

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE OLYMPIA COALITION OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND THE CITY OF OLYMPIA

This agreement is entered into this 13 day of July, 2012, between and among the Olympia Coalition of Neighborhood Associations (CNA) and the City of Olympia ("City"), collectively known as the Parties ("Parties")

WHEREAS, City Ordinance 18.86.040 et seq. was passed in 1990 and amended in 1995, which established the Recognized Neighborhood Association program and the rights and responsibilities of the parties.

WHEREAS, OMC 18.86.100(H) instructs the City Manager to "develop a program to support the establishment of neighborhood associations and their active participation in City decision processes."

WHEREAS, the parties believe that the meaning of the phrase "active participation in city decision processes" needs to be clarified to improve public involvement in city affairs and to achieve the other purposes contained in the ordinance.

WHEREAS, one of the purposes of Chapter 18.86 of the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) was to "encourage the incorporation of neighborhood associations in all areas of the City" and yet, there are many areas of the City where residents are not represented by a recognized neighborhood association;

WHEREAS, the CNA was formed as an organization representing the individual recognized neighborhood associations to promote and enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods by providing a forum for neighborhoods to collaborate to achieve common goals; and

WHEREAS, the CNA is a membership organization comprised solely of representatives of recognized neighborhood associations; and

WHEREAS the CNA has been actively engaged with the city in policy discussions and actions concerning the regulation of real properties, recruitment of city managers, recruitment and selection of department heads and other key employees, community policing and informing the community about public safety and the value of neighborhood based programs; and

WHEREAS, the CNA has a proven history of hosting meetings and conducting proceedings in a fair and neutral manner; and

WHEREAS, the individual recognized neighborhood association members of CNA want to address citywide issues through dialogue and discussion and then present neighborhood based views on city issues through CNA; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the unique role that the CNA can play in providing a variety of forums for discussion and consideration of issues affecting neighborhoods and that the discussion of issues affecting neighborhoods is an important first step to help citizens better understand development proposals and to allow developers to hear neighborhood interests and concerns before plans are finalized.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Parties agree to the following terms and conditions:

I. Official Recognition of the Coalition of Neighborhoods Associations

The CNA is recognized as an entity that can provide assistance to the City and the individual recognized neighborhood associations established under Chapter 18.86 of the OMC.

II. Updating the City Ordinance for Recognized Neighborhood Association and the MOU

The parties agree to review Chapter 18.86 and this MOU periodically to determine if the OMC and MOU are achieving the objective of improved public involvement in city affairs. Periodic reviews would be at least once a year and the review would include the degree of success in providing neighborhood associations in all areas of the city. The parties agree to undertake actions to remove impediments to forming a neighborhood association, to assist in the formation of alliances of neighborhood associations and to review existing neighborhood association boundaries.

III. CNA Involvement in City Decision Making and Processes

The parties agree to pursue an open dialogue concerning citywide issues and to foster a spirit of openness and mutual trust. The goals of this dialogue are to facilitate an exchange of views, to increase public awareness, information and consultation, and to respond actively to public concerns. The parties agree to accomplish these goals through the following processes and activities:

A. Neighborhood Issues Forum

CNA agrees to provide a Neighborhood Issues Forum for the discussion of regional, citywide and neighborhood issues to help residents stay informed and to provide feedback to the City about issues and impacts from a neighborhood perspective. Such forums will be structured as neighborhood conversations to ensure broad participation of neighborhoods and interested parties affected by the issue, be conducted early in the process before any significant final decisions are made and allow for broad dissemination of proposals and consideration of alternatives to the proposed action. The forums will cover subjects like the following:

1. Making City programs more neighborhood centric.
2. Ensuring that City development codes conform to the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Incorporating the interests of neighborhoods in the land use decisions of single purpose governments that are governed by the City land use authority.
4. Emergency preparedness
5. Reviewing the Capital Facilities Plan:
 - a. To focus on pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and livable and affordable neighborhoods.
 - b. To ensure that future sidewalk and trail system improvements in neighborhoods are prioritized to increase mobility and connect neighborhoods to parks, schools and community centers.
 - c. To allow neighborhoods to test proposed cost saving measures before these measures are implemented citywide

The CNA and the City agree that a workplan detailing Neighborhood Issues Forum topics and a schedule shall be developed jointly with the City Manager on an annual basis following the City Council's annual goal setting retreat. The work plan will be presented to the City Council for Council review.

The City agrees to provide space on a reasonable basis within a City-owned building or other appropriate facility for such forums.

B. Review of City Services and Neighborhood Services Ad Hoc Review Committee

CNA will provide input to the city concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's delivery of services and make proposals and recommendations for city expenditures that reflect the needs of the neighborhoods, and neighborhood priorities. CNA will also participate in the review and prioritization of city grants for neighborhoods.

The parties agree to pursue open dialogue and a collaborative process in the form of a Neighborhood Conversation concerning the provisions of services and programs affecting neighborhoods. The goals of these Neighborhood Services Ad Hoc Review Committees are to facilitate an exchange of views, to increase public awareness, provide information and consultation, and to respond actively to public concerns. Examples of potential services committee topics include the following:

- a. Provide input on the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's delivery of services (specific services to be mutually determined).
- b. Review and prioritize applications for certain City grants (e.g., Neighborhood Matching Fund).
- c. Foster neighborhood improvement, such as decreasing public nuisances, street and sidewalk improvements.
- d. Improve public safety by increased criminal activity reporting, decreasing speeding, etc.
- e. Coordinate city services (e.g., street sweeping, junk car removal, graffiti removal, etc.).
- f. Publish inventories of existing assets and investments in neighborhoods.
- g. Provide emergency preparedness training and a communication relay system.
- h. Assist in developing individual neighborhood emergency plans.
- i. Such other issues as may be mutually agreed upon by the City and CNA.

The CNA and City agree that a work plan detailing Neighborhood Services Ad Hoc Review Committee topics and a schedule shall be developed jointly with the City Manager on an annual basis following the City Council's annual goal setting retreat. The parties recognize that Neighborhood Services Ad Hoc Review Committees may result in the formation of a working group, such as the one that was convened in 2010 to work on code enforcement processes, to delve into issues at a deeper level and to provide recommendations for improvement to the City Manager.

IV. CNA Involvement in City Decisions Related to Land Use Planning and Resource Allocations

Planning, land use and permitting decisions of the city have a major impact on residents and neighborhoods. Land use decisions should focus on pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and livable and affordable neighborhoods. Also, future sidewalk and trail system improvements in neighborhoods should be prioritized to increase mobility, and connect neighborhoods to parks, schools, and community centers.

Maintenance of neighborhoods is also an important factor in maintaining the quality of life for residents and the desirability of the city as a place to work and live. The parties agree to foster neighborhood improvement, such as decreasing public nuisances and street and sidewalk improvements, to assist in improving public safety, to investigate the benefits of coordinating city services and to publish inventories of existing assets and investments in neighborhoods

The parties agree to establish the following mechanisms to consult with the affected residents and neighborhoods periodically throughout the development and implementation of a land use project.

A. Neighborhood Development Forums

The CNA shall develop in consultation with the City a Neighborhood Development Forum process and shall convene its membership as necessary to consider development proposals within or affecting recognized neighborhoods.

The CNA agrees to host a Neighborhood Development Forum when requested by a development interest and to report the results of such meetings to the City. A Neighborhood Development Forum process shall include an opportunity for an applicant for development approval to present a project description and plans to the CNA membership. Such meetings shall be open to the public and shall provide an opportunity for public comment and applicant response. These meetings are intended to be collaborative dialogues between the prospective applicant and the neighborhoods. The CNA and the City shall cooperate on providing notice of such meetings to achieve the broadest possible awareness and participation in the forum.

The City agrees to notify potential applicants, such as those who submit for pre-application review by the Site Plan Review Committee, of the existence of the Neighborhood Development Forum and encourage them to make use of the forum.

The City agrees to provide space on a reasonable basis within a City-owned building or other appropriate facility for such forums.

B. Neighborhood/Subarea Plans

The City is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan and neighborhoods and neighborhood issues have been an important part of the Comprehensive Plan update discussion. The Comprehensive Plan update includes recommendations affecting neighborhoods; the CNA is uniquely qualified to provide assistance in their implementation.

CNA will provide input to the city concerning goals and objectives related to growth in neighborhoods and ensuring that new development will fit comfortably within existing neighborhoods. Also, the city and CNA will work with residents to design neighborhood “frameworks” that identify preferred densities, land use types, and design styles that fit with existing neighborhoods and Associations and identify locations for future “third place” developments (e.g. community gardens)

The draft Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations regarding sub-area planning. These recommendations envision sub-area plans being developed for the entire city. The City encourages the CNA to play an active role in helping to shape how this recommended aspect of the Comprehensive Plan is implemented by becoming a partner in the Comprehensive Plan *implementation plan*.

As a partner in the *implementation plan*, the CNA would be in a leadership role to help form implementing strategies, regulations and approaches for this important addition to our Comprehensive Plan. A likely outcome for this process will be the need to update the OMC 18.86.040 to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and could become a future Neighborhood Services Ad Hoc Review Committee work plan item.

V. Administrative Support for Recognized Neighborhood Associations

A. Focusing Resources on Policy Making

Recognized neighborhood associations and CNA need assistance in the area of administrative support. To relieve some of the administrative burden and allow more resources to be dedicated to policy review and consultation, the parties agree to the following:

- i. Develop and implement templates for the establishment and operation of neighborhood associations, such as developing agendas, bylaws, and meeting minutes.
- ii. Assist in the development of a common web site for neighborhoods.
- iii. Where possible, work with recognized neighborhoods to provide a list of locations for no-cost rooms for individual recognized neighborhood meetings.
- iv. CNA can work with neighborhood associations to apply for grants to assist with administrative support and to achieve the other purposes contained in this agreement

B. Continuity of Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhood associations tend to be reliant on a small group of dedicated volunteers. New leaders are necessary due to turnover in leadership positions and to allow more individuals with varied backgrounds an opportunity to serve in leadership roles. The parties agree to the following to foster new leaders:

- i. Develop a set of criteria to assist individuals in participating with their existing neighborhood association.
- ii. Participate with the CNA in organizing an annual seminar for Neighborhood Association leaders and assist during leadership transitions.

VI. Communication with the City and the City Council

A. CNA and City Leadership

The agreement is intended to improve communication between neighborhoods and the City. The parties agree to the following common protocols and methods:

1. Chairs of CNA will serve as the CNA Liaison to the City Manager.
2. The City Council will appoint a Councilmember as liaison to the CNA.
3. The City Manager and the CNA agree to jointly prepare and submit to the City Council an annual report. This report shall detail the successes, challenges and opportunities for improvement from the past year and make recommendations about possible work plan items for the coming year.

B. Points of Contact

The City Manager or his designee shall serve as the primary contact for the City for purposes of administration of this agreement. The Chairs of the CNA shall serve as primary contact for the CNA for the purpose of administration of this agreement.

VII. Other Terms and Conditions

A. Amendment

This agreement may be amended from time to time with the joint approval of both parties.

B. Duration


This agreement shall remain in effect for three years at which time it will be reviewed and updated. The parties shall provide no less than 30 day's notice prior to terminating this agreement.

C. Limited Effect of this MOU

This document is an expression of the intent of the Parties on how they will work toward supporting neighborhood associations. This document is not a legally binding agreement and it does not in any manner amend any of the City's regulations or create any additional requirements for development within the City of Olympia.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have executed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the date and year written above.

OLYMPIA COALITION OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

By: 
Robert C. Jones, Chair, Coalition of Neighborhood Associations

Title: Chair, CNA

CITY OF OLYMPIA

By: 
Steven R. Hall, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Tom Morrill, City Attorney