

# **Awbrey Butte Neighborhood Association (ABNA)**

## **Representing our Community – Guiding Principles**

The ABNA Board's principal roles are to serve as the primary communications channel between the City and our ABNA members and to provide a platform for addressing issues important to our membership.

To ensure that ABNA remains an organization that serves its residents, rather than one that pursues the objectives of the board members, it is critical that ABNA remains member driven with respect to both the issues we choose to address and our response to those issues. It is equally important that we provide effective, unfiltered communication between the City and our residents. The following specifies some basic principles that are critical to this pledge.

### **Communication Role**

The Board shall encourage direct contact between the City and ABNA residents. This can be done by providing an audience with City officials as is currently done at our General Membership Meetings and by encouraging our members to attend City meetings for specific topics. Frequent, direct contact will lessen the degree to which the Board acts as a filter and will facilitate an informed debate on local and citywide matters.

### **Reaching Our Members – Maximizing Membership**

The Board cannot fulfill its communication role unless it can reach a reasonable percentage of ABNA residents. For this reason, maximizing registered membership is a key goal for the ABNA Board as only registered members can easily participate in setting the priorities for the ABNA, participate in surveys and forums, be readily contacted, and vote in ABNA Board elections. It is therefore critically important that the Board take reasonable, frequent measures to maximize registered membership.

We will describe the Board's experience with what has been effective and what has given unsatisfactory membership drive results in the attached appendix. This appendix shall be updated as the Board's membership drive experience evolves.

### **Member Driven Issue Selection and Response**

To effectively represent our members, issue selection and our response to those issues shall be member driven. It is a philosophy critical to the Board's ability to act as unbiased representatives of our community.

## **Issue Selection**

The Board shall provide channels for members to raise new issues and contribute to the dialogue on existing issues. Examples of channels by which members should be encouraged to bring issues to the Board's attention include in-person at general membership and Board meetings, through email, ABNA opinion surveys, and ABNA website forums. The Board shall provide a platform for consideration of any issue deemed appropriate for NA consideration by our membership - not just those issues generally supported by board members.

The Board shall, from time to time, conduct member surveys to gauge interest in issues it suspects will be important to our members. This applies primarily to issues on which the Board may act, but also includes topics to be presented at our general membership meetings.

The Board shall also facilitate presentations of topics that our community has yet to recognize. Some topics may not be well understood until the presentation has raised awareness. In such cases, the presentation serves to educate so that our members can make an informed judgment regarding the topic's merits and can consider whether the topic deserves further attention. This is not possible if we allow for presentations of only those topics our members approve in advance. Such topics shall be given space on the ABNA website to give members some exposure to the topic prior to the presentation. In so doing, ABNA can do more to preserve and enhance Bend's essential character than if we focus exclusively on mainstream issues such as speeding, congestion, and land use.

## **Issue Response**

Although Board members should expect to supply a significant share of the effort to address issues, the Board shall encourage member participation in the action ABNA takes. In addition to providing valuable assistance and insights, member involvement can ensure that the attention given to an issue is a function of how strongly members feel about that issue and does not reflect only Board members' personal priorities.

## **Promoting a Dialogue**

The Board's only stated position is that our residents deserve a voice. In so doing, we are proponents of a dialogue rather than an outcome until our members determine what that outcome should be.

## **Representing Our Members**

When representing our members' views to the City or taking a position on behalf of our members to any organization, group, or population, it is of paramount importance that the Board represent only those views that have broad member support.

The Board must take reasonable steps to determine if there is a consensus view within our membership prior to representing a position. Examples of how this can be done include by conducting

a member survey or by facilitating a member forum on the ABNA website for members to express their views. The Board shall take reasonable measures to give members notice of these efforts such as by announcing them on our website, our weekly email to registered members, or through social media formats. The Board shall allow sufficient time for members to respond and for a consensus to emerge.

A matter being time sensitive does not change our obligation to determine whether a particular position is widely held before the ABNA Board takes a position. To best deal with time-sensitive cases, the Board shall use methods to quickly gauge member support. This is fundamental to ensuring that the Board represents our members' views – not just the views of those on the Board. Further, it makes clear our obligation to maximize registered membership so that we can more accurately determine our residents' views.

### **Political Issues and Candidates**

The ABNA Board may express the opinions or recommendations of its membership on civic issues, including ballot propositions. The Board shall limit political commentary to those issues that affect ABNA's ability to address matters on behalf of our members.

Although the ABNA Board is prohibited from recommending a candidate for election, the Board is permitted to conduct forums for candidates to discuss matters affecting our community. The Board shall make every reasonable effort to ensure such forums are neutral with respect to the candidates.

Taken together, these two guidelines are intended to prevent the ABNA Board from becoming political in either perception or reality.