

Griffin Neighborhood Association
BOARD MEMBER FAQ

What are the responsibilities of Board members?

The Board is the governing body of the GNA. The responsibilities of the Board and its members, as with any non-profit organization, can loosely be categorized as:

Setting the policy for the GNA. This is done by creating or updating the mission and vision statements, determining the activities to be pursued in the name of the GNA, approving plans for the GNA and developing official positions that represent the interests of the organization.

Monitoring the organization's operations. The Board elects its officers and creates committees, as required. It establishes budgets, makes decisions on expending GNA funds, and can undertake fundraising. It evaluates the efforts of the Board and its committees. It undertakes troubleshooting as necessary. The Board determines the most effective way for it to conduct its business.

Board members serve as public figures for the organization. This includes fundraising, by directly donating to the non-profit and soliciting donations from others, and advocating for the GNA. Board members are expected to enhance the GNA's public standing and to garner support from the community.

Attending GNA board meetings, contributing to discussions, participating in committees, projects and activities.

Some small number of Board member responsibilities are spelled out in the Bylaws. Additionally, there are some common legal responsibilities for members of the Board.

- Take reasonable care when making decisions for the GNA
- Act in the best interest of the GNA
- Act in accordance with the GNA's mission
- Stand aside when there is a conflict of interest

What are the terms of office?

Board members (called "directors," in our Bylaws) are typically asked to serve for 2 years. Each Board member is assigned to a specific position. There are 17 positions. Position 1 through 9 have a common term end date and Position 10 through 17 share a common, alternate end date. This is our way of ensuring some continuity in our Board, as it's unlikely the entire Board will be up for election in a single year.

If a member resigns in the middle of his or her term, the replacement will inherit the term end date for the position.

Who is eligible to serve on the Board?

The Bylaws state that “Any person owning property or residing within the Griffin area is eligible to become a member of the Griffin Neighborhood Association.” Board members must be dues-paying members of the Association. And, Board members can come from outside the Griffin area, since “The Board may accept a petition for membership from any other interested person and allow this person to become a member of the Griffin Neighborhood Association.”

How are officers selected?

At the first meeting of the Board held after each annual meeting of the members, the Board elects its officers. “The officers of the Griffin Neighborhood Association shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, and such other officers that the Boards deems necessary.”

The responsibilities of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer are described in the Bylaws.

How are committees formed?

With the exception of the Executive Committee, no other reference to committees appears in our Bylaws. This gives the Board great flexibility as to the creation of standing or ad-hoc committees. Generally speaking, Board members can create committees with the approval of a majority of the Board. Committees may be comprised on GNA members who are not members of the Board, but it’s probably best that no committee be created without at least 1 current Board member sitting on that committee.

At the point a committee is created, the Board may define the scope of work to be undertaken by the committee. The Board may set a budget and rules for the operation of the committee.

Once established, committees set their own meetings and activities. The committees can recruit additional members, which need not be members of the Board.

It is reasonable for the Board to expect periodic reports, from the committee back to the Board, as to the committee’s activities. A specific schedule for this reporting may be set by the Board, either when the committee is first established or at any point after the committee is established.

How are Board Meeting date, time, and locations established?

The Board needs to meet within 30 days following the Annual Meeting. After that point, the Board decides on its own meeting schedule.

Technically, the Bylaws read:

The Board shall hold such other meetings: (a) as the President believes appropriate and which are scheduled by the President; or (b) as may be called and scheduled by any three members of the Board.

The Bylaws also contain instructions regarding meeting notice and so it is important that the Board establish a schedule of meetings and attempt to adhere to that schedule, once it is set.

Historically, meetings have been held either in public locations or in private homes. The disadvantage to meeting in private homes, though, is public notice probably cannot be made, of those meetings.

How is the Board run?

The Board is run in a fashion as is convenient and effective for its members. This includes how Board meetings are conducted, how committees are established and governed, and generally how the Board conducts its business.

To the degree permitted in the Bylaws and inasmuch as it is practicable, the Board and committees may conduct a portion of its business by phone, email or by other electronic means. A quorum consisting of at least half the current number of elected board members is required to make decisions. Members who cannot be present at a meeting can provide a proxy for another member cast a vote in their place. Such a proxy is considered to represent a member present for the purposes of achieving a quorum.

What is the purpose of the Griffin Neighborhood Association?

The Bylaws state:

The purposes of the Griffin Neighborhood Association are to preserve and enhance the quality of life in the Griffin area, foster a sense of community within the Griffin area, and attempt build a community consensus on major issues confronting the Griffin area. The Griffin area means an area encompassed by the boundaries of the Griffin School District, which generally is the greater Steamboat peninsula area of Thurston County. Major issues confronting the Griffin area include growth and land use issues, enhancing the natural environmental and aesthetics of the

community, preserving the rural nature of the community, shoreline protection, habitat preservation, protecting water quality and availability, transportation issues, and school planning.

Typically, the following steps will be taken to reach community consensus and issue resolution:

(1) Research an emerging issue as an honest broker of information; (2) raise awareness within the community of a particular issue using a variety of communication methods; (3) determine the community's options and, if necessary, provide a forum for debate; and (4) adopt a position on the issue and support that position before the appropriate decision makers, if a community consensus is determined to exist for these actions.