



Neighborhood Newsletter for March 2014

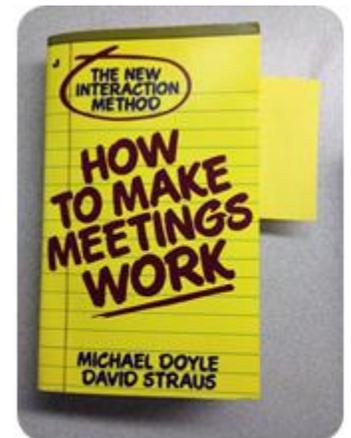
When not to have a meeting.

Don't meet just for the sake of meeting.

A neighborhood leader whom I was recently working with mentioned that she wanted to convene a meeting so that board members could develop a meeting schedule. She asked me if I thought it would be better to host the meeting at a board member's home or at a community room. Knowing the dynamics of the members of her committee, I suggested that she use Doodle.com, an online scheduling tool to develop the schedule. Not that meeting face-to-face isn't a good thing, but there are times when meetings are not necessary.

Everyone's time is valuable, and it's important to schedule a meeting only when it is essential. Here are five general examples for when meetings are not necessary:

1. **A key member can't make it.** Rescheduling is a pain, but it's worse to bring everyone together and not be able to do the work planned. If you need a key member's input, reschedule.
2. **Something could be communicated better by phone, memo, or one-to-one discussion.** Don't hold a meeting unless that's the only and best way to get the work done.
3. **The purpose of the meeting isn't clear.** When meetings are simply informational, participants feel and resent their time being wasted. Make it clear what is to be accomplished, why, how, and when.
4. **Tensions are high.** There is too much anger and hostility in the group and people need time to calm down before they begin to work collaboratively.
5. **A decision has already been made.** No one wants to meet just for formality sake. If the item can wait, roll it into another meeting.



Surely you can think of other reasons to add to this list. Think about it and make your own list. Then refer to that list when making a decision of whether to hold a meeting. Also, remember a meeting is just a tool and in today's technologically advanced world there are other useful tools that can achieve the same desired outcomes as traditional meetings. Meetings are held to generate ideas, share information, and most importantly, making collective decisions. There are big differences between meeting to brainstorm ideas and receive information. So why conduct meetings the same way? Break out of the norm and explore different meeting methods. Above all, as a neighborhood leader, whether you are holding traditional face to face meetings, Skype meetings, conference calls, or Google hangouts, you must come to see meetings as important gatherings in the work of your group.

Outside of the required face-to-face meetings, how do you approach this topic? Is your organization meeting just to meet or are you considering other means or tools to make decisions, solve problems, or receive information? If your group is utilizing other tools like Doodle.com, I want to know. Send me an [email](mailto:) with more information.

Reference: *How to make meetings work.* by Michael Doyle and David Straus

WFAE Public Conversation. [Your HOA and You: Who Rules the Neighborhood?](#)

On February 6, 2014, WFAE public radio held a public conversation, exploring various topics related to living in an HOA community, along with the rights and responsibilities of HOA residents and boards. The event was held at the Davidson Day School Auditorium. Panelists discussed current state laws that govern Homeowner Associations in North Carolina, and proposed changes to those laws. I connected with a three of Concord's neighborhood leaders from Afton Village, Carriage Downs, and Ridgeview for an after the event chat outside of the auditorium. We all agreed that the event provided a great opportunity for all aspects of HOA Living to be shared in an open forum.



Pictured: Jeff Brimanson, Carriage Downs HOA President, Alex Mills, Ridgeview HOA President, Cherie Jzar, and Janet Coward, Afton Village HOA Secretary.

Concord police use [Nextdoor.com](#) to connect with neighborhoods online.



I am pleased to announce that the police department is now using Nextdoor as part of the City of Concord's Neighborhood program. Police Captains from each of the four Police Districts will use Nextdoor to send out crime-prevention tips and other information to specific neighborhoods. **Spread the word to your neighbors and continue to encourage them to join!**

Nextdoor is an online social-media platform that is tailored specifically to meet the needs of neighborhoods. To learn more about the benefits of Nextdoor, go to www.nextdoor.com and watch the video. If you are interested in being the Founding Member of your Nextdoor neighborhood website, go to www.nextdoor.com/priority and enter your address. If you have any questions during the sign up process, go to help.nextdoor.com

Someone needs YOU! Join Neighbor Helping Neighbor Program

A photograph of a utility bill and a payment form. The utility bill is from the City of Concord and shows a balance of \$200.00. The payment form is for the same amount and includes fields for name, address, and phone number.

The City of Concord offers an easy way for you to help those who have trouble paying their utility bills. With the Neighbor Helping Neighbor program, each month you can make a tax-deductible contribution to a fund that will be managed by Cooperative Christian Ministry. CCM provides crisis financial assistance, food, and counseling, and will use these funds to aid City of Concord utility customers with their utility bills. Learn more at concordnc.gov.

Good Neighbor Tip:



Vehicle Storage/ DIY car repair

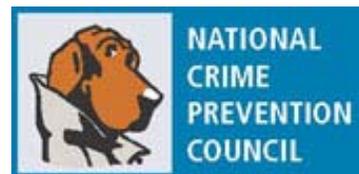
Good Neighbors know that while fixing up that car may be a weekend pleasure, if it is on the street or visible on your property and not drivable, partially dismantled or wrecked with expired tags, the City of Concord considers it a "junk motor vehicle." So to help do your part to keep your neighborhood looking nice, move the vehicle into the garage or an accessory building when you are not doing repairs. Doing this will ensure that your neighbors have a beautiful view and you won't risk getting cited by City Code Enforcement for a violation. Concord Code Enforcement Officers are responsible for enforcing ordinances relating to nuisances. A nuisance can be an overgrown lawn, trash and debris in yards, indoor furniture on porches, appliances in yards, junked or abandoned vehicles, or overgrown vacant lots. To report a

suspected code violation, call the Customer Care Center at 704-920-5555.

Crime Prevention Tip:

Take away the opportunity for crime.

One of the most important things to remember about criminals is that they look for easy opportunities. So thinking about your home, your car, and even your lifestyle - ask yourself what can I change to take away the opportunity for crime. Theft, Larceny, and Burglary within neighborhoods are most often "crimes of opportunity." Meaning that most often criminals will only act if they have easy access to stealing with little risk of being caught. Easy access such as an open door or window and properties with the greatest amount of cover, i.e. tall bushes and shrubs are typically targets. You can change this equation with some common sense behaviors and habits. Lock your car doors, and never leave valuables in plain sight. Trim bushes or trees on your property to allow a clear view of your front door from the street. Get to know your neighborhood and be aware of your surroundings. Finally, let a trusted friend or neighbor know where you are going and when you'll return. There is nothing that can replace vigilant, caring, and concerned neighbors and friends.



For more information, contact the Concord Police Department at (704) 920-5000. Please remember that crime statistics and other information can be accessed from the City of Concord website concordnc.gov. You can also utilize the "Police to Citizen" website at www.concordp2c.com to view reports.

Fire Prevention Tip:

Spring Cleaning For A Fire Safe Home



With the arrival of the Spring season, many of us will be doing some cleaning around the house. Concord Fire Department Education Specialist Jeff Bostian has suggested that spring cleaning be given another meaning. "It's the ideal time to check our homes for dangerous materials and unsafe conditions and protect our families," said Bostian.

Take time this spring to hunt for home hazards while spring cleaning this year. Here are some things to consider:

- **Check fire protection and safety equipment.** Test your smoke alarms. Make sure all doors and windows open easily and are accessible for fast escapes.
- **Remove all hazards.** Check and correct things such as frayed or damaged appliance cords, wiring, fuses or breakers. Address piles of trash and yard debris. Remove stacks of paper and magazines; take them to recycling centers.
- **Properly store flammable liquids and home chemicals.** Make sure that gasoline and cleaning fluids are well marked and are out of the reach of children and pets. Store those materials in a cool, dry place outside the house.
- **Clean-up work areas.** Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches or other work items away and out of any child's reach. Make sure that all chemicals are kept under lock and key and out of reach of children and pets.
- **Make sure your street numbers are posted properly and are visible.**
- **Check and make sure you have a working flashlight and battery-powered radio for the approaching storm season.**
- **Plan your escape.** Sit down with your family and make sure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire by designing a home escape plan. Make sure you have two ways out of every room and that you have a meeting place outside the home for the whole family. & Practice the escape plan.

For more fire safety tips, visit www.nfpa.org/safetytips.

News Headlines

Customer Service Center adjust hours to better meet your needs

Effective March 10, the Customer Care Center is changing its hours to 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. The adjustment will result in more representatives available to help when customers need them, and shorter wait times. The Care Center is a team of professionals who have the training and ability to help customers resolve most City service questions or issues with the convenience of a phone call to 704-920-5555. After hours or weekend needs can be reported to the same number.

Speaker's Bureau available to educate public on City programs and services

The City of Concord is pleased to announce a new effort to enhance its communications and expand outreach to the community. The new Speakers' Bureau is a free educational tool created for citizens to receive information about City programs and services, and other topics of interest. Learn more at the link below or browse topics at concordnc.gov.

Concord advances in NCLM Hometown Showdown

With nearly 300 "likes," Concord's entry of the 2013 Tree Lighting Ceremony and fireworks by local photographer Michael Anderson advanced to the second round of the NC League of Municipalities Hometown Showdown contest! Visit [NCLM's Facebook page](#) for more information.

Affordable rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats on March 12

Cabarrus Health Alliance and Cabarrus County Animal Control sponsor affordable rabies vaccination clinics for dogs and cats each month in partnership with [Carolina Value Vet](#). The next opportunity will be Wednesday, March 12 at the Cabarrus Animal Shelter parking lot (244 Betsy Carpenter Place, Concord) from 4:30-6:30 p.m. The affordable \$10 fee will in part benefit the Cabarrus County Humane Society. Learn more at cabarrushealth.org.

Burrage Road bridge replacement to begin soon

The City of Concord is partnering with NCDOT to replace the aging bridge on Wilshire Avenue and Burrage Road, with the completed project better accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians. Beginning Monday, March 10, Burrage Road will be closed in the vicinity of the bridge over Three Mile Branch for up to twelve months. A temporary detour will re-route traffic along Lake Concord Road, Branchview Drive, and Bradley Street. Visit concordnc.gov for more information on this project.

SAVE THE DATE – 2014 Spring Litter Sweep (Apr. 26 - May 10)

Every spring and fall, the City employees together with recognized neighborhood organizations, collect litter along the City's roadsides. The City provides bags and trash pickup, as well as an opportunity for neighborhoods to receive cash awards. The Spring 2014 Litter Sweep is scheduled for April 26 through May 10. Send email to jzarc@concordnc.gov if your organization would like more details. Roadside litter is a problem for all of us. It is unsafe as well as unsightly.

Lake Fisher Reservoir opens soon

Seasonal recreation activities will begin at Lake Fisher on Wednesday March 5. Lake Fisher is open Wednesdays through Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and Sundays 1:00 until 6:00 p.m. For information about boat rental, fees, and fishing rules please visit concordparksandrec.org.

[Neighborhood Meeting Calendar](#)

Click the heading above to access the March 2014 Neighborhood Meeting Calendar. The calendar includes meeting dates, times and locations for neighborhood meetings, City Council Meetings, Planning and Zoning Commission Meetings and other city events. Please note that meetings date and times are subject to change without notice. This is a live calendar so changes are made immediately after they are reported. For a full schedule of all recognized organization meetings, visit the program's website concordnc.gov/neighborhoods.

Neighborhood News is published monthly and information from neighborhood associations and others are welcome.

Please share this newsletter by forwarding it to your neighbors - post an excerpt in your community's newsletter, post a copy on your community bulletin board, or on your Facebook Page.

[Partnership for Stronger Neighborhoods](#)

BUILDING relationships to
EMPOWER communities
and **CONNECT** citizens to resources.