood associations and groups unaffiliated with neighborhood associations) over last three years?
- How did the City and/or City Council make the decision to give power to NLC to determine guidelines for grant programs, i.e. requirement that all proposals must be endorsed by the local neighborhood association.

**Council Agenda**

- Forecasts for the Council agenda make it much easier for involved groups to stay abreast of upcoming issues and opportunities.
- July 14, 2008 packet: City Council approves new land use process requiring developers to provide notices and hold open meetings with affected neighborhoods prior to submitting application of certain types. Also requires that developers post signage notifying neighborhood residents (beyond just NA members) of the meetings.

**City Manager's Office**

- It appears that the City Manager's Office issues public meeting calendar.
- Question: Would there be efficiencies in having Neighborhood Services assume this task and make it available in other written and electronic publications that reach the broader community?

**Eugene Planning Commission**

- Also serves as the City's formal Community Involvement Committee. Who staffs and manages this committee? Packet information lists Neil Bjorkland, who is not in Neighborhood Services.
- Question: Would there be efficiencies and better coordination in having Neighborhood Services manage this committee considering the overlap in mission and function?
- Question: Has it been useful to the City to have a CIC? What is its charter and interface with CMO, Neighborhood Services and Planning Manager?
- Question: Does the Committee's membership reflect expertise in community involvement? Maybe the role of CIC would be a better fit for the Neighborhood Empowerment Initiative Committee (NEI).

**Neighborhood Association Newsletters**

- Well written and depth of articles reflect well informed and articulate neighborhood association members. Leaders and writers appear to be well educated regarding city decision making processes.
- Question: Does the City provide every neighborhood association funds to produce a newsletter or newspaper? If so, how many editions in a calendar year?
- Question: Who plays the role of "editor" as newsletters are paid with city/taxpayer dollars?
- Does Neighborhood Services or City staff have the option of including city notices or articles in neighborhood association newsletters? Are there sections reserved for "city news" since NA newsletters serve as an efficient communication vehicle for neighborhood residents.

**City of Eugene Newsletter**

- Not clear how newsletter is distributed other than via Neighborhood Association Chair packets.
- Layout: short, no human photos, no event or meeting calendar in layout. Doesn't list any contact information – no name, phone number or email address. Would be a good opportunity to list contact information for Neighborhood Services or City Public Service Officer (PSO).
- No logo or masthead other than too small city logo at the top. Unclear newsletter is quarterly or monthly; no indication of frequency of publication.
- Lost opportunity to :
  - Communicate with the community at large
  - Provide a brief update for each city department
  - Highlight projects – how taxpayer dollars are being spent
  - Showcase good news under a “good news in Eugene” banner
  - Include human interest stories and photos, promote “small town” character
  - Put a human face- literally – on city staff, new city manager, new project staff, city council members – particularly after the election, etc.
  - Pen a “letter to the community” from the Mayor or City Manager
- Does the City of Eugene produce a newsletter or newspaper insert for the *Eugene Register Guard*? (City of Sherwood example)

**Neighborhood Leadership Council**

- Why is the agenda timed as 7:00-7:03, 7:08-7:38, instead of in five, ten or twenty minute increments?
- Who is responsible to develop the NLC agenda? City staff? Neighborhood Services? NLC co chairs?
- Who staffs NLC on the city side?