Factors that Make A Neighborhood Association Successful:

A Case Study of the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association

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Chapter 1:

Introduction to Neighborhood Associations

This report analyzes factors that make a neighborhood association successful. A successful association is defined as an association that has gained favorable or desired outcomes. Communities throughout the United States embrace neighborhood associations; however, there is a lack of information concerning factors that make them successful.

The first section of this report introduces the topic of neighborhood associations by reviewing planning literature. This includes the history of how neighborhood associations evolved out of the public participation movement. Another area currently discussed in planning literature is the resurgence of neighborhood planning. Review of the literature will support the importance of neighborhood associations in planning.

This report also cites planning literature to determine factors contributing to successful neighborhood associations. Review of existing planning literature reveals that conventional approaches take a "how to" organize perspective, rather than addressing factors that contribute to success or failure. Moreover, there is little written that recommends how neighborhood associations should operate or internal factors that contribute to the success of neighborhood organizations.

Responding to this deficiency, the next section tests factors, identified in planning literature, that appear important to the success of associations. This is accomplished by conducting a case study of a Tucson neighborhood association that is considered successful. The case study of the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association (OFLNA)
also identifies additional factors, not mentioned in the planning literature, responsible for the success of the OFLNA. The history of the Fort Lowell neighborhood and the establishment of the OFLNA is presented to provide a context for the association’s success. Observations shared by the organization’s members are presented, in part, to demonstrate why the OFLNA is regarded as a successful. The analysis identifies seven factors that have contributed to the association’s success; organization, communication, membership, education, outside assistance, neighborhood spirit and goals.

This report concludes by addressing how the factors identified may be applied to other neighborhood associations. Planners can utilize this information to help other newly forming and existing neighborhood associations become successful.

**Background on Participation and Neighborhood Organizations**

Public participation is the cornerstone of a democracy (Arnstein 1969, Baum 1999). The involvement of public participation in planning practice is widely accepted as a way to promote democracy and ensure that local resident needs are met (Tauxe 1995).

Planning practice focuses on developing plans that further the interests of the public good or their well-being (Taylor 1998). Good planning is viewed as a negotiated process among all affected parties who have different values, concerns and interests (Friedman 1989). Allowing residents opportunities to participate in the planning process ensures that their values, concerns, and interests are voiced. People’s interests are central to planning and to be able to accurately define them is central to developing good plans (Taylor 1998).
Citizen participation and the development of neighborhood groups has evolved over many decades. Beginning in the 1960s citizen participation was initially promoted for ideological reasons, as a way to broaden the democratic process of city planning (Hutcheson 1988).

Following World War II, consumerism and suburban growth benefited large segments of the population (Krumholz and Clavel 1994). There was a substantial shift in population from inner cities to suburbs. This left the poor, minorities, and elderly trapped in the city core where conditions continued to deteriorate. Some individuals began to be concerned that these low-income areas, suffering from poverty, delinquency, crime and inadequate shelter, were unable to obtain the resources and organization needed to combat the problems they faced. Responding to these concerns in the 1960s the grassroots advocacy planning movement emerged (Hall 1989).

The advocacy movement was led by Paul Davidoff (Checkoway 1994). Davidoff called for planners to serve as advocates for the poor by concerning themselves with the social and economic issues of planning affecting specific groups. According to Davidoff, planners should represent poor groups and further their interests rather than only the overall public good. Davidoff believed that establishing the planner’s role as advocate would lead to improved society equity (Davidoff 1965).

Alternatives to the advocacy planning movement were also developed in the 1960s. Federal programs began to emerge that prescribed “community development,” “community organization,” and “community mobilization” (Hutcheson 1988). These “community mobilization” programs were an effort to redistribute resources to the poor resulting in more equitable distribution of power by promoting public participation.
In the 1970s the effort to involve citizens more directly into the planning process continued (Plant 1981). Cities became interested in expanding both citizen participation and redistribution of power (Krumholz and Clavel 1994). Out of the citizens’ empowerment movement, neighborhood groups emerged as a new focus in community development (Hutcheson 1988, Van Til 1980, Bratt 1985, Krumholz and Clavel 1994). Federal recognition of this came when President Carter enacted the Neighborhood Self Help Development Act of 1978 (NSHD) (Bratt 1985). This act established neighborhood associations as legitimate actors in community development and neighborhood revitalization efforts through full participation of residents in their own voluntary associations (Bratt 1985). NSHD authorized direct funding to the neighborhood organization to assist them in launching activities and programs developed to meet the residents’ needs.

Under President Reagan, in the 1980s, the NSHD program fell victim to cutbacks. By 1983, the Urban-Rural Recovery Act again provided federal funding for neighborhood associations although on a much smaller scale (Bratt 1985). Under this act federal grants were made available, but based solely on the amounts neighborhood associations could obtain from other fund sources.

Today, neighborhood associations may still apply for federal funds through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), although limited resources make this approach the exception not the rule (Plant 1981). As a result of these federal programs, neighborhood groups began to call for more “community control” and through this movement it became obvious that citizen participation was here to stay (Bratt 1985).
In the 1990s advocacy planning is enjoying a resurgence in a new form called “empowerment planning.” Like advocacy planning, empowerment planning seeks to create a more equitable distribution of benefits and power within a city (Rahder 1999). Empowerment planning differs from the earlier advocacy planning movement in that it focuses on bridging differences within a community as well as between the community and government. Empowerment planning should change the distribution of resources and power as well as increase communities’ critical understanding and collective action (Rahder 1999).

Throughout the decades of public participation there have also been changes in the role of the planner. Initially the planner’s role was viewed as purely a technician (Ozawa and Selzer 1999). Early planning practice focused on utilizing the rational planning model as a tool for developing good community plans. After involving citizens’ participation the planning process became more conflict-ridden (Plant 1981). This created a new role for planners serving as facilitators and places them often in the middle of conflicts between citizens and planning decisions. This new role also demands that planners help citizens’ weigh various plan alternatives and to facilitate communication between groups (Taylor 1998, Ozawa and Selzer 1999, Baum 1999). Developing plans by including citizen participation results in plans that are more sensitive to various public interests, especially when they incorporate careful and considered citizen dialogue (Taylor 1998).

Most important to the establishment of federally funded programs and other participation opportunities was the idea that local residents are in an ideal position to understand and determine the unique needs of their neighborhoods (Bratt 1985, Taylor
1998). In this context the planner's job was to develop policies and plans that aim to further the interest voiced by the public (Taylor 1998). Citizen opinions, views, interests and values are central to planning and planners need to be able to define them accurately. However, within large metropolitan areas, it is easy for under-represented groups and individuals not to be heard. By joining residents into more organized groups, such as neighborhood associations, the needs and values of specific areas are shared with the local government who otherwise would be unaware of their specific issues (Taylor 1998).

After many of these programs were initiated, issues were raised concerning how citizen participation should be incorporated into in the planning process. The neighborhood participation process sheds light on the distinction between a “top-down” or “bottom-up” approach to working with neighborhood groups (Hutcheson 1988). In the “bottom-up” approach, citizens initiate their own involvement rather than the “top-down” where the government invites participation and devises rules regarding their involvement (Hutcheson 1988). The “top-down” approach has been faced with limitations due to citizens' playing only passive roles, which often fosters their withdrawal from the planning process (Hutcheson 1988). Research has also found that two-way interactive participation, for example through a dialogue, is also a superior participation method (Julian et al. 1997).

Issues also began to be raised concerning the actual impact of citizen's participation. Citizens were often provided opportunities to participate. However, they served only token roles with very little influence on the decisions being made (Bratt 1985, Van Til 1980, Arnstein 1965, Moore 1995). When citizens were placed in these situations their level of participation declined (Julian et al. 1997). Alternatively, research
found that when tangible results of participation are evident then individuals are receptive
to broadening and expanding their participation (Hutcheson 1988). To enhance
participation in planning practice citizens need to feel empowered to make decisions
(Julian et al 1997).

There are many community advantages resulting from the inclusion of citizens’
participation in the planning process. Foremost, is the identification of individual
residents who may serve as future leaders within a community (Julian et al 1997). Second,
is the transfer of knowledge about smaller local areas within the community
from citizens to planners (Julian et al. 1997, Baum 1999). Residents are more familiar
with their neighborhood than an outsider and they view their neighborhoods’
characteristics differently than a planner. In order for planners to understand the
uniqueness of the neighborhood they need to seek input from its residents. Lastly, citizen
participation also promotes public education about planning issues and the planning
process. Many planners feel that through the experience of neighborhood planning,
community residents are sensitized to other land-use issues and mobilized to become
more involved in the zoning process that effects their community (Hutcheson 1988).
There are also psychological benefits for the individual involved in the participation,
including developing a stronger sense of community and feelings of empowerment and
control (Moore 1995).

Research has shown that homeowners are more likely to participate in voluntary
organizations than renters (Rohe 1994). This is often attributed to the homeowner’s
economic incentive to become involved to protect their investment. However, other
explanations for their involvement are that homeowners may feel a greater sense of pride
in the neighborhood through ownership. This sense of pride fosters or reinforces their social attachments increasing their willingness to participate in decisions effecting their neighborhood (Rohe 1994). Whatever the reason for homeowners involvement, overall a greater number of homeowners traditionally participate in neighborhood organizations.

Research has also addressed the impact of the resident's location with respect to the center of the community (Hutcheson 1988, Julian et al 1997). As communities grow in size and spread geographically, they become less bounded and defined; this appears to be associated with residents' identification with their community's interest. This differs from smaller communities which are more centralized and closely knit. In such cases residents feel more connected to the community. In larger communities, individuals living outside of the center feel insignificant because they are lost in the masses and, therefore, do not identify with the core community as strongly. This phenomena results in a decline in their public participation (Hutcheson 1988). The implication is that people living near the center of a community are more connected and more likely to participate. Therefore, by organizing neighborhood organizations in smaller areas within a larger community, residents are able to identify with their neighbors and consequently are more interested in participating.

There are also questions regarding the participation levels of the lower-socioeconomic-status individuals (Hutcheson 1988). Research indicates that in general lower-socioeconomic groups participate less (Hutcheson 1988, Julian et al. 1997). However, recent research has found that after a neighborhood planning system was implemented the involvement of residents in lower-income areas increased (Hutcheson 1988). By utilizing neighborhood associations, the poor and minorities can participate
and become more involved with local planning issues that effect their lives. In sum, there is a consensus that citizen participation through neighborhood associations is important in the local planning process.

There has also been research conducted that examined the types of people that are willing to participate in the public planning process. Research found that individuals that perceived greater problems were not the most likely to participate as expected (Rohe and Stegman 1994). Being concerned with local problems was not sufficient motivation to become involved with a community organization. Instead, individuals were motivated to become involved based on their own need for solidarity or sense of civic duty (Rohe and Stegman 1994).

Planners and psychologists have found that the real success of public participation has been in the neighborhood movement. This is especially true in cases where programs are initiated by neighborhood groups and are supported by government (Bratt 1985). A recent study found that by formalizing citizen participation in neighborhood planning processes, city governments may aid neighborhoods requiring less resources while at the same time redressing inequities and redistributing power (Hutcheson 1988). Developing government programs to aid neighborhood associations is an effective way of establishing on going participation in a community rather than just responding to crisis situations (Moore 1995).

Others found that shifting responsibilities for improving or changing neighborhood conditions to the neighborhood enhances residents’ sense of empowerment and community leading to greater successes (Julian et al 1997, Moore 1995). There are many examples throughout the country of neighborhood groups organizing to take a
stand against a common enemy (Schwab 1991). Neighborhood organizations have emerged as important political and social forces in a community that play important roles in controlling neighborhood transformation (Van Til 1980). It is for this reason that this report is focused on the important subject of neighborhood associations.
Chapter 2:

What Makes A Good Neighborhood Association

After reviewing planning literature it is evident that participation and neighborhood associations are considered important elements in the democratic planning process. The establishment of neighborhood groups has been an upward trend for decades. However, little of the literature identifies factors critical to the success of neighborhood groups. Instead, much of the literature approaches the neighborhood organization from an "outsiders" perspective, rather than directly observing or recommending how a neighborhood group should operate, or factors critical to developing a successful associations. Consequently, there is little discussion about factors that play a critical role in developing successful associations. A few factors discussed in the following section are implied in the literature to be important for a neighborhood association’s success.

Members

In Neighborhood Planning: A Guide for Citizens and Planners (1990), Jones discusses factors important to the formation of a neighborhood plan. She does not apply these factors to the establishment of a neighborhood association; however, many of the factors identified are applicable to both. One factor discussed was the importance of members having the time and energy to develop a neighborhood plan. Jones states “there needs to be a commitment on the part of leadership to see it through” (Jones pg. 36). This may also be applied to the creation and operation of a neighborhood organization.
Members' dedication to the association's goals and their willingness to actively participate is critical to establishing a successful neighborhood organization.

**Organization**

Organization is another area identified that is important to building a successful association (Jones 1990). Jones states that organization is an important element in the development of a neighborhood plan. Again, this factor may be applied to the creation of successful associations as well. Successful associations require leaders to methodically involve members, distribute information to members, and develop and implement the associations' strategies to meet neighborhood goals. The completion of all of these tasks requires leaders to effectively organize.

Organization is also important in the development of the organizational hierarchy of the association (Jones 1990). Associations need to spread the burden of work by including as many association members as possible, rather than depending on just a few. If the association dwindles down to just a few members carrying the weight of the association there is a good chance they will become burned out. Associations need to provide many opportunities for all members to become involved in the association sharing the work load.

**Communication**

Communication of information is another element identified as important in the development of a neighborhood plan (Jones 1990). The planning process is heavily dependent on information. One of the keys within a neighborhood organization is the
exchange of information. However, it is not always clear how associations can accomplish this. Associations need to develop many different methods to communicate to its members such as, newsletters, meetings, phone trees etc. The use of a combination of methods is an effective way to guarantee the association is reaching all of its members. For instance, some members may not attend meetings but if they receive a monthly newsletter they are kept abreast of association business.

Neighborhoods throughout the country are being empowered through the development of neighborhood plans and in some jurisdictions by creating neighborhood support departments. But what is missing from this movement, is sharing information with associations that may help build a successful association. The case study of the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Organization (OFLNA) is used to analyze factors that have lead to its emergence as a successful neighborhood association. The hope of this report is to contribute to establishing successful neighborhood associations that may provide citizens a voice in the planning process.
Chapter 3
Case Study Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association

History of the Fort Lowell Area

The Fort Lowell area has a rich and diverse history. There have been inhabitants in the area since 1250 A.D. (Turner 1982). This history has provided a cornerstone for the Fort Lowell Neighborhood and the development of the OFLNA.

The Hohokam were the first known settlers in the Fort Lowell area (Turner 1982). The Hohokam developed an agricultural-based society that used irrigation systems extensively. The Hohokam settled in the Fort Lowell area because of farming opportunities offered by the convergence of the Pantano and Rillito Rivers. North of the Fort Lowell Park, the "Hardy site," named after the property owners, contains remnants of some of the 100 pit houses within the area that the Hohokam had once lived (OFLNA Video 1993). Between 1350 A.D. and 1450 A.D. the Hohokam disappeared mysteriously from the area (Turner 1982).

Over the next 400 years the Fort Lowell area was sparsely inhabited. By 1865, there were approximately two to three thousand people living in Tucson, approximately twelve miles away from the Fort Lowell area. The military camp, Fort Lowell, had been located close to the city, but because of the temptation of the bars and civilization in Tucson, the military relocated the camp to the outskirts of Tucson (OFLNA Video 1993).

In 1873, Camp Lowell relocated to the convergence of the Rillito and Pantano Rivers, now known as the Fort Lowell area. During the period of military control of Fort Lowell many buildings were built. A few of these buildings still remain. For example,
the Commanding Officer's Quarters now serves as a branch museum for the Arizona Historical Society. In 1945, the Boy Scouts of America built a shelter to preserve the remains of the Fort Lowell Hospital that was beginning to show signs of decay (OFLNA Video 1983). These remains are reminders of the significant role the area played in the history of Tucson. Within a fairly short time frame, by 1891, Geronimo and his bands were captured signaling the end of the Apache Wars and soldiers were ordered to abandon Fort Lowell Camp (Turner 1982).

After desertion by the army, another group inhabited vacant buildings of Fort Lowell and began to establish a new community called "El Fuerte" (The Fort). The people came from Ures, Huepac, and Magdalena in Sonora Mexico and Santa Rosalia in Baja California (Turner 1982). Although, predominately a Mexican settlement, there were also Anglos in the area. El Fuerte grew as more extended families came and constructed adobe homes. Eventually, there were about twenty-five to thirty adobe homes in El Fuerte linked by both wagon tracks and family ties. Many of these buildings are still standing.

El Fuerte was a very religious community. An important part of their religion and the center of their village was the capillita (a small chapel) (Branham 1997). The capalitta was so tiny that only the priest could fit in it, so attendees would gather standing under the surrounding mesquite trees to hear mass (Turner 1983).

As the community grew so did the need for a larger church. Senora Jesefa de Mule donated land on the hill above the capilitta for the new church. The church was dedicated to San Angel de la Guarda (OFLNA Tour Guide 1999). The church on the hill then became the center of the El Fuerte community. Children within the community
would play on the church steps and adults would gather to visit (OFLNA Video 1993). Homes were built clustered around the church and a water well was dug on the northwest slope where village members living nearby came to draw their water.

In 1925, a cyclone destroyed the chapel completely (Turner 1982). The men of the village of El Fuerte rebuilt the adobe church over a period of seven years. Construction was finished in 1932 and the church was dedicated as the Capilla de San Pedro de Fort Lowell. The San Pedro Chapel was used over the next twenty years until a new church, St. Cyril’s, opened its doors in 1948 at the corner of Pima Avenue and Swan Road. In 1982 San Pedro Chapel was designated as the City of Tucson’s first Historic Landmark.

Their fiestas also depicted a sign of the deep spirituality of the El Fuerte people. On May 15th, the saint’s day, the families of El Fuerte would celebrate El Dia San Isidro. This was a full-day feast to honor San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers. The celebration would begin at daybreak with villagers beginning a procession through the fields (OFLNA Video 1993). The image of San Isidro was carried through the fields and participants would pray and sing so San Isidro might bless the village with rain and no bugs for the next year’s planting. During the procession each family would also make an offering of food to provide the celebrants breakfast, lunch, and for the fiesta at the end of the day (Turner 1983).

During World War II, middle class Anglo families began to move into the Fort Lowell area and the village of El Fuerte began to disappear (Turner 1983). Some of the new residents, such as the Bolsiuses family, planned to rebuild some of the then failing
adobe buildings. The Bolsiuses, Pete, Nan and Charles, rebuilt the Post Trader Store, which was originally built in 1873 when the area served as a fort (OFLNA Video 1993).

The last vestige of El Fuerte village is the barrio located on the north side of Fort Lowell Road near the dirt road El Callejon. Still in the El Callejon area today, most of the families are related in some way and continue to value taking care of one another (OFLNA Video 1993). This small community has been the basis for the “Community of Fort Lowell” that many residents in the area continue to appreciate and wish to maintain.

In recent decades the Tucson community has recognized the Fort Lowell neighborhood as an area that represents Tucson’s history. In 1976 the Pima County Board of Supervisors established the Fort Lowell Historic District of Pima County (OFLNA Chronology 1994 and 1999). A few years later in 1981, the City of Tucson followed by adopting the Fort Lowell Historic District of the City of Tucson. The City of Tucson designated the San Pedro Chapel as its first historic landmark in 1982.

OFLNA Background

In 1981 the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association was formed by a small group of residents. These residents held strong concerns about changes taking place in the Fort Lowell neighborhood (Spicer 1981). Residents felt threatened by increased neighborhood traffic and bulldozers moving into the area making room for new residents (Spicer 1999).

After observing the success of other neighborhood groups, like the Sam Hughes Neighborhood Association and the Tucson Mountains Association, residents felt they had some hope in standing up against unwelcome changes by “organizing” (Spicer 1981).
The OFLNA was formed to “preserve the historic and rural qualities of the area” (Spicer 1981). Within five months of inception, the OFLNA had 125 members with dues paid throughout the end of their first year.

The OFLNA encompasses approximately one square mile at the north-central edge of the City of Tucson (Figure 1: OFLNA General Development Map). The neighborhood is bounded to the north by the Rillito River, to the south by Glenn Road, the west by Swan Road and the east by the Pantano Wash. Traversing the neighborhood is Fort Lowell Road which dead ends at Craycroft Road near Fort Lowell Park (City of Tucson 1983).

When the OFLNA was founded half of the neighborhood resided within the City of Tucson’s jurisdiction, the other half within Pima County. Since that time, the City of Tucson has annexed the majority of the remaining land from Pima County placing the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood within Tucson’s city limits, with the exception of one acre that remains in Pima County.

The majority of the Fort Lowell neighborhood area consists of residential development; however, there are a few different land uses intermixed throughout the neighborhood. There is one small cluster of commercial uses near the corner of Swan and Fort Lowell Roads. This consists primarily of a large office and retail complex on the southwest corner, an office building on the northeast corner and small office parks south of the corner. At the southwest corner of Craycroft Road and Fort Lowell Road is the remains of old factory, that is a non-conforming industrial use (Spicer 1981). There are two operational churches within the neighborhood. One is located near the Alamo Wash on Fort Lowell Road and the other is at the corner of Glenn and Craycroft Roads.
Legend

- City of Tucson corporate boundary
- Historic Districts
- National Register Fort Lowell Multiple Resource Area
- San Pedro Chapel Historic Landmark and Other Churches
- Irrigation Ditches
- Mesquite Bosque
- Developed/Committed Areas

Land Use Boundaries

2.5

Maximum Residential Densities (Residential/Acre)
One acre = 43,560 square feet

Low Density Residential Areas (up to six residences/acre)

Medium Density Residential Areas (up to 15 residences/acre)

High Density Residential Areas (over 15 residences/acre)

Office Use

Nonresidential Use areas. Nonresidential uses may also be allowed in

Low Density Residential Areas.
There is a private high school west of Craycroft Road near the Rillito River. The neighborhood's namesake, the Fort Lowell Park is located in the eastern section of the neighborhood.

The density of residential development within the neighborhood is diverse. Residences range from rural densities with one house occupying three acres to an attached multi-story apartment complex currently under construction along Swan Road. The Fort Lowell neighborhood also has a large range in the value of homes within the area. A few houses are situated on large lots near the Rillito River. These dwellings are very expensive and retain their rural character (Spicer 1981). There are also many houses priced between $150,000 to $250,000 within the Hill Farm subdivision and other small surrounding subdivisions. A few new subdivisions are expected to be built within the next year and will fall into this price range as well. And, there are some lower priced homes under $150,000. The lower priced homes are generally on smaller lots in the southern section of the neighborhood, for example the La Toluca townhouses in the western section and the older homes in the eastern section where the village of El Fuerte was clustered.

Neighborhood Demographics

A diverse population made up primarily of Hispanics and Anglos was responsible for the long established history the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood. The 1990 Census indicates that the neighborhood is still dominated by these two groups. Yet, the percentage of Hispanics in the area appears to have declined since the El Fuerte village disappeared. Although exact figures are not known, according to the 1990 Census,
Anglos and Hispanics make up approximately 95% of the population in the area. Anglos are attributed with approximately 85% of that population with the remaining 10% being Hispanic.

The Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood is also comprised of a generally normal age distribution. Based again on the 1990 Census, the largest population group within the neighborhood is between the ages of 30 to 49 which constitutes approximately 34% of the population. The other age brackets under 18, 18 to 29, 50 to 64 and 65 and over account for equal percentages of the population.

The educational obtainment for residents within the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood appears to be slightly higher than average. Only 18% of residents have a high school diploma, another 27% have taken some college courses but have not obtained degrees. Twenty-nine percent of residents have a college degree, and another 14% have graduate degrees. These statistics were compiled based on the 1990 Census data.

It is assumed that many of these characteristics have changed slightly over the past ten years. This is especially due to the number of new residences that have been built or are expected to be built within the next year. The majority of the new residences being built are higher priced homes that most likely require buyers to be older, wealthier and possibly Anglo. These circumstances will continue to dominant demographic characteristics of the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood.

**OFLNA Accomplishments**

After the OFLNA was established in 1981, the members of the organization immediately began working together to develop a Neighborhood Plan. A Neighborhood Plan Committee was formed which consisted of seventeen residents (Spicer 1981). The
committee distributed surveys to residents and prepared an inventory of the area’s resources to determine the needs and wants of residents. These members were very dedicated to the establishment of the neighborhood plan. They worked hard to develop the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Plan meeting almost weekly with city and county planners for a period of over two years (Anderson-McKee 1999). The Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Plan was published and adopted by the City of Tucson Mayor and Council on January 23, 1984 (City of Tucson 1984). In 1992 the neighborhood plan was updated by the Land Plan Committee and then reaffirmed and amended by City of Tucson Mayor and Council on October 26, 1992. The Land Plan Committee has been a consistent presence in the organization over the years and the committee is responsible for reviewing and upholding the goals as defined in the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Plan (Anderson-McKee 1999).

The creation of the neighborhood plan is an ideal example of how the OFLNA organizes effectively. The preparation of the plan required members to obtain input from residents throughout the neighborhood (Spicer 1981). They then established the neighborhood’s goals by incorporating the views of all residents. The association is also responsible for the implementation and updating of the plan requiring constant review and updating of the plan (Anderson-McKee 1999).

Another large achievement of the OFLNA was the creation of the first La Reunion de El Fuerte in 1982 and supported by the Arizona Humanities Council (OFLNA Chronology 1994 and 1999). La Reunion is a day-long event that was established to bring together the residents of the El Fuerte neighborhood, by including all current and former residents and as well as decedents of the area. La Reunion is also a
historical event that celebrates a historic mass in the San Pedro Chapel (Turner 1981). Following mass in the chapel there is a free self-guided historic tour of the neighborhood open to the public. At the end of the day the neighborhood has a large fiesta for all residents and event participants. After the first annual La Reunion a committee was formed in 1982 to continue the annual tradition of La Reunion. The association has continued this very successful event every year since, attracting hundreds of people from around Tucson.

During the time of the first La Reunion, the OFLNA was using the San Pedro Chapel with permission from its owner Nik Krivitsky (Stafford 1999). But in 1991, after Krivitsky passed away, the organization was offered the opportunity to purchase the chapel. A group of neighbors and friends of the OFLNA held the property in trust for two years while the OFLNA raised money to purchase the chapel. During that period the San Pedro Chapel was placed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places (OFLNA Chronology 1994 and 1999). Through the collection of donations, fundraisers and a matching grant from the Arizona Heritage Fund, the OFLNA raised enough to purchase the chapel in 1993.

After acquiring the chapel the OFLNA, with the help of a matching stabilization fund from the Heritage Fund, spent another two years repairing the chapel (OFLNA Chronology 1994 and 1999). The OFLNA was given The Governor’s 1996 Award for Historic Preservation for the work they completed restoring the San Pedro Chapel.

The association formed the San Pedro Chapel Committee to organize fundraisers and to care for the chapel. Today the association continues to conduct many association functions at the San Pedro Chapel (Stafford 1999)). The OFLNA also rents out the
chapel for private functions, such as weddings, to raise money for its continued maintenance. The OFLNA still considers the chapel the center of the neighborhood as the Fuertenos once did.

Acquiring the San Pedro Chapel benefited the association in many ways. The chapel grounds provide a strong geographical center for the association. The buildings next to the chapel serve as facilities for the association’s office and association meetings. The chapel grounds are also central to many events the association holds throughout the year. As well, the association capitalizes on the rental of the chapel, for weddings and other events, to raise money for the OFLNA.

Another accomplishment of the association related to the neighborhoods’ history was the creation of a video *South of The Rillito, West of The Pantano*. The video is a half-hour documentary accounting the history of various communities that settled in the Fort Lowell area. It was produced with matching grant funds from the Arizona Humanities Council and other donations made to the association by residents, friends and community businesses (OFLNA Chronology 1994 and 1999). The video includes long time residents of the Fort Lowell neighborhood speaking about how the neighborhood’s natural characteristics have changed over the years (OFLNA Video 1993). The video also includes appearances by professionals in the community such as historians from the Fort Lowell Museum and the Arizona State Museum. These contributors enhance the professionalism and stature of the video. The association uses the video as a public relations and educational tool by often distributing the video to new neighborhood residents and other interested parties throughout the community. Individuals interested in obtaining a copy of the video may contact the association.
The distribution of the video is an important element in establishing the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood as a unique place. Providing the video to the broader community, especially political leaders, developers and planners, educates people about the neighborhoods history. Sharing this information helps to establish the preservation of the neighborhood as a worthy cause.

Another unique accomplishment of the OFLNA was their award of ISTEA funds in 1997 by the Arizona Department of Transportation for the Fort Lowell Road Enhancement Project (OFLNA Newsletter 1999). The project will redesign Fort Lowell Road (including creating walking and biking trails) and mitigate the effects of increased traffic. This is another example of a project that the OFLNA worked hard to obtain funding by dedicated grant writing.

The award of ISTEA funds is also an important achievement by the OFLNA because it demonstrates how the association works proactively. Association members envisioned positive change for their neighborhood by improving the major thoroughfare. They worked diligently to submit the two grant proposals required to obtain the requested funding.

Each of the above accomplishments signify remarkable and definitive goals the association has achieved. There are many smaller obstacles that the OFLNA has conquered over the years as well. Many are closely related to the high pressures of development in the area. After the establishment of the Land Plan Committee in 1982, the committee was appointed the liaison between the OFLNA and developers. The OFLNA admits that not all development in their neighborhood is well-liked, in fact
unless the project requires rezoning the property the association generally has no vehicle to voice its concerns to the developer (Stafford 1999, Spicer 1999).

There are several examples of recent developments in which the Land Plan Committee was able to negotiate with the developer. The first involved the site layout for the Adobes del Bosque subdivision (Stafford 1999). Discussions between the developer and the Land Plan Committee led to the preservation of some of the few remaining Mesquite Bosques in the Tucson valley. Second, the committee was able to coordinate with the developer to develop a public walking trail that links Fort Lowell Road with the Rillito River (Stafford 1999, Spicer 1999). This is important to the neighborhood because currently there is not public access connecting the two areas and many Fort Lowell residents enjoy walking along the Rillito River. Lastly, in other developments the Land Plan Committee influenced the building’s architectural design and color palette. This illustrates the association’s dedication to preserving the sense of place within the Fort Lowell Neighborhood.

Factors that Make the OFLNA a Successful Association

After reviewing the impressive list of the OFLNA achievements over past years it is apparent that the association qualifies as successful. The question arises, what factors played important roles in ensuring success. By carefully examining the OFLNA, several factors emerge that contributed to their attainment. The factors identified are organization, communication, membership, education, outside assistance, neighborhood spirit and goals. Each is discussed in detail below.
Organization

Organization is important to an association in two ways. First, associations need to operate within the structure of an organizational hierarchy. Second, the association needs to manage its daily operations in an effective and organized manner.

The first approach to understanding how an organization operates is by examining its organizational structure. This is one area in which the OFLNA is in flux. In the past the organization operated with a closed structure, which limited the amount of interaction between residents and association’s leadership. The previous structure was headed by a Board of Directors reported to by the Community Outreach, Finance, San Pedro Chapel, Fundraising and Land Plan Committees (Stafford 1999). The Community Outreach and Fundraising committees also had its own subcommittees (See Figure 2: Old OFLNA Organizational Chart).

Over the past twenty years the Association had very strong involvement by a few key members (Spicer 1999, Stafford 1999). These individuals were important in developing the association and they built specific areas within the association that were their own domain. Leaders of the association operated independently, occasionally assisted by other, but usually others members within the association were not involved in their roles and responsibilities. In recent years there has been a turn over in the
Figure 2

OFLNA Old Organizational Structure

Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association Board of Directors
(President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary)

Community Outreach

Finance

San Pedro Chapel

Fundraising

Land Plan

Mailing
PR & Education
Gazette
Membership
La Reunion
Membership

Home Tour
El Fuerte Flea Market
Grants
Antiques & Collectables
Other

Source: OLFNA June, 1996
association's leadership mainly because many of the founding members have either passed away or moved (Stafford 1999, Spicer 1999). This transition has diminished the effectiveness of the organization because of the individuality of leadership.

After operating under this structure for nearly twenty years the association decided recently to reconfigure its structure (See Figure 3: New OLNA Organizational Chart). There was a need for clearer reporting relationships between areas and positions in the association and for clearer definitions of individual responsibilities (Stafford 1999). The association discovered that members were more willing to volunteer in the organization when their position was defined more clearly.

Solutions to problems are not always found within an organization. The OFLNA's council members participated in a few planning sessions with a Business Strategist Consultant to establish the new OFLNA organizational structure (Spectra Consulting 1998). This example illustrates how members within the association took the time and interest to recognize that the association was experiencing growing pains and took a stand to recommend that changes be made. Often it is easier for the status quo to remain, which may lead to a weaker association.

The first step in developing the new structure was to identify the association's vision and values. The association determined their vision as: "Neighbors working together; Connecting and strengthening our diverse community; Enhancing our environment and preserving our heritage" (Spectra 1998). The association also specified values for the neighborhood: cooperation, integrity, respect, inclusion, commitment,
Figure 3

OFLNA New Organizational Structure

Administrative Management
- Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary)
- Finance
- Publicity
- Archives and History

Resources (money, people, property)
- Fund Raising
- People
- Properties
- Land Plan
- Ft. Lowell Rd. Enhancement
- Ecology

Environment

Community and Social Enhancement
- Publications
- La Reunion
- Community Building
- Holiday & Social Events
- Volunteer Coordinating

Long Term Planning
- General Planning Committee

Stabilize Budget & Duties
- Pierre
- Membership/Mailing Lists
- Yr. Calendar
- Assignments for Volunteers

OFLNA Newcomer Packet
- Newsletter
- Grants
- Asset Mapping
- New Member Recruitment
- Development
- Property
- Gray Property
- O'Brien Property
- Kennedy Property
- Newsletter
- Gazettes
- Potlucks
- Boys Choir/Choiring
- Contact Police Dept.
- Keep track of VIP Program

Source: OFLNA 1999
caring, communication, fun, spirit, and participation. These values are intended to serve as the foundation for the association.

By identifying the neighborhood's vision and values several areas emerged that required specific attention and projects. They were formulated into the following five domains: Administration/Management, Resources, Environment, Community/Social Enhancement, and Long Term Planning (Spectra 1998). A council member serves on each domain area with the help of a primary coordinator. Each domain also contains year-long committees and short term-projects (Figure 3: New Organizational Chart).

The OFLNA is in the process of introducing this new organizational structure, so it is not yet tested. It is anticipated that this new structure will allow for greater certainty of responsibilities and reporting relationships (Stafford 1999). The structure is designed to set priorities from the top of the organization by the President and Council rather than individual committees establishing their own priorities. This structure allows the top leadership positions to ensure the association is working to meet goals important to the entire association rather than goals developed independently by individual committees. Thus this grass-roots organization takes on a "top-down" model.

The restructuring also allows more opportunities for members to become involved (Stafford 1999, Spicer 1999). In the past, there were situations when individual committees worked on projects independent of the rest of the association. This created a breakdown in the strong direction and cohesiveness of the association. Thus, under this model by creating more committees, thus more positions, so there are more opportunities for the general membership to become involved in the leadership of the association. The creation of more positions also provides more opportunities for new members to become
involved representing more areas throughout the neighborhood and avoids problems of burnout.

The association elections process is setup so each year there are council members serving on the council that served the prior year (Stafford 1999). This setup guarantees that the old council members are familiar with how the council should operate. Elections take place yearly on May 15th and each position serves a two-year term. There is also a maximum of two consecutive terms a member may serve before they must take a year break before returning to the council. This is intended to involve more residents in leadership roles by alternating various positions held within the association.

The date of elections is also an example of how the OFLNA incorporates the history of the area into today's everyday life. The date is significant because when the Fuertenos occupied the Fort Lowell area, they celebrated the annual feast called El dia San Isidro, on the saint's day May 15th. The association continues this tradition by gathering residents to hold the elections, which is followed by a potluck feast.

The second area of organization concerns the management of association events and business. In order to coordinate the number of events the OFLNA holds regularly requires a large amount of organization. Each month the association holds a potluck for members, giving residents the opportunity to socialize and discuss any concerns or comments they have with council and/or committee members. The OFLNA also holds a number of events annually such as La Reunion El Fuerte held in February, El Dia San Isidro on May 15th election day, and El Fuerte Flee Market in November. Separate committees coordinate each event and some require months of planning and preparation.
Another area where the OFLNA illustrates their organization is in the writing of grant proposals. Many of the associations accomplishments were made possible by the award of grant funds. Each grant proposal requires a detailed description of the neighborhood’s background and how the proposed project meets the objectives of the grant being offered. The written proposal usually requires a submittal of approximately twenty pages in length. Proposals are normally composed by a few volunteer writers, after it is completed a draft is presented to the council for approval. In some instances, such as when the association requested the ISTEA funds for Fort Lowell Road, two application submittals may be required to obtain funding. Preparation of these grants requires writers to be organized, committed and able to present information on behalf of the association.

As can be seen in the case of the OFLNA, organization provides an important foundation in which to build a successful association. It is essential to establish a detailed organizational structure within the association including responsibilities for each position. Members of the association require knowledge of a position’s responsibilities so leaders may work cooperatively as well as effectively in their own domain. Since there are often many different activities taking place within the association and throughout the year it is also critical to be organized to stay on top of planning events. Creating many different positions and committees within the association increases members participation and also allows the association to effectively manage its operations by distributing the workload.
Communication

Communication to members is also an important factor in developing a successful association. The OFLNA communicates very effectively to its members. The association provides many different opportunities for members to become informed of the neighborhood’s history and association projects.

The first method used to communicate is through direct interaction. The OFLNA holds two meetings monthly which gives members opportunities to interact and to keep informed of association activities and/or issues. One of the meetings is a structured council meeting that follows an agenda. The second meeting is a monthly potluck open to all neighborhood residents. At the potlucks there is no agenda and attendees are free to intermingle and socialize. After the potluck the association usually schedules some entertainment or an informational speaker.

The second method of communicating is through the association’s monthly newsletter. The newsletter is compiled by a committee and includes small articles from council members and committees, and a calendar of events. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep members informed of association business and upcoming events. The committee prepares, reproduces and delivers the newsletter to the City of Tucson’s Citizen and Neighborhood Services for mailing.

The other written communication tool is the Old Fort Lowell Gazette. Since the association’s creation in 1981, The Gazette has been published quarterly. The Gazette differs from the newsletter because it focuses on more broad issues facing the neighborhood. For example, the initial issues of the Old Fort Lowell Gazette featured articles with topics such as “Why have a neighborhood association?” and “History and
the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood”. The Gazette is a medium used to educate residents of the neighborhood’s history; explains the backgrounds of annual association events, and, provides a vehicle to discuss other general issues facing the neighborhood. Like the newsletter, the Gazette is distributed to all association members. The combination of these two mediums, one focused on the specific day to day business and the other dedicated to more general topics, provides members with good information related to the association.

The Fort Lowell neighborhood is a diverse area that experiences mobility just like other neighborhoods. In order to communicate with residents new to the neighborhood the association developed a New Comer’s Packet. The packet contains information related to the neighborhood and it is intended to educate new residents about the neighborhood’s uniqueness. A brief history is enclosed that describes the history of the Fort Lowell area. In the packet there is also an introduction to the OFLNA including a statement of the association’s goals, what the association offers residents and a list of opportunities for residents to become involved. A membership application is also enclosed to encourage neighbors to become a member and volunteer in the association. The New Comer’s Packet is a new program recently implemented. The association plans on having an existing member personally deliver the packet to the new resident so they may introduce themselves and welcome the resident to the neighborhood.

The association also communicates effectively with individuals outside of the association. The association has produced many publications available for distribution to individuals interested in the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood. The following publications are just a few examples of the number of items produced over the years. In 1982, the
book, *The People of Fort Lowell*, by Teresa Turner was published through the help of funding by the Arizona Humanities Council. The book was written by three long time Fort Lowell residents and focuses on describing the neighborhood’s history. Information from the book was also used to write the commentary for the documentary video *South of The Rillito, South of The Pantano*. The association also published a self-guided tour designed to accompany the tours given during La Reunion de El Fuerte. The guide describes and maps the historical landmarks located within the neighborhood. The video, book and tour guide are all available by contacting the OFLNA.

Communication is another key to building a successful association. Associations must be able to communicate ideas clearly to its members. Providing information to members should be one of the association’s primary objectives. The use of multiple communication methods such as meetings, newsletters and brochures adds to the effective dissemination of information. Through written methods members are kept abreast of association business even when they are unable to attend meetings.

It is also critical to develop ways to obtain information from members as well. Associations need to promote accessibility of the associations leadership so members may have opportunities to voice their concerns and feelings. The OFLNA currently does this by holding monthly potlucks.

**Membership**

Without members there would not be associations, because dedicated members are required to build a successful association. The history of the OFLNA indicates how dedicated its members were to establishing the OFLNA as a successful association.
When the association was initially established there were only a dozen founding members. Those members' hard work was responsible for building much of the OFLNA. Many founding members were personally responsible for early association accomplishments such as the publishing of the book, *People of Fort Lowell* and production of the video, *South of The Rillito and West of The Pantano*. These individuals were dedicated members, which provided strong leadership for the association from which it could flourish. Based on articles appearing in early issues of the Gazette, the OFLNA found itself falling into the general rule of 20% of the members contributing 80% of the work (Stafford 1999).

From its beginning the association made efforts to improve the representation of all residents. Members who were highly involved suffered from burnout and after many years of service, most of the founding members no longer participate in the association. Today the OFLNA has reached a point when it has become important for the membership to be more inclusive of other members within the association and throughout the neighborhood (Stafford 1999, Spicer 1999). By doing this the association will distribute its participation and reduce chances of member burnout.

Members serve as the building blocks of the association. Based on the history of the OFLNA, it is apparent that in some cases a few dedicated members may be able to begin an association and may even lead it to success. However, with the weight of an entire neighborhood association on the shoulders of just a few, problems such as burnout and lack of widespread member involvement are likely to occur. Recognizing the risk of these situations, organizations should be structured to include as many individuals as possible.
Association membership is not restricted to residents of the Fort Lowell neighborhood. Businesses within the neighborhood are encouraged to participate in the association. Businesses are also allowed to vote, this signifies that businesses are recognized as part of the neighborhood and that the association is interested in their opinions. The association also offers memberships to others not living in the neighborhood but that are interested in participating in the association. However, only members living or owning a business in the neighborhood are allowed to vote. By allowing wider membership the association collects more membership fees and spreads information about the neighborhood by increasing the circulation of the Old Fort Lowell Newsletter and Gazette.

Another area important to members is providing clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities of association positions. By doing this members are also better able to determine if they have the personal resources available to fulfill their obligation before they commit to volunteer. The association has found that this setup appears to facilitate members’ willingness to volunteer to perform roles within the association.

The association uses two additional tactics to increase recruitment of member volunteers. The first is attempting to match volunteers to a position that piques their interest. If volunteers are involved with something they enjoy, then they are more likely to participate. The other tactic the association uses to recruit volunteers is to provide diverse opportunities for involvement within the association that require different levels of commitment. The association recognizes that individuals have varying abilities to volunteer, some residents are retired and have more time available than other young families with limited availability. The association has many volunteer opportunities and
each differs in the amount of time and work demanded. Members who wish to become highly involved in the association may serve as council members. And, others who wish to participate at lower levels may consider working on small projects. Whatever the member’s interest may be the association welcomes all to be involved and participate at their own level.

Another important aspect of the structure is developing detailed responsibilities for association positions. This encourages members to volunteer to become involved and also helps them once they are participating to know what steps to take next. Associations need to develop a variety of opportunities that require different amounts of participation. Matching volunteers with positions that interest them is also an important way to increase member participation.

**Education**

Education of members is another area where the association has worked very hard to increase its success as an association. In the past there were areas that individuals took under their wings and made their own. Very few other people were involved in their operations, this led to a lack of understanding the requirements needed to continue the operation of specialized areas (Stafford 1999). This created difficulty when the leader was no longer available to fulfill his/her obligations and continue their efforts. Recognizing this, the association recently dedicated itself to reorganizing its structure to help avoid this situation in the future. The association is now focused on developing training of positions and defining responsibilities so new members or volunteers may step in and continue the work of their predecessor.
There are many positions within the association that require training for new volunteers. There are some committees within the association that the committee chair has led since its inception (Anderson-McKee 1999). The Land Plan Committee is one such example. The Land Plan Committee serves as the liaison between the association and developers. The committee is responsible for negotiating and developing letters of understanding for new development in the neighborhood. This committee requires some specialized understanding in order to continue operating effectively. One method the association uses to train individuals in cases like this one is the establishment of a shadowing relationship (Anderson-McKee 1999). This allows the committee chair to train other individuals in case they are unable to fulfill their responsibilities. This training is important not only for short-term absences, such as vacations, but also in the case of turnovers within the association.

The association operates the OFLNA Council in a similar manner. The association hold elections yearly; however not every position will be up for election each year (Spicer 1999). The availability of positions alternate so there will be experienced council members serving on the council every year. The experienced council members are responsible for training new council members. This arrangement provides smoother transitions between councils year after year.

The implementation of member education programs is important to protect the association from turnover in leadership. New leaders need to be trained on how they are to perform their new role and knowledge of the association’s history. With this education, members are better prepared to serve as association leaders working to fulfill the association’s goals.
Outside Assistance

The case study of the OFLNA has identified many occasions where the OFLNA has looked outside of the organization to obtain the help needed to meet goals. The association has looked for aid from professional consultants, from friends and community businesses, from the local government and finally from political leaders within the community (Stafford 1999, Anderson-McKee 1999, Spicer 1999). One example is when the association solicited the aid of a business strategist to help them restructure.

Obtaining grants is another area that the association looks to outside sources for aid. The association would not have been able to achieve its many accomplishments if not for the grants they have been awarded. An important area for associations to continue to flourish is the ability to effectively write and campaign to obtain funds. Associations that are able to effectively write and campaign for grant funds have a better probability of becoming successful.

There have also been many incidents through the history of the OFLNA where the association has depended on assistance from local government. Planners from the City of Tucson were instrumental in the drafting and adoption of the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Plan (Anderson-McKee 1999). There have also been incidents where local government staff has aided the association by serving as support for grant proposals. For example, the Pima County Manager was instrumental in the association’s application for ISTEA funds to establish a Fort Lowell Road Enhancement Project.

Political ties have also helped the association over the years (Stafford 1999). The association found that establishing relationships with elected officials is also important.
Association members attribute their support from political representatives to the squeaky wheel.

The OFLNA also depended on help from friends, professionals and businesses from the Tucson area. These friends, professionals and businesses have been instrumental in providing aid to the association through financial donations and volunteering their time (Stafford 1999).

Seeking assistance from sources outside of the association is important to establishing a successful association. Associations have limited resources and to maximize the success of an association, members must recognize ways the association can benefit by obtaining assistance from others. There are many different sources available for aid, including government agencies, politicians, professionals and friends of a neighborhood. All of these sources provide opportunities, such as funding, political assistance, professional expertise, and volunteer participation.

**Neighborhood Spirit**

The Fort Lowell neighborhood has used its history to develop the neighborhood’s unique character and spirit. The historical buildings within the neighborhood has been an opportunity for the association to use as a focus and central theme within the neighborhood.

From the early days the association has developed programs and events incorporating the area’s history. By doing this, these events are reminders of the past and serve to reinforce the spirit of the neighborhood. This spirit binds neighbors together cohesively as the people of Fort Lowell neighborhood.
Focusing on a unique characteristic or feature within a neighborhood can be used to create neighborhood spirit. This may be done by focusing on a neighborhood school, garden, park or anything else positive that the neighborhood can identify with. Associations can build neighborhood spirit to unify residents. This can be accomplished by highlighting the spirit and incorporating it into all aspects of the association including events, newsletters and meetings.

**Goals**

Establishing goals within an association is critical to establishing a successful association. The OFLNA has developed goals and worked to fulfill strategies to accomplish those goals.

It is important to place the responsibility for spearheading the development of the association’s goals upon the associations leaders. The OFLNA looks to their Executive Committee consisting of the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary to guide the association by initiating goals (Stafford 1999). Goals are then brought before the entire council and members are given the opportunity to voice their opinions. The council representing the rest of the association will vote on the proposed goals.

The OFLNA also updates and reviews their goals regularly. The OFLNA is always furthering its objectives by also creating new goals after others have been met. The most recent example is the association’s establishment of San Pedro 2000 (Stafford 1999). “San Pedro 2000” is a plan to restore and stabilize the San Pedro Chapel Complex and to create a desert park.
Developing and working to obtain association goals is a major factor that attributes to the success of an association. Goals are responsible for motivating the association’s accomplishments. Associations should work with members to develop goals based on the member’s input. Goals need to be reviewed regularly to evaluate if they coincide with the associations’ desires. When goals have been obtained then new goals need to be established to continue the momentum of the association. Ultimately, by developing and working to achieve the association’s goals the association will lead itself to success.
Chapter 4

Conclusion - Lessons to be Learned – Policy Recommendations

Through the OFLNA case study many different factors have emerged that led to the association’s success. The factors identified were organization, communication, membership, education, outside assistance, neighborhood spirit and goals. This report reviewed each factor and detailed how they have been instrumental to making the OFLNA successful.

The goal of this report is to establish how these factors can be applied to other associations leading them to becoming successful as well. Below the policies identified in the previous chapter will be re-evaluated to examine how they may be implemented in other neighborhood associations.

Many of the factors identified can be implemented easily in other associations by providing associations information about steps to take to become successful. This proactive approach will replace the current method of neighborhood associations depending on recreating the wheel to discover these policies on their own. The following policies are reasonable for an association to implement on their own if the information was provided to them. By providing associations with this information on how to build a successful association will increase their probability for success.

Associations should develop a detailed organizational structure. It is important to develop a formalized structure that details the responsibilities of all positions showing clear reporting relationships between positions. Associations also need to develop detailed responsibilities for association positions to encourage members to volunteer.
Individuals are more willing to participate and volunteer when they have a better understanding of what obligations they are committing to. Cross train members within the association for various positions to avoid breakdowns in operations resulting from leaders leaving.

Associations need to create many different positions and committees within the organization. By creating many opportunities for participation the association will increase and diversify the amount of member participation. Promoting widespread participation by members avoids situations of burnout and increases representation of residents within the association.

Effective communication to members should be one of the association’s primary objectives. Multiple communication methods such as monthly meetings, newsletters and brochures should be used to regularly disseminate information to members. It is also important to include association business updates in the newsletter to keep members unable to attend meetings abreast of current business. Association leaders also need to develop opportunities to interact and obtain feedback from association members. Participating in relaxed social events such as monthly socials provide members good opportunities to voice their concerns and views.

Develop neighborhood spirit by focusing on a unique characteristic or feature within the neighborhood. Neighborhood spirit can focus on various things within a neighborhood. The OFLNA focused on its history but an association can also focus on a neighborhood school, park, garden, a style of architecture, or any other unique feature of the neighborhood. It is important to focus on a unique aspect of the neighborhood that will tie the residents of the neighborhood together. Incorporating the neighborhood spirit
into the association will increase residents' identification with neighborhood and will unify association members.

Develop association goals and work to obtain them. Goals need to be developed based on the input from as many residents as possible. Goals need to be defined specifically and must include steps for achieving the goals. Timelines should also be established to help guide and prioritize goals. Goals should also be reviewed often to ensure that over time they continue to coincide with the desires of the association. After goals are fulfilled, new ones need to be established to continue the momentum of the association in a positive direction.

As stated earlier, each of the policies just described are easily implemented by associations on their own, if they are informed concerning what they need to do. The question then becomes how can associations obtain this information. This is where planners need to become involved in disseminating the information.

The information and policies important to building successful associations may be distributed to neighborhood associations by planners in a few ways. The first method is by writing guide books for associations to read in detail what steps need to be taken in order to become successful. There are also many opportunities for planners to disseminate information to neighborhood associations through public agencies. Public planners often serve as information providers within a community. If planners were more aware of what factors were important to develop a successful association, then they could share the information with the public they interact with regularly. Lastly, because of the large number of neighborhood associations throughout the country, many jurisdictions are creating specific departments to aid neighborhood associations. These departments
provide ideal vehicles for planners to disseminate information to associations concerning factors and policies that are important to build a successful association.

The final policy is more challenging than the other policies already described for associations to implement on their own. Neighborhood associations need to seek assistance from outside sources to maximize their opportunities. Sources of assistance are government agencies, politicians, professionals and friends of the neighborhood. These sources are useful in aiding associations in obtaining funding for projects, providing support for projects and volunteers, to name just a few of the opportunities possible.

It is this last policy that neighborhood associations need the greatest aid from planners. Planners need help associations by providing them with direction concerning resources and opportunities that are available to them. This is especially the case for giving associations information concerning grants and funding available to satisfy association goals. Planners are more aware of these opportunities and need to utilize their interaction with associations to disseminate this information. Again, an ideal vehicle is through the Neighborhood Association Support Departments that are being developed throughout the country.

The review of planning literature showed that little has been written concerning factors important to building a successful association. Currently there is a lack of material available outlining how to build a successful association. This report has begun to define factors that were important to the development of a successful neighborhood association. More research and understanding of these factors needs to be completed in the future. Planners need to then share that information with the large number of
associations that already exist and the many more that will develop in the future. Providing associations with information about how to become successful will lead to more associations becoming self-sufficient and successful in the future.
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