

Community Association

Volunteer Handbook



City of
Saskatoon

Community Development Branch

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The Critical Role of the Community Association

Community associations enhance quality of life for residents in neighbourhoods throughout Saskatoon.

Community associations are non-profit organizations that recruit and train volunteers, plan and administer seasonal recreation programs at minimal cost to residents, and work to enhance the quality of life for people living in their neighbourhoods.

An association may operate an outdoor rink in winter, assist with public meetings on neighbourhood development or organize a community cleanup in spring. Whatever the activity, the goal is to encourage residents to get involved and build a sense of “community.”

BENEFITS

Build Relationships
with Neighbours

Speak with a Strong
Voice

Provide Input on
Neighbourhood
Improvements

Community associations play a vital role in maintaining a sense of belonging and identity in our growing city. A healthy community association benefits residents in many ways.

Build Relationships

In some cities, residents can go years without getting to know their neighbours. Not so in Saskatoon. Since the founding of the very first home and school associations in the early 1900s, Saskatoon residents have worked together for the benefit of their neighbourhoods.

Community associations help build relationships among neighbours. When residents join together to plan programs and events, they not only get to know each other, they get to know the needs of their neighbours

and the issues facing their community. This builds a spirit of neighbourliness and creates a bond of common interests that leads to more supportive problem solving.

Speak with One Voice

The community association speaks for many people with one representative voice. This gives your community a stronger voice in municipal government decision-making. Your association also provides a central access point through which the City can more efficiently provide services and information to residents.

Have a Say on Neighbourhood Improvements

When it comes to neighbourhood improvements, community associations provide local residents with a chance to voice their opinions and concerns. They are also a resource for City planners on issues such as land use, zoning and neighbourhood/community-based planning.

A Handbook for Community Association Volunteers

The City of Saskatoon Community Development Branch works with community associations to coordinate neighbourhood activities and programs throughout the city.

We have prepared this handbook to give community association volunteers a resource for organizing, operating and participating in their local association. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your Community Consultant at 975-3378.



Organization

Organizing and operating a healthy community association is like caring for a garden.

One of the unique and challenging things about community associations is that they are being constantly re-invented. Every year, new members join, new people are elected to the Board while long-time members retire and move on. High turnover is simply part of being a volunteer-run organization.

In this sense, a community association is like a garden. You have to plant it new every year and nurture it over the long-term. The cycle begins with the election of a new Board. At first, attention is focused on keeping everyone's interest alive. As members get to know each other, programs and initiatives take root. At the end of the season, you take a moment to enjoy the results of your efforts ... before beginning the cycle all over again.

The Building Blocks

A thriving community association needs a solid foundation. Your basic building blocks include goals and objectives, written constitution and bylaws, committees, neighbourhood involvement and funding.

Clear Goals & Objectives

Make your goals and objectives realistic *and* attainable.

Clearly stated goals and objectives are essential to your community association. They define the reason you exist and provide a sort of road map for your activities. For example, if your objective

is to “enhance quality of life in your neighbourhood,” then one of your goals may be to deliver programs that address the specific needs of local residents, such as youth basketball or seniors’ art classes. Clearly defined goals and objectives provide direction to your association activities. Your association is able to respond to specific needs and issues, providing members with a greater sense of accomplishment.

Written Operating Procedures

Written operating procedures and policies are essential for your community association. They ensure continuity year to year, which is especially important with new people coming and going on the Board. The most common operating documents are a constitution and bylaws.

The Non-profit Corporations Act 1995. In Saskatchewan, community associations are required by law (*The Non-profit Corporations Act 1995*) to hold current Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

- Articles of Incorporation are designed to formalize the structure of your association. They follow a prescribed form set out by the Saskatchewan Department of Justice. It includes the name and purpose of your association, boundaries, number of directors, their titles and duties, type of membership, restrictions, etc.
- Bylaws are established by your Board and provide rules for governing your association. They outline your goals and objectives, and set down voting procedures, frequency of meetings, definition of membership, member fees, financial procedures, committee formation, etc.

For more information on Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, talk to your Community Consultant or refer to the Non-profit Corporations Act (1995) on the Saskatchewan Justice website at www.saskjustice.gov.sk.ca/corporations (click on “Non-profits” on right hand menu). An informational brochure is also available on the Saskatchewan Legal Public Education website at www.plea.org/freepubs

Regularly review your Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Neighbourhoods are constantly evolving; you need to ensure policies and procedures remain relevant to your community.

Democratic Process

Community associations are democratic. Members are elected to the Board according to voting procedures outlined in your bylaws. Elections are important because they give members a say in leadership. They encourage members to participate more in the association and also promote accountability on the Board.

Committees

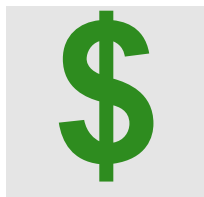
The committee is the basic operating tool of your community association. By forming committees to handle specific issues, programs or events, you can effectively delegate tasks and get more people involved in the association.

- Standing committees operate continually and address key issues, such as programming, communications (newsletters), events, etc. Nominating, Social, Welcome and Safety are examples of standing committees commonly used by community associations.
- Special committees are created to address short-term issues, such as specific events or projects, and are dissolved after the issue has been addressed to the satisfaction of members.

Neighbourhood Input and Involvement

The secret to a healthy community association is an active membership. Your association newsletter, committee meetings and special events all provide forums for neighbourhood input and involvement; they are also ideal opportunities to recruit more volunteers. By bringing residents together to address neighbourhood issues, your association can pool resources, promote team building and empower local residents.

Funding



Membership dues are the main source of funding for most community associations. Since your association will incur expenses (equipment rental for special events, newsletter mailing/delivery, etc.), you need to operate according to a budget. Your budget should be capable of supporting your goals and objectives. To ensure the long-term financial health of your association, it is important to regularly track and report revenues, expenses and balance-on-hand.

How to Make Your Community Association Thrive

Ask for Help



One of the great strengths of a healthy association is that it reaches out to its membership. Encourage residents to get involved in different projects. Ask individuals for help; they may not volunteer when you put out an “all call,” but they may be willing if you ask one-on-one. This way, instead of shouldering all the responsibility, your association becomes a facilitator in getting things done.

Be Courteous

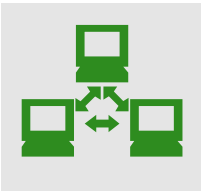
Courtesy is always a good response, especially in situations where you feel frustrated or angry. Courtesy is an effective way of de-escalating emotionally-charged situations. If you’re dealing with an angry group of residents, for example, listen, be pleasant and take notes. Even if the solution is beyond your control, show that you are willing to listen. It will build your credibility and enhance their trust in you.

Being courteous can defuse tense situations, build credibility and create trust.

Be Enthusiastic

Building a strong sense of community can be fun and exciting. At times, it can also be one of the most thankless jobs around. Effective leaders see the bigger picture and remain enthusiastic, even when some members of the community try to burst your bubble with their negativity. Don’t let them get you down—keep your enthusiasm!

Communicate



The basis of all good relationships is good communication. Seek creative ways to keep the lines of communication open between your leadership and membership. Use traditional newsletters, telephone contact lists and door-to-door campaigns. Or share information via e-mail newsletters or e-groups. Most public library branches offer internet access for those who don’t have access at home.

Create Visual Impact

Whether you're looking at a small project or a major event, keep in mind the importance of making a visual impact. If you see an opportunity for your association to do something positive *and* visible—go for it! From neighbourhood clean-ups to boulevard beautification in high-traffic areas, Saskatoon community associations are finding ways to make a visual impact.

Delegate & Mentor



Sometimes it just seems easier to do things yourself. But by delegating tasks and sharing the workload, you'll make your members feel they are part of the bigger picture. When you're delegating, don't forget to include young people. Finding meaningful roles for youth and children in your community will ingrain a sense of community responsibility from a young age.

Invite Others to Share their Story

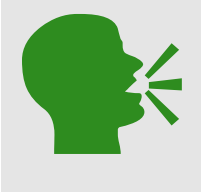
If your association is rebuilding or refocusing its efforts, it can be helpful to hear the challenges, successes and experiences of other groups. Hearing other success stories is also a great way to motivate your members to do more within your association.

Plan Short-Term Projects

Avoid burn-out (your own and others) by planning short-term successes.

Biting off more than you can chew is a common problem. It stems from enthusiasm and the desire to do a good job, but it can lead to frustration and volunteer burn-out. Your association can help itself by planning short-term projects. If your association is rebuilding or your volunteer resources are limited, starting with a small success will not only give your members a sense of accomplishment, it will help keep them interested.

Promote Accomplishments



Every neighbourhood has long-term issues and it is easy to focus on all the things that still need doing. But a strong community association builds on all the great things—large and small—you *have* done. Don't be shy about sharing the good work you are doing, promote your accomplishments!

Reflect Diversity

Your association's leadership should reflect the diversity of your community in terms of culture, heritage and even age. Ask people of different ages and backgrounds to get involved. And remember, even though not everyone you ask will say 'yes,' it is still important that you ask. Some residents will not have the time or inclination *right then*, but knowing they were asked will mean a lot ... and it leaves the door open for future involvement.

Tap Residents' Skills

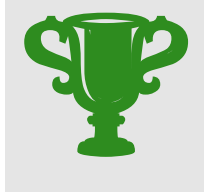
In business, employees are referred to as "human resources." Each person has talents and skills (resources) that can benefit a company, if properly tapped. The same holds true for your association. Tap your residents' skills—recruit volunteers with experience in event promotion, bookkeeping, computers, coaching, teaching, etc.

Serve Refreshments

Serving refreshments at meetings is a long-standing tradition in Saskatchewan. It's especially fun in multi-cultural neighbourhoods, where food sharing has a way of teaching us about our different cultures. It also adds a celebratory flavour to meetings and functions. Some associations have members take turns providing refreshments so it does not become a burden on any one individual.

Refreshments are a sure-fire way to build attendance at meetings.

Thank/Reward Volunteers



An “attitude of gratitude” not only maintains the interest and participation of your current members, it encourages them to invite friends, neighbours and colleagues to get involved. Take every opportunity to thank the people who volunteer their time and talents.

Incentives and Rewards. Volunteers like being rewarded for their efforts. Incentives and rewards don't have to cost a lot. Use your imagination. Thank specific people at a general meeting, acknowledge special efforts in your newsletter, stage a fun volunteer appreciation event, or give small gifts.



Tips

Maintain Member Interest

Keeping your neighbours interested and involved in the community association is an ongoing challenge, one you share with many other neighbourhood and non-profit organizations. Here are helpful tips gleaned from other organizations.

- ✓ Be realistic in your expectations. Your neighbours have jobs, families and other priorities that may limit their participation.
- ✓ Focus on a few projects. Juggling too many projects may frustrate or dilute your volunteer resources.
- ✓ Set attainable goals. Include a timeline and identify individual and/or committee responsibilities.
- ✓ Celebrate your successes—even if it means doing it one step at a time.
- ✓ Publicly recognize members. Remember to recognize volunteers for their efforts in your newsletter.
- ✓ Incorporate fun into your meetings or projects. Humour helps too!
- ✓ Ask specific neighbours to get involved. You never know who's willing to help until you ask.
- ✓ Find out what's important to specific members. Try to get them involved in committees or projects involving their interest.
- ✓ Delegate important tasks and assignments. Let your committees do their job—respect their decisions.
- ✓ Publicize meetings well in advance. It helps to list some of the topics you'll be discussing.
- ✓ Start and finish meetings on time. Respect the time and commitment of members attending the meeting.

- ✓ Keep meetings to the point. Summarize results of decisions at the end of the meeting so members leave with a sense of accomplishment.
- ✓ Keep the community informed. Publish regular newsletters or create a telephone tree or e-mail chain to share news.
- ✓ Organize social functions. Bring neighbours together by staging events; delegate organization to a special committee.
- ✓ Be responsive. If members raise questions or concerns, respond as quickly as possible.
- ✓ Involve youth. Getting kids involved in neighbourhood programs and events is good for kids. It's also a great way to get parents more involved.
- ✓ Provide useful information. Contact your Community Consultant for information on City services or to schedule speakers.
- ✓ Say thank you. Always thank volunteers for their participation and leadership.



Notes

Goal Setting

For a community association, having clearly defined goals is like having a road map to success.

Associations need clear direction. In order to chart that direction, it is important to determine the social and physical needs of your neighbourhood. One way to do this is to stage a community meeting and ask residents about their concerns, issues and interests. Encourage attendance by letting people know their input will help your association set realistic long and short-term goals.

Definitions

Goal

A goal is a statement that describes what your association wants to accomplish. Your association may have several goals, both long and short-term.

Objective

An objective is a statement that explains how your association will reach its goal(s). Your objectives should be:

- ✓ clear & concise
- ✓ specific & address identified issues/goals
- ✓ measurable
- ✓ achievable

- ✓ realistic
- ✓ time/dated.

Examples

Goal: To physically improve our neighbourhood by implementing a beautification project to enhance common areas and medians.

Objective: Create a site plan identifying all common areas and medians requiring landscaping by September 30.

Reap the Rewards

Goal setting offers a number of other advantages in addition to providing direction and focus to your activities.

1. Awareness of Neighbourhood Needs. The process of goal setting brings neighbourhood needs into sharper focus. Striving to meet these needs gives your association purpose and meaning.
2. Accomplish Projects. By putting time limits on specific goals, you can anticipate how much work is ahead and schedule accordingly.
3. Strive Toward a Common Mark. Goal setting keeps your members enthused and motivated. If your association has set a target date to complete a project, the energy level of members will increase as that target date draws near.
4. Keep Members Active. Most associations set several goals, which means there are usually several projects to work on—and something to interest most members.

Signs of a Strong
Community
Association

Clearly Understood &
Agreed Upon Goals

Clearly Defined Roles

Good Communication

Beneficial Team
Behaviours

Well Defined Decision-
Making Process

Established Ground
Rules

Balanced Participation



Leadership

Good leadership is shared leadership.

Assuming a leadership position in your community association is not something to take lightly. A leader can impact both the association and the neighbourhood for many years to come. Still, it is a role each and every member of your community association is capable of assuming. Your participation in the association is a mark of leadership in itself.

“Good leadership is shared leadership.”
(Milton Doheny)

Successful leaders are team players who are willing to share authority. A good leader knows how important it is for your association to experience a regular change in leadership, and helps cultivate future leaders. He or she has the vision and ability to build consensus, to delegate duties and authority to others, to encourage residents to get involved and to maximize neighbourhood talent.

Effective Leadership

Good leaders share a number of traits, such as a positive outlook, strong communication skills, the ability to motivate others, willingness to share power, interest in the association’s success and knowledge of the neighbourhood. Other demands include:

Communication: The ability to understand what others are trying to say and to convey decisions and action plans clearly.

Confidence: Confidence in yourself, in others, in your cause, in your neighbourhood.

Courage: Courage to withstand criticism, make sacrifices, resist pressure and continue in the face of adversity.

Decisiveness: The ability to weigh options, make decisions and win the acceptance of your neighbours.

Knowledge: An understanding of the basic issues and concerns of your neighbourhood.

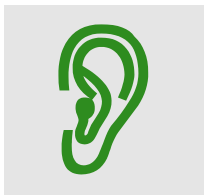
Openness: Respect for the opinions of others and willingness to work with people of differing views.

Optimism: Belief in association goals and your ability to achieve them; a “can do” attitude!

Patience: Patience to plan ahead, let ideas ripen and await the right time for action.

Good leaders lead by example. They help with the most menial tasks, like to lead from the frontlines and support members in their efforts.

Creating an Open Environment



Leaders play an important role in creating an open, welcoming atmosphere—one that encourages input and participation. Your association wants an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing their ideas, and where issues can be discussed openly and honestly.

How do you create an open, welcoming environment?

1. Create guidelines for conduct at meetings to ensure respectful and inclusive behaviour.
2. Ensure that conversations are focused on the issue at hand, not on the people involved.
3. Respect differences of personality and opinion.



Decision-Making

Effective decision-making moves your community association forward in its goals and objectives.

Decision-making is a process. Sometimes it is internal—when you work through an issue in your own mind, for example. In community associations, however, the process is more often external—a visible discussion among members. There are five basic types of decisions. Your association will find that different decision-making processes are necessary in different situations.

Types of Decisions

Individual Decisions



One person, usually your president or committee chairperson, makes the decision. It is binding for the association, and those involved or impacted are expected to abide by it. Individual decisions may be limited by your association constitution and bylaws. Examples include deciding in which school your Annual General Meeting will be held or whether to invite a special guest (such as Police Community Liaison Officer) to the next meeting.

- Is it Appropriate? The individual decision-making process does *not* work well if you're trying to encourage volunteer involvement. Leaders who consistently use this approach quickly find themselves out of touch with the desires and concerns of the general membership.

Minority Decisions

A minority decision results when several members of your association come together to make the decision—selecting a theme for an upcoming Fun Day in the Park event, for example, or reorganizing a sports equipment storage facility. Such decisions are still binding and members are expected to abide by them.

- Is it Appropriate? Minority decisions are most common at the committee level, where a group of only 2 or 3 may be granted the authority to make decisions concerning specific issues or projects. A caution, however, is that while minority decision-making is efficient for low level organizational tasks, it does not team-build or promote volunteer involvement.

Majority Decisions

A majority decision results when more than half of your members agree to a specific course of action. For example, deciding to hire a new printer for your newsletter may be put to a majority decision vote at a Board meeting. The decision is binding. This is the most common form of decision-making in community associations.

- Is it Appropriate? Majority decisions are most commonly made during votes taken at association Board meetings. They may involve policy, financial and planning issues. Majority decisions do have a downside—the minority who vote against may feel alienated. If a vote is close, you may want to consider moving the issue to a committee for further discussion.

Consensus Decisions



A decision is made by consensus when your Board or membership is asked to consider an issue and come to a general agreement on a proposed course of action. This type of decision-making is time intensive and often challenging. It is most often practiced at the Board level.

It is not recommended for Annual General Meetings, where a full agenda and time constraints can make consensus building difficult.

- Is it Appropriate? Consensus decision-making is vital when you are gathering support for major association initiatives. But it

Consensus decisions often involve asking residents, “what would it take for you to support this solution?”

can be useful on smaller issues too. It's a great way to build participation, trust and respect among your neighbours. There are also instances in which a consensus decision may be required, such as whether to install lights along the pathways in your park.

Unanimous Decisions

Each member of your Board or association fully agrees to a solution or action presented on a particular issue, and everyone concerned fully subscribes to the decision made. This is the best-case scenario, but it happens more often than you may think, especially within associations that practice consensus building. Unanimous decisions are most common at the Board level.

- Is it Appropriate? Unanimous decisions are especially important when your association is dealing with highly sensitive or emotionally charged issues. It may not always be attainable, in which case consensus decision-making is a viable option.

Building Consensus

Consensus building takes time and practice, but the results are worth the effort.

Consensus building encourages a sense of belonging and ownership among your volunteers. In a volunteer-powered organization, a sense of ownership is essential to participation. It also creates an open environment that allows your association to integrate differing viewpoints.

- Start Small. If consensus building is new to your association, practice on small decisions. Start with a simple issue, such as what date to have your Fun Day in the Park, rather than a more heated issue, such as whether to allow lighting in the park.

Consensus Building is Difficult with Large Groups. If your group is large, it can take hours, if not days, to build consensus. The consensus building model works best in groups of less than 20 people. For larger groups, form a subcommittee that includes people on all sides of the issue. Build consensus within this group, then bring the results back to the larger group for discussion and consensus building.

The Model

To successfully use consensus building, your members first need to feel comfortable and “safe.” Let them know you respect and want to hear their opinions. The following model outlines helpful steps.

1. Have your group determine its discussion guidelines. Post the guidelines at all meetings. Put them on a poster or print them on the back of your agenda. For example:
 - a) One person has the floor at a time.
 - b) Respect each other’s opinions.
 - c) Deal with the issue not the personality.
 - d) Limit remarks/comments to one minute.
 - e) No war stories.
 - f) Listen to what is being said. Do not repeat what has already been stated.
2. At meetings, ensure everyone is comfortable and able to see.
3. State issues clearly. Ask if everyone understands.
4. Identify common ground among members, such as wanting to maintain strong property values and safe streets.
5. Break issues down into easy to discuss segments. Do not try to tackle the whole issue.
6. Build consensus on each small segment and continue building until the whole issue has been addressed.
7. Summarize individual comments, then ask if there is anything else the individual wants to add or share.

8. Continue to summarize and repeat what has been decided to ensure participants understand and are in agreement.
9. When you reach an impasse, ask those involved what it would take to support the issue. Continue to negotiate until a consensus has been reached.
10. Once you have consensus, repeat the decision and ask for a vote. Summarize the action and any future steps.



Notes

Meetings

Running efficient, on-time meetings improves productivity and member participation.

Meetings are the organizational backbone of your community association. There are various types of meetings—annual, board, special and committee. In each case, you need to determine three things: when, where and with who.

Meet only when necessary. Too many meetings can burn out your volunteers.

- **Dates.** Setting a date for your meeting is not as easy as it sounds. People lead busy lives, especially through the school year. Your best bet is to agree on a time and day that suits the majority, since you are unlikely to fit everyone's schedule.
- **Locations.** Most Saskatoon community associations meet in the local school, but you can choose another location. Keep in mind it should be accessible and appropriate to the size of your group.
- **Speakers.** To add interest, consider inviting a speaker to address issues and interests expressed by your neighbours. Invite elected officials or representatives of City departments. Community organizations and social service agencies are also a good source. Ask your Community Consultant for suggestions.

Your Responsibility as a Member

All community association members have responsibilities at meetings. While you may be a director of a particular sport or activity, your duties go beyond reporting on the business of your specific area.

As an individual member, it is your responsibility to:

- Attend Board and/or committee meetings
- Be familiar with and understand your association’s by-laws
- Participate in decision-making on all issues, not just on your specific area/interest
- Vote! Voice your thoughts and opinion by voting.

Types of Meetings

Annual General Meeting

Your annual general meeting should be held during the same month every year. It is open to all community residents. The main purpose is to elect new members to your Board for the coming year, to approve the annual budget and to discuss upcoming or ongoing projects and issues. If an issue is raised that cannot be adequately addressed at your annual meeting (and this does happen), organize a special meeting to deal with that one issue.

Board Meetings

The people elected to your Board are sometimes referred to as directors. Your Board should meet monthly *or* as often as needed to oversee the concerns and projects of your association. The Board is authorized, within the limits of the budget approved at your annual general meeting, to administer the month-to-month business of your association. Local residents do not usually attend these meetings, although they can.

Want to earn the gratitude of your members? Limit meetings to 1 or 2 hours.

Special Meetings

Special meetings can be called as many times as needed throughout the year. Members of your Board can call the meetings to discuss issues or decisions that require the participation of the wider community. The neighbourhood should receive at least 15 days notice. If a vote is to be taken, check with your association bylaws or Robert’s Rules of Order to determine how to handle proxy and absentee votes.

Committee Meetings

Committees meet separately to discuss and implement specific responsibilities such as newsletters, welcoming new neighbours, membership drives, beautification projects and so on. Some committees are formed for a specific project and then dissolved. Others are standing committees that operate on an ongoing basis. Committees regularly report their activities at Board meetings.

The All-Important Agenda

A well-planned agenda is key to running a successful meeting. An agenda is simply a list of things you want to discuss at the meeting. It is both a schedule and a reminder of the items you need to cover.

Why is the Agenda So Important?

- A well-planned agenda ensures important issues are not overlooked.
- The president or committee chairperson uses the agenda to keep the meeting on track and within specified time limits.
- Posting your agenda gives local residents a chance to prepare their input on specific topics.
- The agenda can also announce your next meeting.

How to Prepare an Agenda



The president and secretary are responsible for preparing the agenda. To prepare an agenda, use one from a previous meeting as a model, or create your own using these simple tips.

- Check the minutes of the last meeting and note any unfinished business.

- Review all correspondence received since the last meeting.
- Note any new business since the last meeting.
- Have the treasurer prepare a financial report.
- Include committee chairpersons and members who are to make reports.
- Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up. Use flyers, phone calls, etc. to encourage attendance.
- Stick to your agenda.

A sample agenda is including on the following page.

Sample Agenda Format

1. Call Meeting to Order
 2. Approval of Agenda
 - Approve agenda additions or deletions.
 - A motion is needed to approve agenda (as presented or as amended if changes).
 3. Adoption of Minutes of Last Board Meeting
 - As presented OR errors/omissions are identified and minutes adopted as amended

Note: It is courteous to place guest speakers third on your agenda, with business items following after.
 4. Business arising from Minutes
 - Reporting of all old business.
 - Any motions from last meeting that required action or follow-up.
 5. Correspondence
 - For the record, read out all of the correspondence received.
 - Chair may recommend piece of correspondence be accepted as information only.
 6. Chair's Report
 7. Coordinators' Reports
 - Treasurer's Report requires a motion, seconder and vote for approval.
 8. New Business
 - Items listed in order of priority.
 - Additions.
 9. Announcements
 - Next meeting date, time & location.
 10. Adjournment
 - Motion required, no seconder.
-

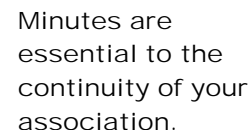
Taking Minutes

Written minutes are the only record of your association's business. Year by year, they detail the evolution of your neighbourhood. They are an important point of reference, as well as a tool for helping orientate new Board members and committee chairs.

A Guide to Taking Minutes

The secretary is responsible for taking minutes. At the top of the first page, clearly write/type the name of your association. In the first paragraph include:

1. kind of meeting (committee, special, board, etc.)
2. name of the committee that is meeting
3. date, including year, time and place of meeting
4. name of presiding officer
5. names of members present & absent. For larger meetings, have a sign-in sheet and attach this to the minutes.
6. whether minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read, mailed or corrected.



Minutes are essential to the continuity of your association.

Begin recording minutes. Summarize. You don't have to write down everything everyone says—just capture the highlights.

- Major issues.
- Proposed suggestions.
- Conflicting points of view.
- Motions and votes.
 - Record main motions. Include name of member(s) who made the motion and underline the action. State and underline whether the motion carried or failed.
- Time of adjournment.
- End minutes with your name (e.g. "John Jones, Secretary"). After minutes are approved, write "approved" and the date at the top.

Tips

Conduct Productive Meetings

The president or committee chairperson is responsible for conducting a meeting. Robert's Rules of Order is a good detailed reference, but this outline provides the highlights.

Don't get caught in the "meeting trap." You don't need to have a monthly meeting just for the sake of meeting – meet when you have business to discuss.

- ✓ *Always* start on time. Open your meeting location at least 15 minutes early so members can socialize and settle in.
- ✓ Introduce public officials and guest speakers at the beginning of each meeting.
- ✓ Recognize and welcome newcomers at the beginning of each meeting.
- ✓ Briefly state the purpose of the meeting. Keep comments relevant to the agenda items being discussed.
- ✓ Use visual aids as much as possible. People relate to things they can see.
- ✓ Allow everyone to contribute. After an issue is presented, open the discussion—but do set time limits.
- ✓ Make frequent summaries during discussion so that everyone clearly understands the issues and responses.
- ✓ Stress co-operation not conflict. If conflict occurs, appoint a committee to research the concern and report findings at the next meeting.
- ✓ Encourage individuals who voice concerns to be part of the solution and join a committee.
- ✓ Assign tasks and delegate responsibilities. People will feel they are contributing, not just listening.
- ✓ Guide the meeting from concerns to solutions. Build consensus by asking others how they approach the issue.
- ✓ Before adjourning, announce the date, time and place of your next meeting.

- ✓ Thank everyone for their participation and attendance.

Not accomplishing your agenda? Here are some common problems.

- The purpose of your meeting is unclear.
- Your members and neighbours are not prepared.
- The meeting detours from the issue at hand.
- Too many “mini-meetings” going on in the audience.
- Progress made during the meeting, including decisions and actions, is not reviewed.
- The manner in which decisions will be carried out is not discussed.

Handling Difficult Individuals

It can happen at any meeting. One individual refuses to let the agenda move forward. The best way to handle this? Call a break and talk with the individual privately. Ask for help in moving the meeting or decision-making process along. Ask what it would take to come to a compromise. Hopefully, you can come to an agreement. If not, you may have to accept that you will not be able to include the individual in consensus building on the issue.

What to do when a member—

Gets angry:

Don't get caught up in his/her anger. Don't get defensive. Remain objective. Explore the ideas and let the group decide their value.

Would like to help:

Encourage the individual to frequently share ideas, particularly when discussion is bogging down. Get the person involved.

Splits hairs:

Acknowledge the point but remind the individual of the objective and the time limit.

Just keeps talking:

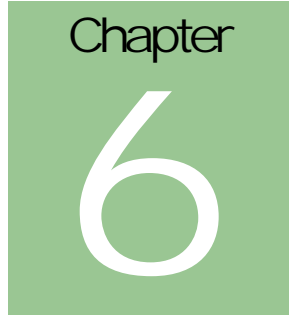
Interrupt tactfully. Ask a question to bring the conversation back to the point being discussed.

Seems afraid to speak:

Ask easy questions. Give the member credit when possible and make him/her feel important.



Notes



Volunteers

Volunteers are the life-blood of your community associations.

Where would Saskatoon be without community association volunteers? Residents would not have access to the wide variety of programs, classes and activities they do; nor would neighbourhoods have a strong voice to represent their concerns at the civic planning and services level.

Becoming a volunteer with your community association involves a commitment of time and effort, but the reward is knowing you are making a real, lasting impact on quality of life in your neighbourhood.

Tell me,
I forget.

Show me,
I remember.

Involve me,
I understand.

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteers fill many roles in your association. Some serve on the Board or other committees, others help with specific activities at special events. To maintain continuity and eliminate confusion, your association should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of volunteers serving on the Board or other committees. This includes written expectations of the Board as well as written job descriptions for each officer and committee.

Board of Directors

Your community association may already have a written explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors. Review it to see if it clearly outlines what is expected of each member. For example, expectations might include:

- Represent the entire community at the table
- Attend monthly Board meetings
- Support the objectives and goals of the association
- Take responsibility for designated tasks
- Be fair and honest in all dealings
- Respect confidentiality
- Respect and accept differences
- Share failures and celebrate successes
- Budget and manage finances.

Directors

As a member of your community association’s Board of Directors, your first responsibility is to speak up—share your opinions, ask questions and vote on issues.

Those who hold specific positions on the Board need to clearly understand their responsibilities. Each position on your Board should have a written job description, including a detailed list of tasks expected. Depending on the needs of your neighbourhood and available volunteers, your Board of Directors may include some or all of the following positions.

- **President:** Overall leader of the community association, responsible for building the group. Coordinates activities, sees that objectives are carried out and ensures that everyone participates in decisions.
- **Vice President:** Assists the president in overall leadership and group building of the association.
- **Past President:** Acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors.
- **Secretary:** Records all the proceedings of the association.

- Director of Finance: Responsible for the association's overall financial matters.
- Director of Recreational & Cultural Activities (Indoor): Responsible for the planning, management and coordination of all indoor recreational activities, fine arts and crafts programs.
- Director of Membership: Coordinates selling of memberships and maintains an accurate membership list.
- Director of Civic Affairs: Coordinates the association's efforts in matters pertaining to neighbourhood traffic patterns, zoning, property assessment and things outside parks and recreation.
- Director of Education: Acts as a liaison between the community association and Home and School Association.
- Director at Large: Training ground for future Board members.
- Director of Basketball / Softball / Soccer: Separate positions to organize and coordinate sports programs for the association.
- Director of Social: Organizes and coordinates social activities for the association.
- Director of Rink Programming and Operation: Provides overall administration of rink operations for the association.
- Director of Volunteers: Provides management, recruitment, training and orientation for association volunteers.

Committees

Committees can play a vital role in associations. They help distribute the workload, provide an opportunity for members to get involved, and train and prepare future directors. The Board has the authority to establish committees as necessary to carry out the functions of the association.

Examples of community association committees include Fun Day in the Park, "Greenspace" and fundraising committees. Your Community Consultant can help you draft terms of reference for committees.

Sample Job Descriptions

Following are three job descriptions developed by the Silverwood Heights Community Association. While your association may have slightly different titles and/or duties, we have included these as a good starting point for developing your own job descriptions. For more sample job descriptions contact your Community Consultant

President

Role

Overall leader of the association; coordinate association activities and ensure objectives are carried out.

Responsibilities

- Preside at meetings of the Board and the annual general meeting.
- Prepare the agenda for each meeting.
- Ensure meetings run smoothly and quickly in a positive atmosphere.
- Appoint a Board member to act in his/her capacity in his/her absence.
- Chairs all meetings according to parliamentary procedures (Robert's Rules of Order).
- Signing authority for all payments and all legal papers and contracts.
- Ensure all Board members understand their duties and responsibilities.
- Ensure all Board members carry out their assigned duties.
- Act on the association's behalf in matters pertaining to the association to government, outside agencies, City of Saskatoon and at public functions.
- Watch for and encourage new volunteers.

Time Commitment - Intense

- Coordinate and prepare for monthly Board meetings.
- Maintain contact with Board members between meetings.
- Field inquiries from membership.
- Attend various community activities.
- Facilitate consensus-building approach to problem solving.

Skills

Leadership • Management • Commitment • Decision Making • Coordination • Public Relations • Delegation • Diplomacy

Secretary

Role

Record proceedings of the association.

Responsibilities

- Record and preserve minutes of Board, annual and special meetings.
 - Prepare and distribute minutes of meetings to Board members.
 - Notify Board members of next meeting (by phone, email, minutes of previous meeting, etc.).
 - Keep and maintain attendance record.
 - Maintain up-to-date file of minutes and keep in association office.
 - Assist with agenda preparation.
 - Watch for and encourage new volunteers.
-

Time Commitment - Light

- Attend monthly Board meetings.
 - Type minutes as per approved format.
 - Distribute minutes in timely fashion.
 - Assist on committees.
-

Skills

Minute Taking • Word Processing • Typing • Coordination • Administration • Commitment

Director of Finance

Role

Responsible for overall financial matters of the association.

Responsibilities

- Maintain financial records of the association in accordance with general accounting practices.
 - Prepare and present current financial statements at each Board meeting.
 - Coordinate the preparation and presentation of the annual budget.
 - Prepare and deposit all deposits, including balancing, deposit slips, etc.
 - Prepare and pay all payables (cheques, account payable sheet, receipt balancing).
 - Coordinate collection of registration fees and membership fees.
 - Prepare all floats needed for registration events, and balance monies received from association events.
 - Prepare grant application forms and submit to Leisure Services.
 - Prepare financial statements for presentation to the community at annual general meeting.
 - Act as co-signatory on documents and cheques drawn on association funds.
 - Watch for and encourage new volunteers.
-

Time Commitment - Moderate

- Attend monthly Board meetings.
 - Prepare financial statements and regular banking procedures.
 - Assist at registration nights, membership blitz and social functions.
-

Skills

Administration • Accounting • Decision Making • Coordination • Organization • Diplomacy • Public Relations • Commitment



Finances

Financial accountability and effective budgeting will ensure your association thrives long-term.

As a non-profit corporation, your community association must have procedures in place to provide financial accountability. It is the responsibility of your Board and treasurer to ensure income and expenses are accounted for and recorded.

The treasurer reports to the Board on a monthly basis. He or she identifies expenditures, income and where the community association stands based on the yearly budget. The treasurer also compiles a yearly budget that must be approved by the membership at the annual general meeting.

Your Association Must ...

1. Make deposits frequently and promptly.
2. Deal with all money matters through a motion and record decision/action.
3. Have a maximum \$ amount that can be spent without authorization.
4. Track cheques monthly.
5. Share financial signing authority among 2-3 people, and require at least 2 signatures.

6. File a financial statement with the Corporations Branch within 4 months of year-end.
7. File an annual return with the Corporations Branch.
8. Report to your members on your annual financial statement and the next year's budget at the annual general meeting.

Role of Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for the financial decisions of your association. Its role is to provide input into the budgeting process, including:

- Monitoring activities/affairs of association funds
- Protecting the association from fraud
- Approving monthly financial statements.

Role of Treasurer

Your treasurer is responsible for providing monthly financial statements to the Board as well as maintaining records and statements in order to:

- Protect the association from fraud
- Monitor and advise on neighbourhood funds
- Guide the budgeting process
- Present final budget for approval at annual general meeting.

If you need help, ask your Community Consultant about the next Treasurer's Workshop.



TIP

In order to maintain a financially sound association, your Board needs to receive regular monthly financial statements. If you're not seeing regular statements, it is important to follow-up with your treasurer to address any reasons for the delay.

TIP:

A background in finances is helpful, but you don't need business training to be treasurer for your association. Remember, many have done this job before you. If they can do it, so can you. Learn from their experience.

Risk Management

Protecting your members with liability insurance is good business sense.

All community associations are required to carry general liability insurance. This protects your members and Board, as well as any property owned by your association.

General Liability

To meet the City of Saskatoon's grant criteria, your community association must carry \$2 million in general liability insurance.

Your association may also wish to carry other types of insurance, such as property and equipment insurance. In all cases, your policies should be reviewed, amended (if needed) and renewed every year.

Tips for Minimizing Liability

1. Attend Board meetings.
2. Read the minutes of Board meetings.
3. Familiarize yourself with the association's purpose, objectives, goals, programs and bylaws.
4. Avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of personal gain.

5. Familiarize yourself with the association's finances, including the budget and budget process.
6. Know who is authorized to sign cheques and for what amount.
7. Be sure the association's books are reviewed on an annual basis.
8. Question all matters concerning policy and practice.
9. Determine how the organization is viewed in the community.
10. Review the association's publications prior to distribution.
11. Maintain accurate records of all association decisions and policies.



List of Community Associations

Adelaide Park/Churchill	Lawson Heights
Avalon	Massey Place
Brevoort Park	Meadowgreen
Briarwood	Montgomery Place
Buena Vista	Mount Royal
Caswell Hill	North Park/Richmond Heights
City Park	Nutana
College Park	Pacific Heights
Confederation Park	Parkridge
Dundonald	Pleasant Hill
East College Park	Queen Elizabeth
Eastview	River Heights
Erindale/Arbor Creek	Riversdale
Exhibition	Silverspring
Fairhaven	Silverwood Heights
Greystone Heights	South Nutana Park
Holiday Park	Sutherland/Forest Grove
Holliston	Varsity View
Kelsey	Westmount
King George	Westview Heights
Lakeridge	Wildwood
Lakeview	

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AREA OFFICE: 975-3378

For information on your local Community Association, visit the City of Saskatoon website at <http://www.saskatoon.ca>, click on Community Associations under "What's New." Contact names & numbers are listed under individual Community Associations.

Notes