



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**NEIGHBORHOOD & HOUSING  
SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



# *Running a Successful Neighborhood Association*

*Presented by Neighborhood Engagement  
Team*

# *First Create a Neighborhood Vision....*

*“...a vibrant, sustainable neighborhood that is home to a diverse range of uses...”*

*“...a quiet and safe community...”*

*“...to preserve the historical character and integrity of the neighborhood...”*

# Successful Neighborhood Associations practice...

Inclusivity

...being able to share your ideas & having your voice heard

Maintain formal structures

...that also allows for flexibility

Effective Leadership

...which is supported by active membership



Diversity + Engagement = INCLUSION



*“Diversity is when you count the people. Inclusion is when the people count.”*

# How do we reach inclusion?



## Welcome new people:

- An open forum for half an hour can make a big difference in whether someone stays involved

## Bring in young people as constructive participants:

- Activities that are inclusive of the younger generation will build respect for the community's values

## Recognize Assets:

- Conduct a survey to identify the skills of residents that might be hidden assets

## Stay focused on the bigger picture:

- Set goals and utilize subcommittees to handle the bulk of the logistics
- **Tip:** Avoid extreme positions and too narrow of a focus...this can alienate people and discourage participation





*To consider...*

*Over 500 teenagers were asked about  
their neighborhood associations.*

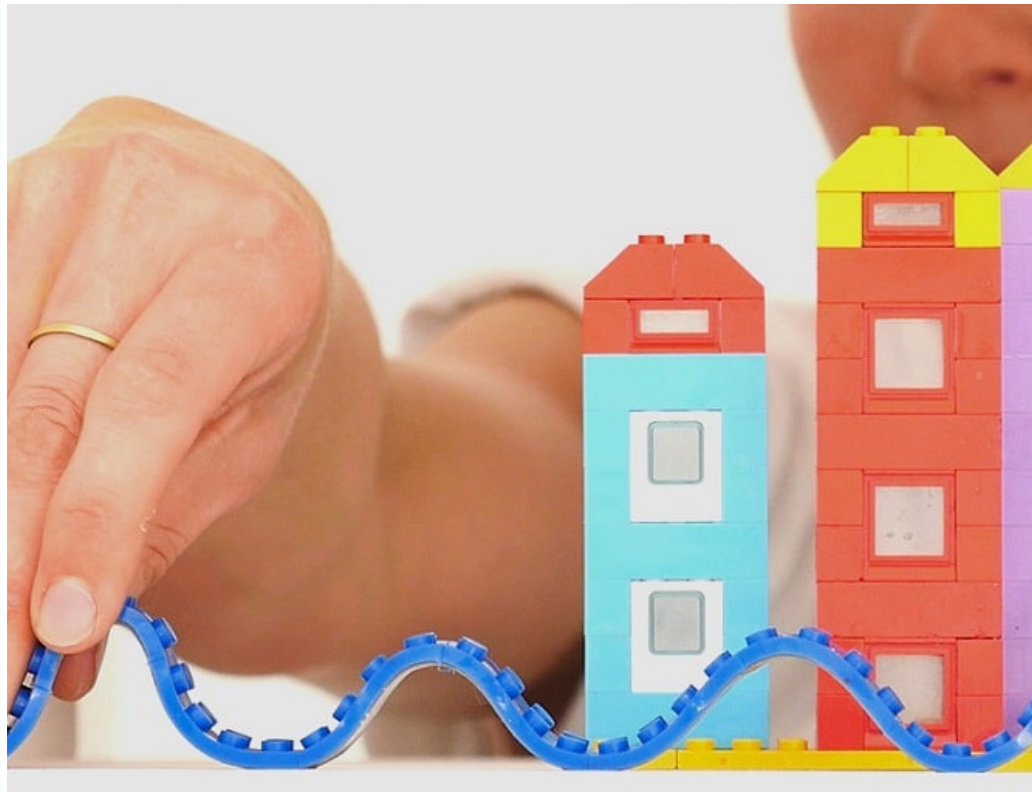
*Here's what we found...*



87% agree that it is important for a neighborhood to have an association that meets regularly to discuss improvements.

83% have never participated in a neighborhood event or meeting; 25% did not know events/meetings even existed.

Nearly 40% admit that they see problems in their neighborhood but don't know where to go to help solve them.



*Create &  
Maintain Formal  
Structures*

*Build in Flexibility*



# Structure & Flexibility

## Hosting Productive Meetings with Relevant Topics



- Start meeting on time and stay on task
- Include timeframes on the agenda for each topic

When a topic approaches its time limit but is not complete ask the group whether the issue deserves more time

# Structure & Flexibility

Set Clear Time  
Lines and  
Responsibilities



- Determine a timeline for action
- Summarize discussions and clarify decisions

Identify who is  
responsible for  
follow-up work

# Structure & Flexibility

Work with Other  
Community  
Organizations



Prioritize  
community  
projects

- Partner up with community organizations/businesses to execute project
- Host your next meeting at a local restaurant





*Effective  
Leadership  
Supported  
by Active  
Membership*

# What makes an *effective* leader?



## *Effective leaders will act as facilitators:*

- Know when to carry a discussion in a new direction

## *Develop New Leaders:*

- Set reasonable term limits for officers
- Committee chairs and project leaders are important positions for testing new leaders

## *Admit and Learn from Mistakes:*

- Recognize mistakes and move on with new insight

## *Celebrate Accomplishments:*

- Too often we forget to celebrate accomplishments or to even notify people of the results of our work.
- Even small victories can encourage people to attend neighborhood functions and give their time more freely.



# Six Thinking Hats

"Six Thinking Hats" can help you to look at problems from different perspectives, but one at a time, to avoid confusion from too many angles crowding your thinking.

Often, the best decisions come from changing the way that you think about problems and examining them from different viewpoints.





# Common Decisions Neighborhood Associations Have to Make

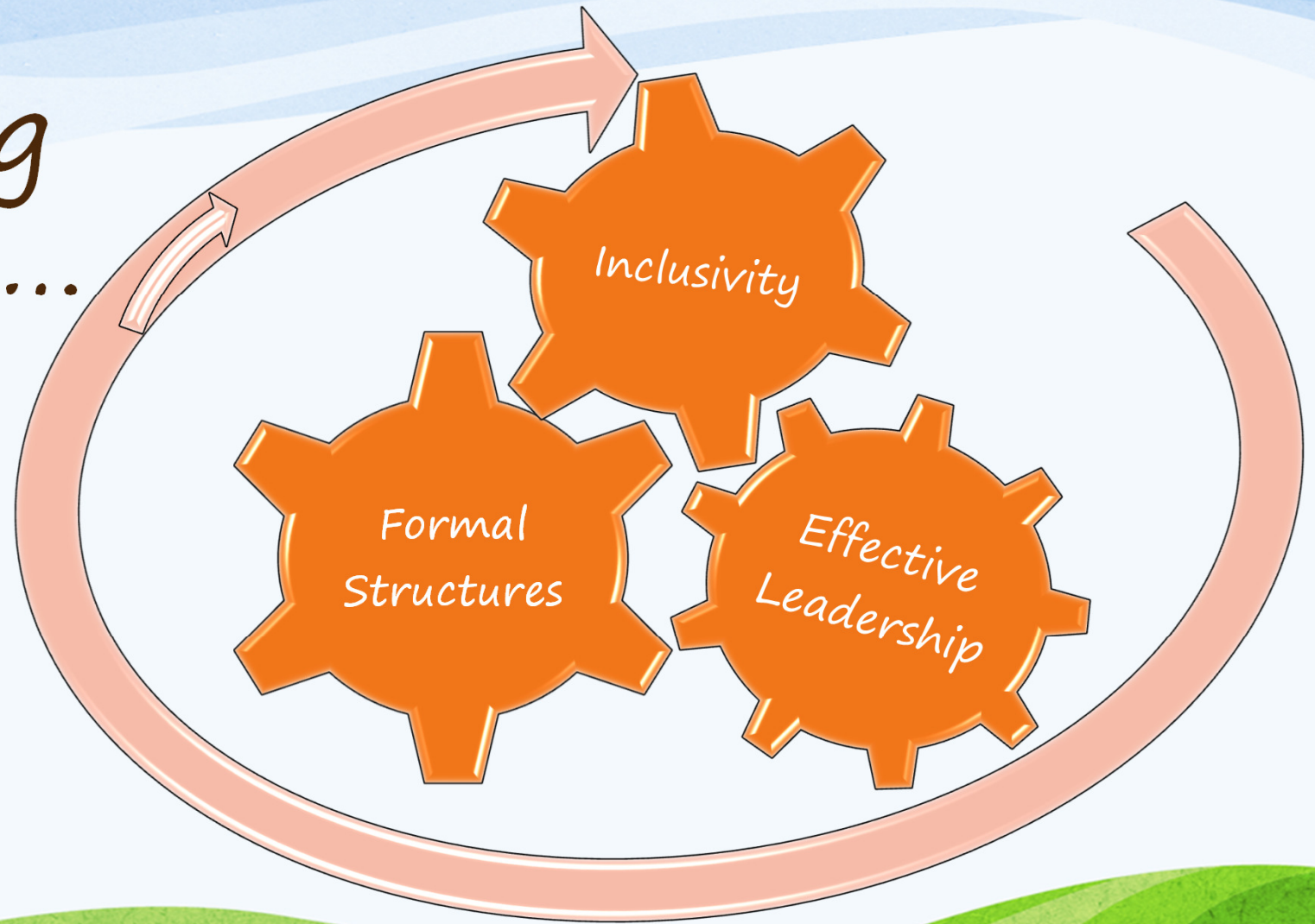
- Should we raise/lower membership dues?
- Should we support the proposed development coming to our neighborhood?
- Should we revise our bylaws?



# Should we increase membership dues?

- **White Hat Thinking-** We need money to host events that will build community and encourage membership, and increasing dues is the fastest way to do that
- **Red Hat Thinking-** Some members might feel personally targeted or offended by increased dues; relationships could be damaged
- **Black Hat Thinking-** Members might choose to leave if dues are raised. We might mismanage the funds and host expensive events that yield low turn out and/or have no impact on membership
- **Yellow Hat Thinking-** This will be a great way for neighbors to show their commitment to the association and we will all benefit from the increase when we host well-attended events.
- **Green Hat Thinking-** There are other ways to raise the money we need like fundraisers or voluntary donations. There are other ways to build community and encourage membership.
- **Blue Hat Thinking-** Have we considered all ways of approaching this decision? Do we need to revisit anything discussed? What are our next steps?

An  
Ongoing  
Process...





REACH OUT TO THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ENGAGEMENT TEAM AND A  
TEAM MEMBER FROM NHSD  
WILL CONNECT WITH YOU.

Questions?

EMAIL:  
[NEIGHBORHOODS@SANANTONIO.GOV](mailto:NEIGHBORHOODS@SANANTONIO.GOV)

