

**MODEL CHARTER FOR EUGENE NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS with guidelines (*in italics*)**

Adopted by City Council on January 26, 1983 (Resolution #3745)

Amended by City Council on October 12, 2015

This Model Charter for Neighborhood Organizations has been prepared in response to the Citizen Involvement Committee's (CIC) recommendation, approved by the Eugene City Council, that a model charter be developed to aid neighborhood organizations in reviewing their charters for possible changes and to improve and clarify the operating processes of the group. The CIC has been particularly concerned about neighborhood charters' provisions for effective communication, conflict resolution and adequate processes for making recommendations to the City Council, boards and commissions.

The City of Eugene has adopted a Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy (Resolution No. 2554), which contains some specific requirements for neighborhood organizations' charters and implies other requirements. For example, Section 1(d) of the Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy requires that "the organization's structure shall provide for necessary coordination among neighborhood residents and between the neighborhood and city departments and the elected and appointed officials." We have interpreted this to imply a requirement for some level of internal organizational structure, such as officers and an executive board. A particular neighborhood organization may not like the language used in the model charter, and is free to change it. However, all of the articles and/or sections of the model charter marked with \* should be complied with, at least in principle.

The other charter provisions are suggested to articulate how the organization will function so that organization members are aware of the processes involved. A number of sections have alternative provisions. The marginal note should be referred to in determining if the organization must choose, for example, a or b, or can include both a and b, if desired.

It is not expected that neighborhoods will substantially change their charters immediately, but it is hoped that neighborhood groups will compare the model carefully with their charter to determine if any new provisions would improve the operations of their group or meet the concerns of the CIC.

Approved by Resolution No. 3745 of the Eugene City Council, on the 26th day of January, 1983.

**\* ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be

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**\* ARTICLE II. GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES**

The \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of Neighborhood Organization)

Shall encompass that area by: \_\_\_\_\_

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**\* ARTICLE III. PURPOSE**

Section 1. The organization shall be advisory to the City Council, Planning Commission, other City boards, commissions, and officials on matters affecting the growth and development of the neighborhood. The organization may develop neighborhood proposals with respect to land use, zoning, parks, open space and recreation, annexation, housing, community facilities, transportation and traffic, public safety, sanitation, and other activities and public services which affect the neighborhood.

*This section uses the language of the City of Eugene’s Neighborhood Organization Recognition Policy, Resolution No. 2554.*

Section 2. The organization shall address all matters which affect the neighborhood, in accordance with the City of Eugene’s Neighborhood Organization Recognition policy, Resolution No. 2554, including problems of public safety and economic development.

*This section could be used as an alternative to Section 1.*

Section 3. The organization shall serve in an educational capacity to inform the citizens of the neighborhood. The organization will encourage and facilitate communication among the members on matters of common concern.

*This section helps meet the requirements for non-profit income tax status (501(c)3).*

Section 4. The organization shall engage in action of a cooperative self-help nature to preserve and develop the neighborhood and to achieve the objectives of this and other neighborhood associations.

*This section is optional.*

Section 5. The organization shall do whatever else it deems necessary and appropriate to enhance the welfare of its members and livability of the neighborhood.

*This section is optional.*

**ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP**

**\* Section 1.** Membership is open to any resident, property owner, or business owner [18 years of age or older] within the boundaries described in Article II.

*Eugene’s Neighborhood Recognition Policy, Res. No. 2554, requires that participation in the neighborhood organization be open to any resident, property owner or business owner within the boundaries. Voting qualifications are to be set by the organization (Sec 2. Below) but residents must be allowed to vote. The city has not established an age requirement for membership or voting.*

**\* Section 2.**

a. Each member shall be entitled to one vote. Each corporation, partnership, non-profit agency, or business shall be limited to one vote.

\*Neighborhood Charter should include this or similar language.

*The organization must decide if businesses and organizations located in but not owning property in the neighborhood will be allowed to vote. If so, use alternative a.; if not, use alternative b.*

b. Each resident member shall be entitled to one vote. Businesses and non-profit organizations located in but not owning property in the area, and non-resident property owners, are invited to have representatives participate in the organization as non-voting members. When non-voting members are present at a general meeting, the Chairperson shall insure that they are provided an opportunity to participate.

*The Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC) recommends that organizations which do not allow non-residents to vote, insure participation of such non-voting members in order to minimize potential conflicts.*

### Section 3.

a. Membership is declared by having one's signature and address on the organization's "official membership list."

b. Membership shall terminate at once for anyone who moves from the neighborhood.

c. A member must have attended a general meeting within the previous year in order to vote. The organization shall keep and maintain attendance lists for all such meetings for at least twelve months.

d. [The/A] representative of any corporation, partnership, non-profit agency, or business shall have attended a general meeting within the previous year in order to vote.

*The organization should decide whether to use an official membership list (alternative a), whether it is necessary to establish provisions for termination of membership (alternative b), whether members should not be able to vote at the first general meeting attended (alternative c) and whether this same restriction should apply if non-resident members have voting rights (alternative d). The neighborhood should decide if the same person ("The representative") or any person ("A representative") must have attended a prior meeting to vote.*

### Section 4. There shall be no absentee voting or voting by proxy.

*Since any votes by the organization represent the "sense" of the community, it is appropriate to require members to attend the meeting and hear the discussion in order to vote.*

## **\* ARTICLE V. OFFICERS**

Section 1. The officers shall consist of [a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer].

*The organization may choose to have other officers, such as a public relations person, or to dispense with certain officers. The organization may wish to use other titles such as president, executive officer, etc.*

Section 2. Duties of Chairperson. The Chairperson shall coordinate and supervise the business and activities of the executive board and the organization. He/she shall preside at all meetings of the executive board and general membership, serve as an ex officio member of all committees, and be the primary contact person for and liaison with the City of Eugene.

*The organization may consider adding other specific duties for the Chairperson.*

Section 3. Duties of Vice-Chairperson.

The Vice Chairperson will assist the Chairperson in his/her duties upon request. In the absence of the Chairperson, or in the event of his/her inability or refusal to act, the Vice Chairperson shall execute the duties and powers of the Chairperson.

*The organization may wish to assign the vice-chairperson some specific duties.*

\*Neighborhood Charter should include this or similar language.

Section 4. Duties of Secretary. The Secretary shall record the minutes of all general membership and Executive Board meetings and maintain on file copies of said minutes, correspondence, membership lists, attendance lists and other records.

Section 5. Duties of Treasurer. The Treasurer shall receive all association funds, deposit them in a bank approved by the Executive Board, and pay out funds only on notice signed by him/her [and by one other officer] [if the expenditure exceeds \$\_\_\_\_\_].

*The organization should determine whether the treasurer can dispense funds solely on his/her own signature, or if another officer's approval is necessary. The organization may wish to require another signature only for expenditures over \$100.00.*

## **ARTICLE VI. EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **\* Section 1.**

a. The Executive Board shall consist of the officers of the organization and \_\_\_\_\_ other persons.

b. The Executive Board shall consist of the officers of the organization and \_\_\_\_\_ other persons, representing the following sections of the neighborhood:

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c. The Executive Board shall consist of the officers of the organization and representatives of each standing committee.

*The Executive Board (or Executive Committee, Board of Directors) will include the officers of the organization and representatives of the general membership (alternative a), representatives of areas of the neighborhood (alternative b), or representatives of the organization's standing committees (alternative c). The size of the Executive Board should be determined by the organization, although at least four persons in addition to officers is a recommended minimum. If the organization is incorporated, the Executive Board should have the same name as and perform the duties of the Board of Directors for corporate purposes.*

Section 2. The Executive Board shall hold regularly scheduled meetings and the membership shall be given reasonable, advance notice of such schedule. Meetings of the Executive Board shall be open to the membership and the general public.

*It is recommended that the Executive Board meet at least monthly from September through May. The membership should be informed of the schedule. The organization may wish to specify that it will announce the schedule in the newsletter or at the general membership meetings.*

Section 3. Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called by the Chairperson or by one-half of the Executive Board members, after notice has been provided to all Executive Board members.

*This section allows the Chairperson to call special meetings, in the event of an emergency, or the Executive Board to convene itself, if, for some reason, the Chairperson fails to do so.*

Section 4. The majority of the Executive Board members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

*This section insures that the business of the organization will not be performed by fewer than a majority of the Executive Board.*

Section 5. Minutes of the Executive Board shall be kept on file and summaries of actions taken shall be communicated to the general membership through publication in the organization's newsletter or presentation at the next general meeting.

*It is important that Executive Board decisions be communicated to and reviewed by the general membership.*

\*Neighborhood Charter should include this or similar language.

Section 6. The Executive Board may conduct such business and take such action as may be necessary to accomplish the purposes of the organization.

*This is a statement of the power of the Executive Board. The organization may wish to list more specific duties.*

Section 7. Executive Board policy decisions and opinions representing the view of the community on an issue where the general membership has not yet voted shall be presented to the membership at the next general meeting. The membership may override the Executive Board decision by two-thirds vote.

*There may be situations where the Executive Board needs to make major decisions before the next general membership meeting. This section insures that such decisions will be communicated to and reviewed by the membership.*

Section 8. The Executive Board shall represent the neighborhood's opinions to the City Council, Planning Commission, or other appropriate decision-makers. Such advisory opinions will specify whether the position is one of the general membership, the Executive Board, or a committee, or by organization members present and lacking a quorum. If there is a minority position on the issue, represented by at least one-third of those voting, this shall also be presented.

*The CIC recommends that advisory opinions indicate the specific basis of the decision.*

Section 9. The Executive Board will be responsible for establishing the time, place, and agenda for general meetings and insuring reasonable advance notice to members of such meetings.

Section 10. The Executive Board shall not

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*The organization may wish to identify specific actions which the Executive Board cannot take without approval of the general membership.*

## **ARTICLE VII. NOMINATION, ELECTION AND REMOVAL OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS**

Section 1. The Officers and additional Executive Board members shall be elected by a majority of those in attendance at the annual meeting in \_\_\_\_\_ and shall serve a \_\_\_\_\_ year term.

*See Art. 8, Section 2 identifying which general membership meeting will be the annual meeting. Officers may serve a 1 yr. term, 2 yr. term, or staggered terms so that there are always some experienced members on each board.*

Section 2. A nominating committee shall be formed prior to the annual meeting. The committee shall be composed of a member of the Executive Board and two other persons. Notice of the creation of the nominating committee and of the annual election shall be published in the newsletter.

Section 3. At the annual meeting, the nominating committee shall present the proposed candidates for office.

a. Further nominations shall be made from the floor, each nomination being for a specific office or board member.

*Sections 2 and 3 describe a process by which the general membership has an opportunity to participate in the nomination of officers. The organization may wish to specify the month when the nominating committee shall be formed and may wish to provide for publication of nominees in the newsletter. It is recommended, however, that the process of nominating and electing officers and Executive Board members may not take more than two months.*

\*Neighborhood Charter should include this or similar language.

b. The slate of candidates shall be published in the organization's newsletter prior to the election, and no further nominations shall be made from the floor.

*Some neighborhood organizations allow nominations from the floor at the time of the meetings; others do not. Either a. or b. is the appropriate alternative.*

#### Section 4.

a. A vacancy on the Executive Board shall be filled for the remainder of the vacant term by a majority vote of the general membership at the next general meeting.

b. A vacancy on the Executive Board shall be filled for the remainder of the vacant term by the remaining members of the Executive Board, subject to approval of the general membership at the next meeting.

*Alternative b is the recommended section since it allows for filling vacancies in a shorter period of time.*

Section 5. An officer may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a general meeting. However, prior notice of intent to submit a removal motion is required in the agenda.

Section 6. If a member of the Executive Board is absent for \_\_\_\_\_ consecutive meetings, either regular or special, that member's position shall be vacated unless the Board finds that an extraordinary circumstance prevents the member's attendance.

*If the Executive Board meets monthly four absences may be appropriate for removal.*

Section 7. Membership on the Executive Board shall terminate at once for anyone who moves from the neighborhood.

### **ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

\* Section 1. General membership meetings shall be held at a time and place to be established by the Executive Board. Such meetings shall be held at least \_\_\_\_\_.

*It is recommended the general membership meetings shall be held at least twice a year. The organization may wish to require more frequent meetings.*

Section 2. A quorum of the general membership shall be \_\_\_\_\_ voting members.

*The organization shall determine a minimum number of members allowed to act at a meeting. In approving other neighborhood organization charters, the city council has required at least ten voting members as a quorum.*

\* Section 3. The general membership meeting for the month of \_\_\_\_\_ shall be the annual meeting.

*It is necessary for the organization to designate one meeting as the annual meeting, for the purpose of election of officers.*

#### \* Section 4.

a. The resident membership shall be notified of each scheduled meeting.

*If meeting notices or newsletters are hand delivered to all residents, property owners or tenants within the boundaries, alternative a. is appropriate.*

b. All members whose signatures and addresses appear on the official membership list shall be given notice of all general meetings. All residents in the neighborhood shall be notified of at least two meetings including the annual meeting.

*Some neighborhood organizations use their membership list for mailing notices and/or newsletters, so that all residents (property owners or tenants) may not be notified, but only those on the list. The city asks that all residents in the area be notified of at least two general meetings, including the annual meeting, but notices of other meetings may be provided to only*

\*Neighborhood Charter should include this or similar language.

*those whose names appear on the membership list. The two notices would provide opportunity for residents to attend the meetings and place their names on the membership list. Alternative b, is appropriate if this is the group's procedure.*

c. All business and non-resident owners of property within the neighborhood boundaries will receive notice of the annual meeting and at the annual meeting, will be given an opportunity to receive notice of regular meetings. The Executive Board shall be responsible to insure notice is given. Notice through a local news-paper is the minimum requirement.

*Business and non-resident owners must be given an opportunity to participate in the organization. The organization should notify them of at least one meeting, and can, at that time compile a mailing list on non-resident property owners who wish to be contacted with the agenda of future meetings. Because of the limits of funding for notification, choices will have to be made how this is done. Notice to non-resident owners and businesses may be given through publication of notice in the local newspaper (Eugene Register Guard), hand delivered or mailed notices.*

Section 5: Notice shall include the meeting, date, time and place and the proposed agenda. Any member may raise an additional matter not previously on the agenda, but that item shall not be voted upon until the next meeting.

a. However, if a member presents a petition containing \_\_\_\_ members' signatures and indicating reasons for emergency action on a matter, that matter may be voted on at the general meeting where the petition is presented.

b. However, if a matter is proposed at a meeting and two-thirds of those present determine such matter needs emergency action, that matter may be voted on at the same general meeting.

*Either Section a. or b. would allow the general meetings to take certain acts in a matter of emergency. The organization may wish to include both alternatives.*

Section 6. Special general meetings may be called by the Chairperson or the Executive Board. Special meetings shall be announced through a local newspaper and/or individual notification of the organization's members.

Section 7. The meetings of the Association shall be conducted in conformity with generally accepted rules and procedures, such as Roberts Rules of Order.

*The organization may wish to specify that in cases where interpretation of the rules is required, the chairperson shall rule on proper procedure.*

## **ARTICLE IX. NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER**

Section 1. The name of the \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood newsletter shall be \_\_\_\_\_.

*This section is optional. It is not necessary to name the newsletter within the charter.*

\* Section 2. The purposes of the neighborhood newsletter are to distribute information to the organization's members and to provide a forum for free expression of opinions by neighborhood members on issues of interest to the neighborhood.

*Sections 2, 3 and 4 are taken from the City of Eugene Neighborhood Recognition Policy, Resolution No. 2554, and apply to newsletters funded by the City of Eugene.*

\* Section 3. Advocacy positions may be included in the newsletter in an editorial format. Newsletters shall clearly indicate editorial material and guarantee space for timely printing of differing viewpoints.

\* Section 4. Commercial advertising is permitted in newsletters in accordance with the Guidelines for Use of Public Information Funds.

\*Neighborhood Charter should include this or similar language.

*See supplement to Newsletter Guidelines for Neighborhood Organizations for a more complete explanation of the requirements of Section 3 and 4.*

**\* Section 5.**

- a. The Executive Board shall appoint an editor for the newsletter. The Executive Board shall have the ultimate responsibility for the contents of the newsletter.
- b. The membership shall elect a Newsletter committee at the annual meeting. The Newsletter Committee shall appoint the editor and be responsible for the contents of the newsletter.

**Section 6.**

- a. Each issue of the newsletter shall identify the officers of the Neighborhood Organization, the Newsletter Editor or Committee, if any, and those compiling that issue, if other than officers, editor or committee.
- b. Each issue of the newsletter shall include an address and/or phone number for submission of articles, letters or other material.
- c. No anonymous articles shall be included in the newsletter.

*The CIC has been concerned with the accountability of neighborhood newsletters and recommends that these provisions be included in neighborhood charters.*

**ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES**

**Section 1.**

- a. The Executive Board may establish standing committees to perform the on-going business of the association. These committees are
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- b. The Executive Board may establish committees to perform the ongoing business of the association.

*Standing committees might include committees on planning, fund raising, neighborhood activities, etc.*

*Instead of standing committees, the Executive Board may establish committees for specific tasks as the need arises.*

**Section 2.** The Executive board may establish committees for special projects that are of concern to the membership, in accordance with the purpose of the organization.

*Whether or not the organization has standing committees, there should be a provision for committees for special projects.*

**Section 3.** The Executive Board shall specify the purpose, [meeting requirements,] and committee authority, including permission to speak publicly on issues within the committee's specific concern. Committees shall not speak or act on behalf of the organization unless they have such specific authority.

*The relationship between the Executive Board and the Committees should be clarified at the time of the formation of any committees.*

**Section 4.**

- a. Committee membership shall be open to all those organization members interested in serving on a particular committee at the time of its formation.
- b. Committee meetings shall be open to all members of the organization.
- c. When the Executive Board determines there is a need to establish a committee, it shall appoint members to that committee, after soliciting names of interested persons from the general membership.

\*Neighborhood Charter should include this or similar language.

*The organization should consider these alternatives for insuring broad membership participation in committees. Section a might result in a committee which is too large to function effectively. Section b will allow public participation in the committee meetings.*

*If Section c is selected, the organization may wish to specify that such notice will be provided in the Newsletter or at the general meeting.*

#### **Section 5.**

a. Each committee shall have a chairperson and a secretary appointed by the Executive Board/Chairperson of the Neighborhood organization.

b. Each committee shall have a chairperson and a secretary elected by the committee.

*The organization should decide who shall appoint the chairperson and secretary for any committees.*

**Section 6.** The secretary of each committee shall keep written minutes of the committee meetings. The committee shall provide its minutes or an oral report to the Executive Board at its regular meetings.

*The Charter should include some process to insure that the Executive Board is aware of the actions of the committees.*

### **ARTICLE XI. FINANCES**

**Section 1.** The organization may receive funds and employ persons to further its purposes, and may own and dispose of property.

**Section 2.** Grants or monies secured to fund specific projects or programs, which have itemized budgets already approved by the [Executive Board/general membership], may be expended without further approval for budgeted expenses.

*The organization may have monies received from specific grants. This section assumes that the budgets have approved before the grant was applied for, and the language should reflect whether the Executive Board or the general membership made such approval.*

**Section 3.** An annual budget for monies and grants from other sources shall be approved by the membership before expenditures commence.

*If the budget has been approved, it seems unnecessary to require further approval of expenditures.*

**Section 4.** The Executive Board shall establish a fiscal process including budgeting, expenditures, authorizations, and an internal fiscal control system.

**Section 5.** Any expenditures, other than those covered by Section 2 of this Article, which exceed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ shall be approved by the general membership.

*The organization may wish to set a maximum limit for expenditures by the treasurer or the Executive Board without approval of the general membership.*

### **ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS AND CHARTER REVIEW**

**Section 1.** This charter may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any general membership meeting. Written notice of the proposed charter change shall be given to the general membership prior to the meeting.

*The general membership should be allowed to consider major changes in the organization's structure which would be reflected as amendments to the Charter.*

Section 2. The Chairperson/Executive Board shall appoint a Charter review committee for a bi-annual review of the organization's Charter or more frequently if the Chairperson/Executive Board deems it necessary.

*The CIC has recommended that neighborhood organizations regularly review their Charters. That is the purpose of this Section.*

\*Neighborhood Charter should include this or similar language.