



Agenda Item Details

Meeting	Jun 16, 2021 - City Commission Meeting
Category	13. POLICY FORMATION AND DIRECTION
Subject	13.01 Adoption of Neighborhood Notification, Engagement and Involvement Policy -- Ashley Edwards, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs
Access	Public
Type	Action
Preferred Date	Jun 16, 2021
Absolute Date	Jun 16, 2021
Fiscal Impact	No
Recommended Action	Option 1 - Adopt the proposed Neighborhood Notification, Engagement and Involvement Policy.

Public Content

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Statement of Issue

This agenda item seeks the City Commission's approval and adoption of the proposed Neighborhood Notification, Engagement and Involvement Policy, which codifies how the City will engage with neighborhoods and the types of services the City will provide neighborhoods. This policy is a major re-write of the City's Neighborhood Outreach Policy, Policy 122, that was adopted on November 13, 1984, and later revised on December 16, 1992.

Recommended Action

Option 1 - Adopt the proposed Neighborhood Notification, Engagement and Involvement Policy.

Fiscal Impact

None

Supplemental Material/Issue Analysis

History/Facts & Issues

The City of Tallahassee has had an ongoing, supportive and productive relationship with neighborhood organizations within the City. According to City's records, the neighborhood movement in Tallahassee began in earnest in the 1970's. To support this growing movement, the City Commission, in 1981, established the Community Liaison Office. One of the objectives of the Office was to respond to complaints and/or requests from neighborhood organizations. In November 1984, the City Commission followed up the action of establishing the Community Liaison Office by adopting a Neighborhood Outreach Policy, which codified the duties and responsibilities of the Office.

Following a city reorganizational plan, in 1991, the Community Liaison Office's neighborhood liaison responsibilities were transferred to the City's Community Relations Office, and the Office became the central point for the Neighborhood Outreach Program. Subsequently, the City adopted a revised Neighborhood Outreach Policy on December 16, 1992, to reflect the City's then organizational support and services for neighborhoods (Attachment 1).

Over the years, the City has continued to provide various levels of support and different services to neighborhood organizations. Where staff for neighborhood services are housed has also changed over the years. In 2017, as part of a reorganization of the City, the City's Neighborhood Affairs Division, housed in the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs Department received increased staffing and other resources. The increased capacity in the Division was a direct response to the City's desire to reemphasize its commitment to neighborhoods and to respond adequately to the growing needs of neighborhood organizations throughout the City.

To a large extent, the proposed Neighborhood Notification, Engagement and Involvement Policy (Attachment 2) codifies existing city practices and services as they relate to neighborhood organizations. Provisions of the policy are summarized below:

Notification

Keeping neighborhoods informed of city events, programs, and all aspects of the City's development approval process is of great importance to neighborhoods. Neighborhood Affairs, working collaboratively with all city departments, seeks to keep neighborhoods informed in a timely manner. One of the main provisions of the proposed policy addresses how the City will keep neighborhoods informed about City services, activities and programs that allow them to participate effectively and efficiently in their City government. To receive these services, neighborhoods will have to register with the City and keep their contact information current. Currently, Neighborhood Affairs maintains a database with contact information for registered neighborhoods. This database is utilized by other city departments to contact neighborhood leaders/ reps as well. The policy does not require neighborhoods to register with the City nor to keep their contact information updated; however, only neighborhoods that are registered with the City position themselves to receive the notification services contemplated by the policy.

Through process outlined in the policy, neighborhoods will be notified of opportunities for residents to provide input on City-funded projects; receive advanced notification of City-related public infrastructure or utility projects taking place within or near their neighborhoods including street closures, utility interruptions and other neighborhood impacts; and development notifications regarding applications submitted for rezoning, zoning or land use variances, providing clear explanations for date, time and place of all applicable public hearings. Per the policy, Neighborhood Affairs will work with other City departments to ensure that neighborhoods are continually informed of these notices.

As a matter of practice, Neighborhood Affairs currently disseminates a weekly "newsletter" style email blast, called the Community Weekly, to registered neighborhood association leaders and community partners. The Community Weekly provides notification of developments updates from Growth Management and Planning departments, and other departmental events and occurrences taking place within the City of Tallahassee. The Community Weekly is not intended to replace notifications provided by Growth Management or the Planning Departments; but is a supplement to those notifications and serves as an added measure to ensure that neighborhoods are notified in ample time to allow participation in the decision-making process of proposed changes in City policies, services, and activities having a significant effect on their neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Affairs and Other City Departmental Responsibilities

The proposed policy involves most City departments. Per the policy, Neighborhood Affairs serves as the primary liaison between neighborhood organizations and City staff; assisting neighborhood groups in gaining awareness of and access to City services, the budget process, and available resources for neighborhood planning and development. Neighborhood Affairs is also responsible for providing structure for community involvement in the development and implementation of public programs such as neighborhood crime watch, beautification, neighborhood leadership training and assisting groups in forming a neighborhood association and defining the boundaries of their organization.

The policy also outlines how other City departments will work with Neighborhood Affairs to provide the best possible service and comprehensive solutions to neighborhood organizations. These responsibilities include the designation of a department liaison to assist Neighborhood Affairs with resolving neighborhood concerns; providing timely notification to Neighborhood Affairs of proposed/adopted changes in departmental policies, projects, services, and activities; and

providing technical support at neighborhood meetings. Additionally, City departments will provide information to Neighborhood Affairs regarding services and programs for distribution to neighborhood associations to be shared in their association newsletters; and provide speakers for neighborhood meetings to promote a better understanding of city government operations and services.

Furthermore, the policy provides an outline of the guidance and procedures for the delivery of services and programs to diverse neighborhoods and establishes the mission, vision and goals carried out by the Neighborhood Affairs Division.

In developing the proposed policy, staff solicited the input of neighborhoods, as well as the two neighborhood umbrella groups operating in the City. The Association of Tallahassee Neighborhoods (ATN) has provided written feedback on the policy and discussed the policy with staff. The feedback and comments provided by ATN were reviewed by staff and the current draft of the policy reflects their input. Staff has had discussions and communications with reps for the Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA) and has answered the questions CONA posed.

Department(s) Review

Growth Management, Planning, Communications, UUPI, Strategic Innovation

Options

1. Adopt the proposed Neighborhood Notification, Engagement and Involvement Policy.
2. Do not adopt the proposed Neighborhood Notification, Engagement and Involvement Policy.

Attachments/References

City Commission Policy 122

Proposed Neighborhood Notification, Engagement and Involvement Policy

[Neighbrhd.Policy122.pdf \(76 KB\)](#)

[NNEIP Policy.pdf \(1,564 KB\)](#)