

COVID-19

HOW TO HOLD YOUR ANNUAL MEETING AND CONDUCT ELECTIONS



neighborhood
association

Due to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, we have had to change the way we do many things. Since March, neighborhood associations have been hosting neighborhood meetings, either through virtual platforms like Zoom or outside practicing physical distancing.

As we move into the season where many neighborhood associations' bylaws require the association to host an annual meeting and conduct elections, the Energize our Neighborhoods team wanted to provide some helpful tips to effectively host your annual meeting online.



DON'T FORGET: Please let the Neighborhood Planner know when and how you are holding your annual meeting so that they can attend the meeting. It is City policy that a Planner attend each neighborhood association annual meeting.

HOW TO HOLD AN ANNUAL MEETING VIA ONLINE PLATFORM

Technology allows for neighborhood associations to conduct meetings in a variety of ways. There are several online platforms that allow associations to conduct meetings while still practicing physical distancing. Regardless of the platform used, annual meetings should still be open to all members. All stakeholders should be provided with the appropriate information to attend through the medium chosen by the Board.

1. CONFER WITH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION BYLAWS

Ensure that the association's bylaws do not prescribe the location in which an annual membership meeting must be held. If the association's bylaws require the annual meeting be held in-person or at a specific location, the board should determine if the meeting can be held while practicing social distancing or if the board can amend the bylaws to allow for a virtual meeting. Virtual meetings do fulfill the bylaw requirement for the meeting to be held in a public space.

2. DECIDE ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM

Below lists some of the common video conferencing platforms available to host meetings. While many of the platforms are free, associations can use mini grant funds to reimburse any fees associated with a subscription or a membership upgrade.

HOW TO HOLD YOUR ANNUAL MEETING AND CONDUCT ELECTIONS

COMMON VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORMS:

- Zoom - Zoom.us
- BlueJeans - Bluejeans.com
- Google Meet - meet.google.com
- GoToMeeting - gotomeeting.com
- Cisco WebEx - Webex.com
- Microsoft Teams - Microsoft.com

3. ADVERTISE THE ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS

It is especially important to advertise the annual meeting. Use the following methods to let neighbors know about the upcoming meeting.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Sites like Nextdoor.com and Facebook.com are great ways to share information broadly. Create an event on Nextdoor and Facebook and post the virtual meeting login information and agenda in the event description. Be sure to include a notice about hosting elections. Use your neighborhood association account to share the event or post about the event periodically leading up to the meeting date. The Energize Our Neighborhoods team can also assist with sharing information via NextDoor to all residents within the association's boundaries.

EMAIL

If your neighborhood association maintains an email list, send an email with information about the virtual meeting. Be sure to include the login information. Neighborhood associations can also include a link to the event page on Facebook or Nextdoor.

POSTCARD

Reach out to the Energize our Neighborhoods team at Energize@cityofboise.org to request a postcard be mailed to every resident in your neighborhood. The City of Boise offers one free postcard mailing a year to registered neighborhood associations who have completed their annual report. It is a good idea to use this postcard as a way to advertise the upcoming annual meeting and other important information. It is best to reach out to the Energize our Neighborhoods team 4 weeks in advance of your scheduled meeting to allow for postcard design, printing, and mailing.

HOW TO HOLD YOUR ANNUAL MEETING AND CONDUCT ELECTIONS

4. HOLD THE MEETING

It is recommended that the neighborhood association test the videoconferencing platform once or twice before the scheduled date/time of the annual meeting, especially if you are new to the platform.

Facilitate the meeting as you would a typical in person meeting, by following an agenda and using the standards (Robert's Rules etc.) described in the neighborhood association bylaws. We recommend that the meeting host record the meeting, if possible.



COMMONSENSE TIPS

SUCCESSFUL VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETINGS

Tips and ground rules that can be shared with meeting attendees to make sure the online meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

1. **REPEAT YOUR NAME.** Introduce yourself every time you speak so everyone knows who is saying what (especially for phone-only meetings). This can feel awkward at first but is really helpful when we can't see each other. (Exception: the facilitator typically won't introduce themselves every time they speak.)
2. **FOLLOW THE FACILITATOR.** As with an in-person meeting, the facilitator will help keep things moving and on time. On videoconferences, facilitators help clarify any conversation issues such as times when more than one person may want to speak at the same time. If that happens, stop and wait for the facilitator to jump in and set a speaking order.
3. **TEST YOUR SET-UP.** Whenever possible, test your equipment ahead of time - for example, when planning to share documents on screen, test links and screen sharing capabilities prior to meeting and ask the organizer for help if they aren't working. If live-time screen sharing isn't possible, print out documents or pull up a local copy on your screen before the meeting starts to have them for reference during discussion. If possible, test and use headphones to help avoid ear and neck strain.
4. **"MUTE" IS YOUR FRIEND.** Use your mute button during periods when you aren't talking or during presentations to eliminate background noise. If you are using a phone with a "hold" button, use "mute" instead of "hold," please ("hold" may play disruptive background music while you are off the line).
5. **SPEAK UP.** If you have a question, idea or are experiencing any difficulty hearing or seeing while on the call - break in courteously and say something. We don't want you to miss out on anything going on in our conversation. Some applications offer an icon such as a hand which attendee can click to indicate that they would like to speak.

HOW TO HOLD YOUR ANNUAL MEETING AND CONDUCT ELECTIONS

6. HOLD THE ELECTIONS

Make sure that Elections are listed as an item on the Annual Meeting Agenda. When holding the elections, encourage attendees to use the chat function to nominate people and to vote. By using the chat function the meeting facilitator will have a written record of those nominated and elected.

7. REPORT CHANGES TO BOARD VIA ENERGIZE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD WEBSITE

After your annual meeting, please use the form link below to report any changes to your neighborhood association leadership. It is very important for the city to maintain accurate contact lists for the associations in order to share information, provide development notices, and verify membership when public testimony is shared on behalf of an association.

cityofboise.org/programs/energize/neighborhood-associations/na-contact-form/



If your neighborhood association board does not feel comfortable hosting an annual meeting and elections online, or if you held your neighborhood association annual meeting online but did not achieve quorum, please reach out to the Neighborhood Planner so that we can advise on next steps.



EnergizeOurNeighborhoods.org
208-570-6834 | energize@cityofboise.org
150 N. Capitol Blvd, Boise, ID 83702