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*enhancing the quality  
of neighborhoods  
through  
community participation*

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**City of Portland, Office of Neighborhood of Involvement  
Great – Guidelines Review Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, August 12, 2003

8:30 AM to 10:00 AM, Lovejoy Room, Portland City Hall

**MINUTES AND SUMMARY NOTES**

Members Present:

Moshe Lenske, Co-Chair	Woodstock Neighborhood Association
Kathy Bambeck	Bridlemile Neighborhood Association
Nancy Chapin	Alliance of PDX Neighborhood Bus. Assocs.
Leonard Gard	Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.
Raymond Hites	Lents Neighborhood Association
Brian Hoop	Office of Neighborhood Involvement
Stanley Lewis	Downtown Community Association
Jerry Powell	At-Large
Mark Sieber	Neighbors West/Northwest
Ruth Spetter	City Attorney's Office
William Warren	Central Northeast Neighbors

Absent:

Patricia Gardner, Co-Chair	Pearl District Neighborhood Association
David Lane	Office of Neighborhood Involvement
Michael O'Malley	Irvington Community Association
Charles Shi	Communities Beyond Neighborhood Boundaries

Visitors

Lee Perlman	Media
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*Decisions by this group are subject to change at future meetings.*

*Opportunities for public input are at the end of meeting and future workshops.*

*The committee has approved these summary notes and are final.*

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**Information & Referral  
Center**  
503-823-4000

**Crime Prevention  
Center**  
503-823-4519

**Neighborhood Mediation  
Center**  
503-823-3152

**Metropolitan Human  
Rights Center**  
503-823-5136

**Civic Involvement  
Center**  
503-823-4519

## **Approval of Minutes**

- Minutes approved for July 23, 2003 meeting.

## **Minutes**

### Motions approved:

- Motion approved to change Section B: Definitions, first sentence of "Decisions" to read: "Decision" includes administrative decisions and policy recommendations, but excludes routine day-to-day decisions within the scope of authority of ....."
- Motion passes to change title of Section C: "Decisions shall be made at meetings."
- Motion passes to change first sentence of definition of "quorum."
  - "Quorum means the minimum number of general membership, board or committee members who must be present at a meeting in order to take a vote that results in a decision."
- Motion passes to change third sentence in section C: "Members have one vote each and decisions shall be made by a vote that is at least a majority vote of those members who are voting."

## **Summary of Notes for August 12, 2003**

- Continued discussions on whether or not to allow informal meetings.
- Continued discussions on definition of quorum.
- Discussion on role of abstaining from a vote.
- Overall some feel our standards need to be simplified to allow well-intentioned neighborhood folks to be able to get their business done. Some feel the principle of state open meetings law should not be altered.

## **Open Meetings and Public Records: Ad-Hoc Committee proposal**

### **Section C: Decisions to be Made at Meetings:**

- Motion to change title to:
  - "Decisions shall be made at meetings." Passes.

### Issue of "quorum" and informal meetings

- Summary: Discussion centered on whether or not we can deny people from meeting informally. At what point does a meeting become formal? Some feel neighborhood associations need the flexibility to be able to deliberate in small groups outside of meetings to form positions. Some feel the principle of open meeting law is to have all discussions in the formal meeting.
- Robert's Rules require a motion to be made to recognize quorum exists and therefore the official meeting can begin. The chair can recognize that quorum no longer exists and therefore the meeting needs to adjourn.

- ❑ Suggestion made that there is an arcane allowance in Robert's Rules for some business to be done without quorum.
- ❑ Comment that proposed definition of "quorum" covers concerns about when a meeting is official when quorum exists so we don't need to mess with this section.
- ❑ Discussion on whether or not administrative decisions need to meet this standard to have a quorum. General feeling is no. This is intended for policy issues.
- ❑ May need to consider how associations fill vacancies in boards if they don't have a quorum.
- ❑ These rules need to work for neighborhood associations and may not always agree completely with Robert's Rules of State Open Meetings law. Remember; state court decisions say neighborhood associations don't have to comply with state open meetings law. Our standards need to be simplified to allow well-intentioned neighborhood folks to be able to get their business done.

#### Can deliberations continue but not take a vote?

- ❑ Majority feels we want people to be able to continue deliberations even without quorum but they can not vote. Not all agree, and feel we should not even be able to deliberate.
- ❑ Suggested language: "When quorum is lost deliberations may continue but votes may not be taken."

#### **Section B: Definitions**

- ❑ Motion approved to change first sentence of definition of "Decisions" to read: "Decision" includes administrative decisions and policy recommendations, but excludes routine day-to-day decisions within the scope of authority of ....."
- ❑ Motion to change definition of "Quorum" to: "Quorum means the minimum number of general membership, board or committee members who must continuously be present at a meeting in order to make a decision."

#### Amendments considered and discussed:

- ❑ Amendment: The word "decision" needs to be the word "Vote". Vote is the word that neighborhood leaders understand. Accepted.
- ❑ Amendment: Drop "continuously". "Continuously" might be construed to mean someone could not even step out to use the facilities. Accepted.
- ❑ Amendment: Change to say, "in order to vote." Accepted.
- ❑ Amendment: Change to say, "conduct a vote." Accepted.
- ❑ Amendment: Change to say, "to take a vote that will result in a decision." Accepted.

#### Call to vote on Motion:

- ❑ "Quorum means the minimum number of general membership, board or committee members who must be present at a meeting in order to take a vote that results in a decision." Passes with one nay vote.

#### **Section C: Decisions to be Made at Meetings:**

- ❑ Suggestion section C needs to be changed in order to comply with definition of quorum, middle of first sentence - "and conduct all deliberations."

### Issue of member's votes and abstention

- Issue raised of how do we deal with people who abstain? Does their vote count or not?
- Robert's Rules says that people who abstain do count as a no vote.
- Some feel that people should have the right to abstain as a no vote. Some feel this gives abstainers the right to stall a deliberative process, or worse yet, capitalize on abstentions as "no" votes like Bill Sizemore has.
  
- Motion for new language:
  - "Members have one vote each and decisions shall be made by a vote requiring at least a majority of the quorum in attendance."
  - Amendment: "Members have one vote each and decisions shall be made by a vote that is at least a majority vote of those members who are voting." Passes. Two abstain.

### Suggestions that were not voted on yet:

- Delete "Proxy voting is prohibited" because it is already listed in another section.
- Add to section C: "Assuming a quorum members shall have one vote each."

### Other business:

- Mark brings up issue of whether or not neighborhood associations should have to turn over records, data, research they might have compiled on a controversial issue to an opponent. The example is an environmental case where a corporation and association are in conflict.

*The committee has approved these summary notes and are final. The information contained in this document is preliminary and informal in nature and does not necessarily reflect the views or adopted policies of the City of Portland or the final outcomes of this project; the reader should exercise caution in its interpretation.*

### **NEXT MEETINGS**

Tuesday, August 26, 2003

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

City Hall, Lovejoy Room, 1221 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Tuesday, September 9, 2003

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

City Hall, Lovejoy Room, 1221 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Prepared by: Brian Hoop, Office of Neighborhood Involvement