Business District Associations

Summary of proposed changes in ONI Standards affecting Business District Associations

Below are proposed changes of importance to Business Associations proposed in the draft ONI Standards. This is a good-faith effort to summarize differences between the existing ONI Guidelines with the proposed ONI Standards.

See page 28 in draft Standards for Section VI: Business District Associations.
http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=23242

Proposed language affecting Business District Associations was developed by leadership from the Alliance for Portland Neighborhood Business Associations. The GREAT/Guidelines committee did recommend some changes.

There is a name change being proposed for such associations. Presently they are referred to as Neighborhood Business Associations. The proposed Standards would refer to them as Business District Associations.

Business Associations were not incorporated into the original neighborhood system in the 70's, as were Neighborhood Associations. It was not until the early 90's, at the urging of Mayor Vera Katz, that City bureaus, including ONI, were asked to forge closer partnerships with Business Associations.

It is important to remember that Business District Associations are "Acknowledged" by the City of Portland compared to the "Recognized" status of Neighborhood Associations. The primary difference is Neighborhood Associations benefit from City funding for organizational and leadership development support through the District Coalitions. In addition, they have formal standing on land use and zoning procedures. Business District Associations currently receive neither City financing for organizational support nor have formal standing on land use and zoning issues. Commissioner Adams has proposed a small grant program for Business Associations for marketing.

The key change you will notice is that Business District Associations will not be required to follow open meeting and public records requirements. They will be "encouraged" to follow them. The changes were sought in recognition that such expectations were unwarranted if the City was not providing any financial support to Business Associations.

Business District Associations (Section VI)

Boundaries: States boundaries may not overlap those of other Business District Associations unless agreed to in writing. Does not specifically state they have to follow same boundary standards that apply to Neighborhood Associations, as do the current Guidelines.

Non-Discrimination: Expands non-discrimination to include "gender identity" which was added to the City of Portland's Code non-discrimination language, which Neighborhood Association language has historically mirrored.

Size: Expands minimum number of businesses in a geographic area from 40 to 75 businesses.

Bylaws: Expands these items to be addressed in bylaws including provisions for: notification, elections, annual meetings, meeting requirements, and grievances.

Grievances: Drops this sections and lists it under requirements for bylaws (above.) The existing Guidelines description required specific provisions relating to the resolution of grievances concerning the activities, policies, or recommendations of the Business Association, including who is eligible to grieve, a process for the receipt of complaints, and a procedure for final resolution. It also referenced that the separate Grievance section in the guidelines applied.

Meeting requirements: Adds provisions that General Meetings must occur at a minimum once per year with notice to elect a Board of Directors.

Open Meetings/Open Records: Drops this section. The meeting requirements section (above) would state Business District Associations are only "encouraged" to hold open meetings and maintain open records. The existing Guidelines required Business Associations to abide by open meeting/public records policy in the operating City Code/ordinance, which was to follow State open meetings/public records laws as did Neighborhood Associations. The existing Guidelines also listed specific items to be recorded in meeting minutes.

Acknowledgement as a Business District Association by the City of Portland:

- Adds provision that mediation services from the Neighborhood Mediation Program can be used for resolving disagreements between Business District Associations and/or Neighborhood Associations.
- Drops the statement that ONI may if resources are available- provide support services such as general communications, newsletter production and distribution, activity planning, public relations, and general information and

referral. Historically, ONI has not had the financial capacity to support these services to Business Associations.