

Neighborhood Advisory Committee Policies

City of Newton
Housing and Community Development Program
April 2005

The City of Newton is committed to providing a system for full participation by City residents in the planning and implementation of its Community Development Program. Since a major emphasis of Newton's program is to improve conditions in selected neighborhoods which meet certain federal and City criteria, it is appropriate that each of these neighborhoods, called target neighborhoods, have a Neighborhood Advisory Committee to provide an ongoing system for citizen participation.

The policies described below will govern the appointment and operation of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees (NAC). It should be pointed out, however, that nothing in this action is intended to imply that anything other than the fullest possible participation of any and all residents of each Target Neighborhood is desired and encouraged.

1. Purpose of Neighborhood Advisory Committees - The purpose of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees falls into two categories as indicated below.

Planning - A major purpose of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees is to advise and assist the Planning and Development Board and the Planning and Development Department in formulating the five-year Consolidated Plan and subsequent Annual Action Plans. In this capacity, each Neighborhood Advisory Committee will meet with the Community Development staff in quarterly public meetings to assess and discuss the needs of the subject neighborhood. The recommendations of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees will be presented to the Planning and Development Board to review, discuss and propose projects for implementation during the five-year period.

In carrying out the above functions, each Neighborhood Advisory Committee will serve as a well-informed and continuously involved core of neighborhood residents who may best communicate with and organize other residents of the neighborhood to participate as fully as possible in this planning process. Throughout the planning process, the views of all neighborhood residents will be given full consideration.

Implementation - The second major purpose of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees is to advise and assist the Planning and Development Department and the Planning and Development Board in carrying out the five-year Consolidated Strategy and Plan through approval and implementation of the Annual Action Plan. The responsibilities of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees in carrying out this function are indicated as follows.

- **Review of Project Design** - At quarterly meetings, the Neighborhood Advisory Committees will review and comment upon the design of specific neighborhood projects as those projects are carried forward toward implementation. This review and comment function includes the planning and design of construction projects. In this capacity, the Committee may, as appropriate, participate in the selection of planning or design consultants (if any), but not in the selection of construction designers or of construction contractors.
- **Oversight of Project Implementation** - At quarterly public meetings, the Neighborhood Advisory Committees will review and comment on the progress being made in the implementation of neighborhood projects. This review may include such issues as the timeliness of implementation, the need for any project budget

adjustments, changes in project scope, and any other issues which may arise that affect the neighborhood during project implementation.

- **Review of Substantial Changes to the Community Development Program** - The City's Community Development Program has adopted a policy concerning citizen participation in the review of substantial changes¹ to the Community Development Program. That policy requires that the opinion of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee(s) be sought prior to any action by the Associate Director for Housing and Community Development to move funds among projects in any given neighborhood, to move funds from one neighborhood to another or to add or delete a project from the list of projects in the approved Annual Action Plan. A public meeting of the appropriate Neighborhood Advisory Committee(s) and interested citizens will be scheduled to consider the change. The recommendation of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee(s) will be considered at a public hearing of the Planning and Development Board, which will then make a recommendation to the Mayor.

2. **Composition of Neighborhood Advisory Committees**

The size of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees should be large enough to allow for representation of the social and economic diversities of the neighborhood and to allow the Committee to function should some members be absent. Therefore, ideally there shall be a minimum of ten (10) members of each Committee and a maximum membership of fifteen (15). The actual size of each Committee, at any point in time, will be determined by the appointing authority.

Categories of Appointment – The membership of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees should reflect the diversity of the neighborhood to the fullest extent possible. Therefore, insofar as possible, the following guidelines will apply with regard to appointment of persons to each Committee to represent certain elements of each neighborhood.

- All appointed members of each Committee shall reside within the designated target neighborhood, except for business owners who operate a business within the designated target neighborhood.
- At least three low- to moderate-income target neighborhood residents shall be appointed to each Committee.
- At least one business owner, as defined above, shall be appointed to each Committee.
- At least one minority resident shall be appointed to each Committee.
- At least one resident with a disability shall be appointed to each Committee.
- At least one elderly resident shall be appointed to each Committee.
- The remaining Committee appointments shall consist of combinations of people from the above categories, as well as other general Target Neighborhood residents.

¹ A substantial change is defined, in accordance with 24 CFR 91.505(a), as:

- A substantial change in allocation priorities (any change greater than 25 percent in an individual project budget) or a substantial change in the method of distribution of funds;
- An activity (including those funded exclusively with program income) not previously covered by the Newton Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan; or a
- Substantial change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity.

Not more than one person shall be appointed per household. However, if a member cannot attend a meeting, a representative from his/her household may vote in his/her stead.

Aldermen representing the target neighborhood shall be considered "de facto" members and as such, may vote when no conflict of interest is present.

3. **Appointment Procedures**

Outreach Efforts - At a minimum, outreach efforts to identify eligible interested citizens to serve on the Neighborhood Advisory Committees shall be carried out in conjunction with the development of the five-year Consolidated Plan. Efforts shall consist of a combination of the following:

- Notices within local papers
- Notification to civic organizations
- Notices posted in prominent locations within Target Neighborhoods
- Notification to existing Committee members/interested citizens

In addition, special outreach efforts may be carried out by the Community Development staff as needed.

Appointment to a Neighborhood Advisory Committee - The appointing authority for Committee membership shall be the Mayor of the City of Newton. The Community Development staff shall assist the Mayor in carrying out the appointment procedure as described below.

- Conduct outreach within the target neighborhood.
- Review responses to the outreach effort.
- Interview potential members to determine eligibility and to determine if they fall within one or more of the categories of appointment.
- Notify the Mayor of all potential Committee members.
- Prepare an appointment letter for the Mayor's signature as directed.

Term of Appointment - Term of appointment shall be coterminous with the planning for and implementation of the Community Development Program's five-year Consolidated Plan, (i.e. July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2010). Should an individual be appointed to a Committee midway through the Plan, his/her term shall run through the end of the above appointment period. Reappointment will occur with the next five-year plan and is voluntary for both the City and the member.

Interested Citizens – Any interested persons not appointed by the Mayor will be encouraged to attend meetings and will be notified of meetings through an "interested citizens" mailing list. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend and participate in Committee meetings with the understanding that only appointed Committee members may vote on recommendations and issues before the Committee.

4. Attendance

Committee members are encouraged to attend all Committee meetings to ensure continued familiarity with the Community Development Program. In the event that a committee member cannot attend a meeting, prior notification to the Community Development staff is requested. Members who have not attended any meetings for one fiscal year may be removed from Committee membership.

5. Vacancy Procedure

When a Committee member resigns from a Neighborhood Advisory Committee or is removed due to substantial unexplained absences, the following procedure will be used for replacing said Committee members:

- The neighborhood project manager will determine the category of appointment to be filled.
- The neighborhood project manager will develop a list of potential candidates to fill the vacancy by first talking to appropriate interested citizens identified during the outreach efforts who were not appointed to the Committee. If this initial step is not possible or if it proves fruitless, the neighborhood project manager will work with the subject Committee to carry out special outreach efforts designed to fill the particular category.
- A list of potential candidates will be submitted to Mayor's office for review.
- Community Development staff of the Planning and Development Department will prepare an appointment letter for the Mayor's signature as directed.

6. Election of Officers

At its first or second meeting of the fiscal year, each Committee shall elect the following officers:

Chairperson
Vice-Chairperson

The Chairperson's responsibilities shall include:

- Bringing the Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting to order;
- Keeping order during the Committee's proceedings;
- Serving as the Committee's contact person with the neighborhood project manager and the City;
- Working with the neighborhood project manager to set up meetings; and
- Setting the meeting agenda in conjunction with the neighborhood project manager.

The Vice-Chairperson's responsibilities shall be to take over the Chairperson's responsibilities when the Chairperson is absent.

Term of Office - The term of office for all officers shall be one year from the time of election. Elections will be held at the first or second meeting of each new fiscal year (begins July 1).

7. Minutes

Community Development staff shall be responsible for recording minutes of each Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting. Minutes shall consist of the following:

- Attendance record

- Summation of discussion of each agenda item
- Questions which need to be answered
- Record of recommendations and issues voted on by the Committee

8. Meeting Notification Procedures

Meeting notice shall include the following:

- Date, time and location of meeting
- Meeting agenda
- Minutes of the prior meeting

Meeting notices shall be mailed at least ten calendar days prior to the NAC meeting date to all members of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee and to all persons on the "interested citizens" list.