

How to Start (or Jump-Start) a Neighborhood Association

Introduction

Neighborhood associations play a vital link in our community. They open doors of communication between neighbors and city government. They also provide key information that is more “local” than virtually any other source.

Sometimes it’s difficult to find ways to make a neighborhood association function effectively. Here’s a list of tools, along with sample documents, that can help you start up a neighborhood association or put one back on its feet after a difficult period.

Step #1 - Know Your City Partners

- Melissa Bisset – City Recorder
- Dawn Wilson – Deputy City Recorder
- Tim Wood – Assistant City Manager
- Shane Witham – Planning Director

The City of Keizer [website](#) contains key information about each Neighborhood Association. It contains existing bylaws, minutes, etc. This can be an important tool for you. The Assistant City Manager works with Keizer’s budget and can help you get funds for postage and flyers (see “Getting the Word Out” below). The Planning Department can give you a detailed map of your neighborhood and the addresses.

Step #2 - Find Your Neighborhood Partners

This can be the hardest part. You will probably need at least three people who are interested in starting up the group. These will fill the traditional officer roles (with one possibly doubling as Treasurer), at least in the beginning. With at least three willing to hold these roles, you can hold very simple elections and give your names to the City (for Step #3 below).

Once you’ve identified your core members, the next step is to decide on a regular meeting time. Consistent meeting times and places can help build membership. Neighborhood Associations currently meet at the Keizer Community Center.

Step #3 - Do A Little Paperwork

The City needs to know who you are, especially if you’d like to use some city funds to help with mailings, etc. In Keizer, it’s likely that your association exists on paper but has fallen behind with its annual reports to the City and filing of its minutes. Put together a one-page report introducing the association officers and your general plan for the year, which can fill in as the “Annual Report” (see sample) and give it to the City Recorder. Fill out a “Minutes Form” (see sample) when you meet and submit that, also.

If you have bylaws on file, some paperwork is already done for you. Gubser Neighborhood Association’s bylaws are also included as an example if you are starting “from scratch.”

Step #4 – Getting the Word Out and Getting Neighbors to Come)

Association success often depends on getting word of the meetings to members and giving them a good reason to come. Options for getting the word out include postcard mailings, flyers, notification in the Keizer Times and Statesman Journal calendars and web postings and/or Email lists. (See sample flyer, postcard “make-ready” for four cards per 8 1/2” by 11” page, Keizer Times calendar notice and web page.) These take some time and effort, but if you have put together a standard format and timetable for them, the process becomes routine and much, much easier with time. Using the map from the Planning Department and list really helps.

Neighbors often come when there is a “focus topic” with a speaker that interests them. Because a neighborhood includes a variety of interests, it’s good to have a variety of topics lined up. City personnel can provide a great source for speakers. Many non-profit organizations are eager for speaking opportunities.

Step #5 - Making the Meeting Work Well

The meeting will only attract and keep new members if it is well-run. An agenda helps keep things on track (see sample- two per photocopy page). The sign-in sheet is also essential (see sample). It can be used to build future mailing and phoning list sand to survey attendees’ interests. It’s your “roll call” and planner. Starting with a “Welcome and Introductions” segment will help your neighbors feel at home.

Step #6 - Planning Ahead

If your neighborhood association doesn’t meet during the summer months or during the holidays (December), you’re planning will only require about eight programs for the year. Sometimes planning a whole year at once is simplest. It also allows you “in-between-times” to try different meeting formats and forums for smaller groups, such as a traffic study group or a neighborhood watch group. Reminding the attendees of upcoming events will help bring them back. It also allows you to budget for costs with the City.

Final Comments

Using these steps and sample documents will be very helpful to you in starting up your group, making your neighborhood association work valuable and rewarding.

SAMPLE MINUTES

Gubser Neighborhood Association

Record of Meeting Activities for: _____

Key Topic: _____

Other business: _____

Attending: _____

Motions/Action Items: _____

Next Meeting: _____

Next Meeting Agenda Items: _____

SAMPLE BYLAWS

GUBSER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION BYLAWS

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Gubser Neighborhood Association, herein known in this document as the Association.

ARTICLE II – AREA

The Association shall encompass that area bounded by the Bonneville Power Administration transmission lines to the south shore of Labish Ditch and Lake Labish on the north, the city limits of Keizer on the east, the north sides of Chemawa Road NE to Lockhaven Drive NE on the south, and the east side of River Road N on the west.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

Section 1 The Association will be advisory to the Keizer City Council, Planning Commission, Parks Advisory Board; Salem-Keizer School District, Marion county Commissioners, and all other organizational bodies as requested or required, on matters affecting the growth, development, and all other factors affecting the livability of the area within the boundaries of the Association. Such advisory communication is not limited to the neighborhood plans and proposals with respect to land use, zoning, parks, open space and recreation, housing, school and community facilities, transportation and traffic and other factors affecting the social and economic welfare of the members of the Association.

Section 2 The Association will provide a forum for open discussion and allow maximum citizen participation in the formation of the public policy to all members of the Association.

Section 3 The Association will improve open communication between Association members, community leaders, and elected and appointed officials.

Section 4 The association will promote, coordinate and conclude, in an orderly fashion, the business of the Association in order to protect and enhance the quality of life in Keizer.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 The Association shall be non-partisan, non-commercial, and non-sectarian.

Section 2 Membership shall not discriminate or limit membership by race, religion, ethnic origin, age or gender.

Section 3 The general membership shall be open to all residents, property owners, and business owners or one appointed representative of any business or institution, within the boundaries of the Association.

Section 4 Monthly general membership meetings are considered desirable and shall be held at the hour and day designated by the Association board. The association Board should provide whenever possible at least five (5) days notification to the

general membership of the time, place and purpose of the general membership meeting.

ARTICLE V – VOTING

- Section 1 There shall be no voting by proxy.
- Section 2 Each member 18 years of age and over shall be entitled to one vote per voting opportunity.
- Section 3 Motions and decisions shall be passed based on majority vote.
- Section 4 A quorum is duly constituted by those present.

ARTICLE VI – ASSOCIATION BOARD

- Section 1 The Association Board, herein known in this document as the Board, shall consist of twelve (12) persons and shall include the four Association officers and two members from each area as described in this section (map attached).

Area #1: Bounded by the south side of Labish Ditch and the south shore of Lake Labish on the north, the city limits of Keizer on the east, the Bonneville Power Administration transmission lines, west of McLeod Lane NE, and the north side of Tepper Lane NE on the south, and the east side of Labish Ditch on the west.

Area #2 Bounded by the Bonneville Power Administration transmission lines on the north, the west side of 14th Avenue NE on the east, the north side of Lockhaven Drive NE on the south, and the east side of River Road N on the west.

Area #3 Bounded by the Bonneville Power Administration transmission lines on the north, the west side of McLeod Lane NE on the east, the north side of Lockhaven Drive NE on the south, and the east side of 14th Avenue NE on the west.

Area #4 Bounded by the south side of Tepper Lane NE on the north, the city limits of Keizer on the east, the north side of Lockhaven Drive NE and Chemawa Road NE on the south, and the east side of McLeod Lane NE on the west.

- Section 2 A nominating Committee will attempt to provide at least two nominations for each open position. Nominations may also be made by the membership at the general membership meeting held in September/October.
- Section 3 Board members shall be elected by a majority of those voting members in attendance at the November general membership meeting.
- Section 4 Each area representative must reside, own property, own a business or be a representative of any business or institution located within the area's boundaries.
- Section 5 Board members shall serve a one (1) year term, from January 1st through December 31st of the year following their election.

Section 6 Whenever a vacancy occurs on the Board, such vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by majority vote at the next Board meeting or as soon as possible thereafter. The Board may declare a Board position vacant if the member is absent from four (4) consecutive meetings, regular or specially called.

ARTICLE VII – DUTIES OF THE ASSOCIATION BOARD

Section 1 The board shall hold at least one general membership meeting each year, holding other general membership meeting according to Article IV, Section 4.

Section 2 The Board shall hold at least quarterly meetings conducting business and taking such action as may be necessary to fulfill the purpose and accomplish the goals of the Association.

Section 3 Those board members present for an officially convened meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 4 In the event of a tie vote by the board, the motion under consideration shall be brought before the membership at the next general membership meeting.

Section 5 Special meetings of the Board, for any purpose or purposes, may be called by the President, or if absent, by any other officer of the Association. Three (3) days advanced notice of the time and place of any Board meeting shall be given to each Board member. Notice shall also be provided to the media to assist in the notification of the general membership. Notice shall state the purpose of the meeting.

Section 6 Any Decision by the Board may be nullified by a majority vote of the voting membership in attendance at a general membership meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – DUTIES OF THE OFFICER

Section 1 The Association officers shall consist of a President, vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2 The President shall be responsible for the general supervision and direction of the Board and the Association; shall preside at all meetings of the Board and general membership; shall be responsible for an annual report to the City Council in February; appoints all committee members/chairpersons and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 3 The Vice-President shall in the absence of the President execute all the powers of the President, and perform other duties as assigned by the President.

Section 4 The secretary shall record the minutes of all general membership and Board meetings and provide the Executive board with copies of said minutes, retain a copy for the Association files, and file one copy with the city Recorder; maintain Association and membership records, including all pertinent data in cooperation with the Area Representatives.

Section 5 The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records and be accountable for the funds of the Association. Upon request of any Association member, the

Treasurer shall open for examination all financial records of the Association. The Board shall conduct an examination of the Association financial records annual. A motion for acceptance shall be made regarding the condition of the examination with appropriate recommendations.

Section 6 In the event a checking account is established in the name of the Association and for its business purposes only, all checks will require two signatures. Only Association officer have the authority to sign a check.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

Section 1 In order to carry out the work of the Association, committees not limited to Christmas Lighting, Parks, Financial, Neighborhood Watch, Land Use, Nominating, etc. may be created by a majority vote of the Board.

Section 2 The purpose of a committee is to examine an issue(s) and make a recommendation to the Board, and take such action as directed by the Board.

Section 3 Committee members, to include the chairperson, shall be appointed by the Association President. Each committee shall elect its own secretary.

Section 4 The secretary of each committee shall present three written copies of the minutes of the committee meetings to the committee chairperson who shall file a copy with the Association President and a copy with the Association Secretary.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be repealed or amended or new bylaws may be adopted by a majority vote at any general meeting. Public notice of the meeting and of the proposed bylaw changes shall be made at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting.

SAMPLE FLYER

The topic is

KEIZER STATION!

- - - > Current Construction Status

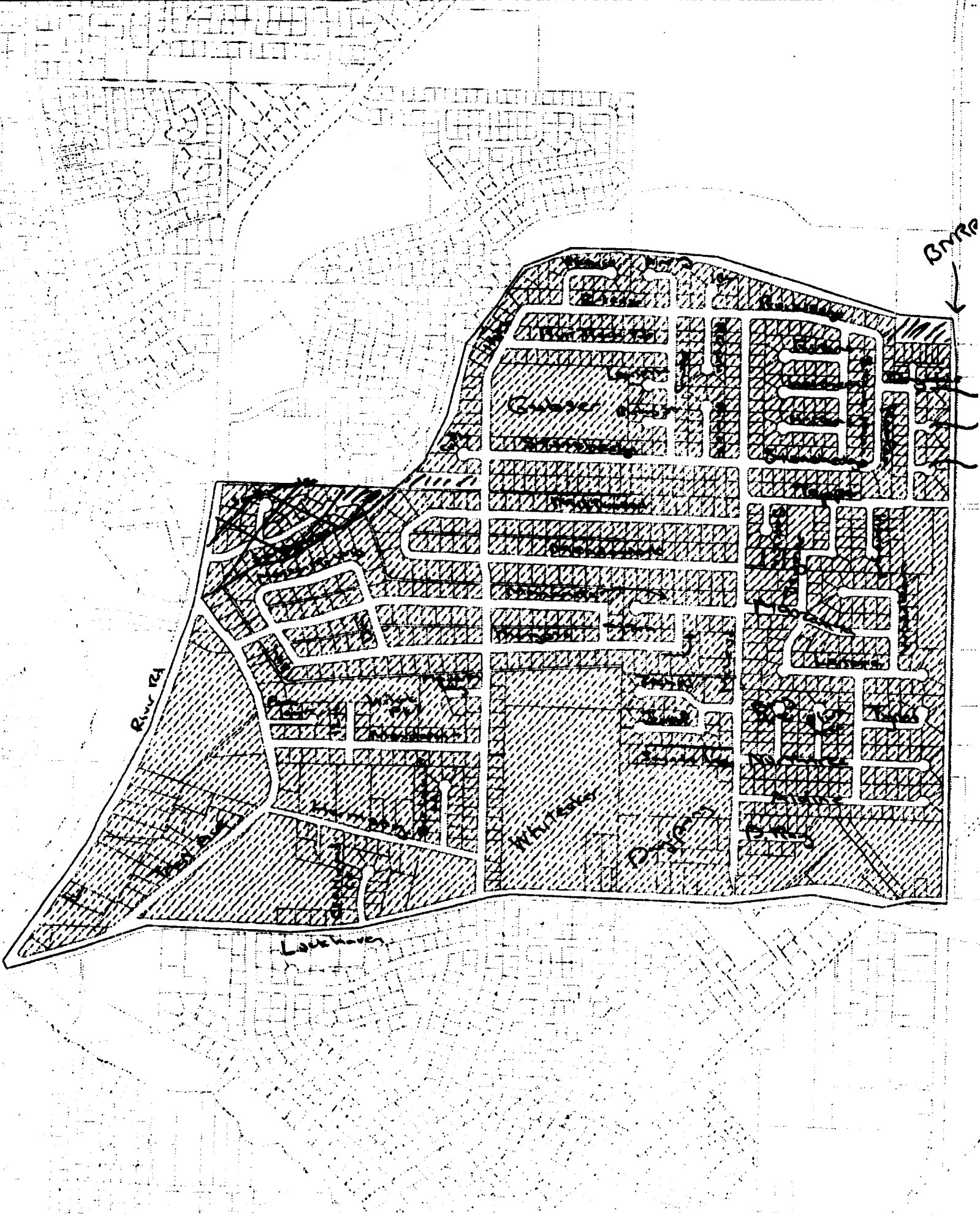
- - - > Other Current Developments

Come join us as Nate Brown, Keizer's Community Development Director, speaks to us on this important and timely topic.

WHERE: Gubser Elementary School (Library Area)

WHEN: Thursday, May 19th, 7PM

SPONSORED BY: Gubser Neighborhood Association
Questions? Call (503) 945-8236



SAMPLE AGENDA

Gubser Neighborhood Association Agenda

Date:

Welcome and Introductions

Focus Topic:

Old Business and Committee Reports:

New Business:

Adjourn

(Quick Officers' Meeting Follows)

Next Meeting Time and Place:

Gubser Neighborhood Association Agenda

Date:

Welcome and Introductions

Focus Topic:

Old Business and Committee Reports:

New Business:

Adjourn

(Quick Officers' Meeting Follows)

Next Meeting Time and Place:

