



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

CHLOE EUDALY, COMMISSIONER

David Austin, Interim Bureau Director

Community & Neighborhood Involvement Center

1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 110

Portland, Oregon 97204

Promoting a culture of civic engagement

August 11, 2017

Chris Trejbal
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chair@overlookneighborhood.org

This letter is in reference to proposed bylaws revision for the Overlook Neighborhood Association, Revision B, “require(ing) residents to provide a legal home address to qualify for membership,” as posted on the Overlook website on August 8, 2017 at <http://www.overlookneighborhood.org/>.

As noted in City Code, a neighborhood association must meet the City’s minimum qualifying standards to receive and maintain formal recognition. PCC 3.96.030.A. If a neighborhood association fails to meet the minimum requirements, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (“ONI”) may suspend some or all of the Association’s benefits, and may ultimately revoke formal recognition of that Neighborhood Association. PCC 3.96.030.D.2.

Under the ONI Standards for Neighborhood Associations¹, membership in a neighborhood association must be open to any person who lives within the recognized boundaries of the association. Separately, the ONI Standards prohibit discrimination against individuals on the basis of income. Separately, the ONI Mission statement² identifies that community involvement should strive to build inclusive neighborhoods, and increase the diversity of people who are involved in their neighborhoods.

In the spirit of this diversity, ONI does not believe that residency should be based on a “legal home address,” nor should it be limited to those who may be able to afford to buy or rent a home. Your interpretation of requiring a “legal address” appears to exclude houseless people without a USPS address who may legitimately live within the boundaries of the Neighborhood Association and desire to be active members.

Accordingly, ONI believes that a bylaw amendment that would restrict or otherwise prohibit houseless individuals from qualifying as members of the Overlook Neighborhood Association would be in conflict with the ONI Standards for Neighborhood Associations. If the Overlook Neighborhood Association were to move forward with adoption of such a restriction, ONI would

¹ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/article/97811>

² <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/29128>



have to consider exercising its authority to suspend, and perhaps eventually terminate, the Overlook Neighborhood Association's benefits of formal recognition. This is not a decision that ONI would lightly make. However, a prohibition upon houseless individuals qualifying for membership in the Overlook Neighborhood Association would be in conflict with the inclusivity and diversity that ONI otherwise serves to promote for all neighborhood associations. We hope that this conflict does not come to pass, and that Overlook continues to welcome all residents, regardless of their housing status.

I also note that the clean version and redlined versions of proposed bylaws changes posted on the website do not contain proposed changes to definition of membership set forth in link #2. Is document #2 being presented alongside the other versions? Your current bylaws on ONI's website - <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/article/51358> - references "membership address." Proposed revisions in links 1A and 1B refer to providing a "contact address." Proposed revisions in link #2 refer to providing a "legal domicile and address." This may cause confusion.

Ideally your current methodology asking for participants to list their "membership address" or the suggested "contact address" on the sign-in roster suffices to meet our concerns. Other neighborhood associations simply allow individuals to list a nearby street intersection or general area of the neighborhood they live in if they are houseless. If needed, ONI can work with Overlook leadership to come up with a signed affidavit form stating location they are living within the neighborhood association boundaries for those unable to produce a document with an address.

Please contact me at 503-823-3075 or Paul Leistner, Neighborhood Program Coordinator, at 503-823-5284 if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Brian Hoop
Manager, Community and Neighborhood Involvement Center
Office of Neighborhood Involvement