

Community Associations

Volunteer Handbook



Table of Contents

Introduction: The Essential Role of the Community Association

CHAPTER 1

ORGANIZATION.....	6
The Building Blocks.....	6
How to Make Your Association Thrive	9
Tips: Maintain Member Interest.....	12

CHAPTER 2

GOAL SETTING.....	15
Definitions	15
Reap the Rewards.....	16

CHAPTER 3

LEADERSHIP	17
Effective Leadership.....	17
Creating an Open Environment	18

CHAPTER 4

DECISION-MAKING	19
Types of Decisions	19
Building Consensus	21

CHAPTER 5

MEETINGS	24
Your Responsibility as a Member	24
Types of Meetings	25
All Important Agenda	26
Taking Minutes.....	28
Tips: Conduct Productive Meetings	29
Handling Difficult Individuals.....	31

CHAPTER 6

VOLUNTEERS	33
Roles & Responsibilities	33
Sample Job Descriptions	36

CHAPTER 7

FINANCES	39
----------------	----

CHAPTER 8

RISK MANAGEMENT	41
General Liability.....	41
Tips for Minimizing Liability	41

INDEX

LIST OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS.....	43
-------------------------------------	----

The Essential 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, and plan and administer seasonal sport, culture, and recreation programs at minimal cost to residents. They also work to enhance the quality of life for people living in their neighbourhoods.

An association may run an outdoor rink in winter, help 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
- Create quality neighbourhood programs
- Provide input on neighbourhood improvements

Community associations play a key 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 community spirit and creates a bond of common interests that leads to more supportive problem solving.

Quality Neighbourhood Programs

Community association recreation programs offer children and neighbours important social interaction as they learn positive ways to interact and play together. This can add to their self esteem. Sport programs teach values such as fair play and respect for opponents. Family-oriented programs provide opportunities for parents and children to play together while building a closer family bond.

Have a Say on Neighbourhood Improvements

Your association provides a way the City to provide services and information to residents.

When it comes to neighbourhood improvements, community associations provide local residents a chance to voice their opinions and concerns. They are also a resource for the City on issues such as land use, park planning, and other community-based planning. Community associations are a way for the City to learn what the public wants to see, through community meetings and other events.

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.

This handbook gives community association volunteers a resource for organizing, operating, and participating in their association. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your Community Consultant at 306-975-3378.

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 constantly being reinvented. Every year new members join and new people are elected to the Board, while long-time members retire and move on. High turnover is common in a volunteer-run organization.

Every year as the Board recruits new members and volunteers they need to train and nurture newcomers for the long term. The cycle begins with the election of a new Board at the annual general meeting. After an orientation and training, it is important to ensure that new volunteers stay interested and have meaningful work with the Board. Sitting down with new volunteers will help them understand the expectations for their roles and motivate them to be members of the group. As members get to know each other, programs and initiatives take root. At the end of the season, take a moment to recognize the volunteers and reflect on the group's accomplishments before beginning the cycle all over again.

The Building Blocks

A thriving community association needs a solid foundation. Your basic building blocks include well informed volunteers and goals and objectives, a structure to govern how the group will function, and neighbourhood involvement and funding.

Clear Goals and 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 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. With a clear direction and with programs, your association is able to respond to specific needs and community issues, which provides members with a greater sense of accomplishment.

CHAPTER

1

Written Operating Procedures

Written operating procedures and policies are essential for your community association. They ensure continuity year to year, which is especially important for succession planning and orienting new members on the Board. The most common operating documents are the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

The Non-profit Corporations Act 1995 in Saskatchewan, requires community associations to hold current Articles of Incorporation.

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

- **Articles of Incorporation** are designed to give shape to your association. They follow a form set out by the Corporate Registry, Information Services of Saskatchewan. 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 to supplement the Articles of Incorporation, to clarify the governance procedures and provide rules for governing your association (how your meetings and group will operate). 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 of 1995. More information is available online from the Information Services Corporation at www.isc.ca/corporateregistry/Pages/default.aspx

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

Committees can be a 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), and events. The membership, social, civics and community safety are examples of standing committees commonly used by associations.
- Special committees (ad hoc) are created to address short-term issues such as Bylaw reviews, financial reviews, social events, and other specific projects. The special committees are dissolved after the issue is addressed to the satisfaction of members.

Neighbourhood Input and Involvement

The secret to a healthy community association is an active membership. Your association newsletter, website, social media, community schools, committee meetings, and special events all provide forums for neighbourhood input and involvement. These are 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 fees are a common source of funding for community associations. Since associations have expenses (equipment, special events, newsletter mailing/delivery, program costs, insurance costs, annual financial review, etc.) you need to operate according to a budget. Your budget should support 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; volunteers are less open to generic “Volunteer Needed” advertisements, but do respond when asked personally, or when the position is advertised very clearly so they know what to expect. By recruiting more volunteers you don’t need to bear all the work responsibility and your association becomes a way to accomplish tasks.

You can advertise in the Leisure Guide, via social media (Facebook and Twitter), newsletters, social events, registration nights, programs, email lists, membership lists, schools, and with community development resources; just ask your community consultant!

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

Be Courteous

Courtesy is always a good relationship builder, especially in situations where you feel frustrated or disappointed. Courtesy is an effective way of de-escalating emotional situations. If you’re dealing with a heated 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 and it will build up their trust in you.

Be Enthusiastic

Building a strong sense of community can be fun and exciting, but it can also be hard to measure your successes. Effective leaders see the bigger picture and remain enthusiastic and forward thinking. At times some community members may be displeased with what they are experiencing and express themselves negatively. Don’t let them get you down, keep your enthusiasm, and share with someone you trust who can lend a helping hand.

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 email, newsletters, or social media. Public library branches offer Internet access for those who don't have access at home.

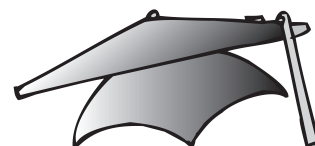


Create Visual Impact

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

Recruit, Train, Mentor, and DELEGATE!

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. Most volunteers leave positions because they are bored or lack meaningful work. Make sure you ask them what they are interested in, and then delegate!



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. The Community Newsletter is a great source for inspiring stories from community associations. Call 306-975-3378 for more information.

Plan Short-Term Projects

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

Having unrealistic goals is a common problem that leads to volunteer burn out. It stems from enthusiasm and the desire to do a good job but may lead to frustration and apathy. Your association can help itself by planning short-term projects. If your association is rebuilding or volunteer resources are limited, start with a small goal. If you have not been able to run programs, start with one or two and increase from there. Achieving this goal will give your group a sense of accomplishment and help keep volunteers interested.



Promote Accomplishments

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

Reflect Diversity

Your association's leadership should reflect the diversity of your community in terms of race, heritage, gender, and age. Ask people of different ages and backgrounds to get involved. Even though not everyone you ask will say yes, it is still important to ask and include these groups. 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

Employees at work are referred to as "human resources." Each person has talents and skills (resources) that can benefit an organization if properly applied. The same holds true for your association. Make sure you know your residents' skills, and recruit volunteers with experience in event promotion, bookkeeping, computers, coaching, teaching, governance, and leadership.

Refreshments are
a sure-fire way to
build...

Make Meetings Fun

Volunteers serve organizations because they have meaningful services to perform and because they are enjoying themselves, meeting people, and having fun. Volunteer satisfaction is a priority, and ensuring you have laughs at the meeting is a great way to make people feel welcome and break the ice.

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. Some associations have members take turns providing refreshments so it does not become a burden on any one individual. You can also host meetings at different venues, schools, homes, and restaurants or coffee shops. Sharing the chairing of the meeting is also a great way to increase the diversity of the meetings, prevent boredom, and provide a way for others to learn new skills.

Thank and Reward Volunteers

An “attitude of gratitude” not only maintains the interest and encourages 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

People like being rewarded for their efforts. Incentives and rewards don't have to cost a lot or anything at all. 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. Association T-shirts, cups or pens are a way to show appreciation and advertise to the rest of the community at the same time.



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 from other organizations.

- **Be realistic in your expectations.** Your neighbours have jobs, families, and other priorities that may impact their participation.
- **Focus on a few projects.** Juggling too many projects may frustrate or weaken your volunteer resources.
- **Set attainable goals.** Include a timeline and identify individual and/or committee responsibilities.

- **Celebrate your successes.** Ensure you recognize successes by advertising them at the AGM, online, and in newsletters.
- **Publicly recognize members.** Remember to recognize volunteers for their efforts in your newsletter.
- **Incorporate fun into your meetings or projects.** Humour helps too! Think outside the box to ensure meetings are not boring.
- **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 interests and skills.
- **Delegate important tasks and assignments.** Let your committees do their work and respect their decisions.
- **Publicize meetings well in advance.** It helps to list some of the topics you'll be discussing in an agenda or on the website.
- **Start and finish meetings on time.** Respect the time and commitment of members attending the meeting. Call for reports a week prior to the meeting and aim to complete the meeting within an hour and a half.
- **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 email chain to share news. Use the website or social media to advertise.
- **Organize social functions.** Bring neighbours together by holding 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 them. 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 guest speakers.
- **Say thank you.** Always thank volunteers for their participation and leadership.

Notes

[illegible]

CHAPTER

2

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 hold a community meeting and ask residents about their concerns, issues, and interests. People can be surveyed at the annual general meeting, at registration nights, or via an online survey. 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 and concise
- Specific and address identified issues/goals
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Dated

Examples

Goal: To physically improve the look of the neighbourhood by designing and implementing a beautification project to enhance common areas and medians.

Objective: Create a site plan identifying all common areas and medians requiring landscaping by Sept. 30 and submit to the City.

Reap the Rewards

Goal setting offers a number of other advantages and it provides 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 Objective. Goal setting keeps your members 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

Positive team behaviours

Well defined decision-making process

Established ground rules

Balanced participation

Welcoming of new volunteers

CHAPTER

3

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 taking on. Your participation in the association is a mark of leadership in itself.

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 traits include:

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

Communication skills: 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 difficulties.

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.

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.



CHAPTER

4

Decision-Making

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

Decision-making is a process. Sometimes it is internal, such as when you work through an issue in your own mind. In community associations the process is more often external, and a discussion among members is involved. 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 a 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 by 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 two or three 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 is less effective to team building or promoting 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 because 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 often involve asking residents, “What would it take for you to support this solution?”

Consensus Decisions

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

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 takes a lot of time and is 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 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

A unanimous decision is made when each member of your Board or association fully agrees to a solution or action presented on a particular issue. This is the best-case scenario and 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 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 Consensus Building 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 comments to one minute.
 - e) 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

[illegible]

Meetings

Running efficient, on-time meetings improves productivity and member participation, and reduces volunteer burn out.

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.

- **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.
 - Advertise your meeting dates wherever possible and stick to a consistent day of each month.
- **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.

CHAPTER

5

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

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 Bylaws.

- Participate in decision-making on all issues, not just on your specific area/interest.
- Vote! Voice your thoughts and opinions 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 one or two 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.

Email Voting

Email votes are becoming more popular and some decisions are being made electronically. If your association will accept votes via email, it is important to make sure all board members know that an email motion has been made, a seconder named, and quorum reached for voting. Use the following steps as a guideline.

1. Ensure you have every executive member's email address.
2. The chair will send out a test message saying there will be information and a motion coming from a director. This will serve as a "notice for a meeting and a vote."
3. The chair will ask everyone to respond to the notice within three working days to the chair and the recording secretary (if they differ) to make sure quorum is reached. Every reasonable measure should be done to ensure all voting members know of the vote.
4. The same number of members should respond to the email "notice for a meeting and vote" as is needed for quorum.
5. When quorum has been reached, information is sent out with an outline of the issue and a motion.
6. Someone must second the motion and three working days is given for any discussion. Voting can commence if quorum is reached and the vote is passed by majority.
7. Members will "reply all" when responding to the motion.
8. Recording secretary and/or the president will tally the votes and include the results for approval in the minutes at the next meeting.

Committee Meetings

Committees meet separately to discuss and carry out 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 closed down. 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 forgotten.
- 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.

1. Check the minutes of the last meeting and note any unfinished business.
2. Review all correspondence received since the last meeting.
3. Note any new business since the last meeting.
4. Have the treasurer prepare a financial report.
5. Include committee chairpersons and members who are to make reports.
6. Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up. Use flyers, phone calls, social media, etc., to encourage attendance.
7. Stick to your agenda.

A sample agenda is included on the following page.

Sample Agenda Format

1. Call meeting to order

2. Approval of agenda

- Approve agenda changes.
- A motion is needed to approve agenda (as presented or as amended if there were changes).

3. Adoption of minutes of last Board meeting

- As presented, or errors/omissions are identified and the minutes are adopted as amended. It is courteous to place guest speakers third on your agenda, with business items following after.

4. Business arising from minutes

- Report all old business.
- Cover any motions from the last meeting that required action or follow-up.

5. Correspondence

- For the record, read out all of the correspondence received.
- The chair may recommend a piece of correspondence be accepted as information only.

6. President's report**7. Coordinators' reports**

- The treasurer's report requires a motion, seconder, and vote for approval.

8. New business

- List items in order of priority.
- Note any additions.

9. Announcements

- Note the next meeting date, time, and location.

10. Adjournment

- A motion is required, with a seconder.

Taking Minutes

Written minutes are the only record of your association's business. Year by year, they detail the development of your neighbourhood. They are an important point of reference and a tool to help new Board members and committee chairs understand the work of the association.

Minutes are essential to the continuity of your association.

A Guide to Taking Minutes

The secretary is responsible for taking minutes. At the top of the first page, clearly write 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 the meeting.
4. Name of the presiding chairperson.
5. Names of members present and 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 or corrected.

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

- Major issues (financial spending).
- Proposed suggestions (actions to do).
- Conflicting points of view.
- Motions and votes. Include the name of the member(s) who made the motion and underline the action. State and underline whether the motion carried or failed.
- Time of adjournment.

End the 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 reference guide, but this outline provides the highlights.

- 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 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.

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.

Not accomplishing your agenda? Here are some common problems.

- The purpose of your meeting is unclear.

- The Board is not prepared for the meeting or do not attend.
- The meeting detours from the issue at hand.
- Too many “mini-meetings” going on at the same time.
- 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 Personalities and Situations

It can happen at any meeting where one person has difficulty moving forward on a topic they disagree with or have issues with. The best way to handle this? Call a break and talk with the individual privately. Ask for help in moving the meeting or decision forward. Ask what may be a good compromise for them. If an agreement is not come to, you may have to accept that consensus cannot be reached on the topic and put the issue to vote.

What to do when a member...

Gets angry: Breathe and stay calm. 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.

Won't “let go”: 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

This image shows a full page of a handwriting practice worksheet. It consists of multiple sets of three horizontal dashed lines, evenly spaced across the entire page. These lines are designed to help children learn letter formation and alignment by providing a guide for the height and placement of their writing. The background is plain white, and there are no other markings or text present.

CHAPTER

6

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 currently. 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, and 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.

-Chinese Proverb.

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 and written job descriptions for each officer and committee.

Board of Directors

If your community association does not already have written roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors, putting some in place is good practice. Review the current roles and responsibilities to see if they clearly outline what is expected of each member. Expectations might include:

- Be representative of the entire community.
- Attend monthly Board meetings.
- Support the objectives and goals of the association.
- Take responsibility for your tasks.
- Be fair and honest in all dealings.

- Respect confidentiality.
- Find a volunteer to replace your position when you leave.
- Respect and accept differences.
- Share challenges and celebrate successes.
- Budget and manage finances from the community.

Directors

As a member of your community association's Board of Directors, your first responsibility is to 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 to be performed. 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 team-building. Coordinates activities, sees that objectives are carried out, and ensures that everyone participates in decisions.
- **Vice President:** Assists the president in overall leadership and team building of the association. Becomes president when the current president retires.
- **Past President:** Acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors and is a non-elected member (ex officio).
- **Secretary:** Records all the proceedings of the association.
- **Director of Finance:** Responsible for the association's overall financial matters.
- **Indoor Coordinator:** Responsible for the planning, management, and coordination of all indoor recreational activities, fine arts, and crafts programs.

- **Director of Communications:** Coordinates the preparation and distribution of newsletters, and coordinates the website and other communications.
- **Director of Membership:** Coordinates selling of memberships and maintains an accurate membership list.
- **Director of Civic Affairs:** Coordinates the association's efforts in matters related to neighbourhood traffic patterns, zoning, property assessment, and things outside sports, culture, and recreation.
- **Schools Liaison:** Acts as a liaison between the community association and the school community.
- **Director at Large:** Training ground for future Board members.
- **Director of Sports (Basketball / Softball / Soccer / Football etc):** Separate positions to organize and coordinate sports programs for the association.
- **Director of Social/Special Events Coordinator:** Organizes and coordinates social activities and/or special events for the association and community.
- **Director of Rink Programming and Operation:** Provides overall administration of rink operations for the association.
- **Director of Volunteers:** Provides management, recruitment, training recognition, and orientation for association volunteers.

Committees

Committees can play an important role in associations. They help share the workload, provide opportunity way for members to get involved, and train and prepare future directors. The Board can set up committees as necessary to carry out the functions of the association.

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

Sample Job Descriptions

Following are three sample job descriptions. 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; coordinates association activities and ensures 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 (for example – *Robert's Rules of Order*).
- Have 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, the City of Saskatoon, and at public functions.
- Watch for and encourage new volunteers.

Time Commitment: moderate to significant, seasonal

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

Skills

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

SECRETARY

Role

Records proceedings of the association, administers association documentation.

Responsibilities

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

Time Commitment: light, seasonal

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

Skills

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

TREASURER

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 Community Services.
- Prepare financial statements for presentation to the community at the 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 drives, and social functions.

Skills

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

CHAPTER

7

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. They identify 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.

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.

A background in finances is helpful, but you don't need business training to be treasurer for your association. Your Community Consultant can help guide you around these processes.

Your Association Must ...

- Receive, record, and make deposits frequently and promptly.
- Deal with all money matters through a motion and record the decision/action.
- Have a maximum dollar amount that can be spent without authorization.
- Track cheques monthly.
- Share financial signing authority among two to three people, and require at least two signatures.
- File a financial statement with Information Services within four months of year-end.
- File an annual return with Information Services.
- Report to the membership on your annual financial statement and the next year's budget at the annual general meeting.
- Share the bank statement information with the public.

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 the 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 the final budget for approval at the annual general meeting.

If you need help, ask your Community Consultant.

CHAPTER

8

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 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.

In Summary

Thank you for volunteering for your community association. In this volunteer position you will help to build community and encourage neighbours to get active and lead healthy lifestyles. Not only that, you will have the opportunity to meet neighbours and create friendships within your community. Community associations have been successful in Saskatoon for many years and there are many tried and tested ways of accomplishing your roles. If you have questions or need assistance or support in your role, contact the area Community Consultant with the City of Saskatoon at 306-975-3378.

List of Community Associations

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

As of October 2014

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AREA OFFICE:
306-975-3378**

For information on your local community association, visit the City of Saskatoon website at saskatoon.ca and click “C” for Community Associations.

Contact names and numbers are listed under individual community associations.

Notes

[illegible]

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom).

