

Old North Davis Neighborhood Association
Thursday, November 16, 2016

From Molly McCarthy and John Meyer

Discussion of communications/outreach: specifically, ONDNA Listserv(s).

Background

The board has established a subcommittee (J. Lofland, M. McCarthy, J. Meyer) to review and enhance communications utilizing the Association's website and other means. Significant enhancements have already been made to the website by J. Lofland. Agendas and other information are now more routinely posted to the site, and other improvements are under consideration. The Board asked M. McCarthy and J. Meyer to review and provide recommendations related to the listserv(s).

Individuals can currently subscribe to two listservs. One is entitled "Board of Directors" and the other "General Interest." While the Board of Directors listserv reports to share emails that are sent and shared amongst the Board, this has not been routinely done in practice. The General listserv is described as one where information about meetings and special events is shared. This has been the practice recently. The two listservs appear on the web page as shown below.

Sign-up to Receive ONDNA Information

Under City rules for recognized neighborhood groups that function democratically (of which the ONDNA is one), all Old North residents, landowners (residents or not), and established organizations are automatically members of the ONDNA with rights to vote in elections and otherwise to know about and to participate in ONDNA activities. <http://cityofdavis.org/city-hall/city-manager-s-office/neighborhood-services/neighborhood-associations>.

If you have not already done so, one good way to act on your automatic membership is to sign up for ONDNA **BOARD of DIRECTORS** and/or **GENERAL INTEREST** listserv emails.

●●● **BOARD of DIRECTORS Listserv Email:**

If you are "policy-wonk" inclined, you can sign up to receive the boring emails that Board members commonly send one another, here:

<http://www2.dcn.org/mailman/listinfo/ondboard>

●●● **GENERAL INTEREST Listserv Email:**

If you only want to know about ONDNA meetings and special events and happenings and not otherwise to be bothered, this is the email list for you:

<http://www2.dcn.org/mailman/listinfo/oldnorth>

With Your Sign-up, You Can Also SEND Messages to the ONDNA

If there is an aspect of Old North you especially like and want to celebrate or one you think needs improvement, people on both the **Board** and **General** lists will attend very seriously to what you tell them. Moreover, as a member of a list, you can view all past emails and view the entire roster of list members.

In some previous brief discussions, a reason for the Board listserv was in the spirit of openness and transparency. We support this objective, but worry that since the Board listserv is not often used, and yet the board does have communications through email, that we should consider how best to meet this important objective. Before discussing tactics, we believe it is important to consider principles that support our communications and outreach strategy.

Draft Principles *(with comments in italics)*

1. **A non-commercial mechanism should be developed that provides a way to readily notify interested parties of meetings, special events and other activities of the association.** *(The General listserv appears to be an effective mechanism to do this).*
2. *(Rather than represent that interested parties will be copied on all board correspondence, adopt more effective standards to promote transparency that reflect government practice).* **The Board**

of ONDNA is committed to an open and transparent process and will operate under the general tenants of the Brown Act as it relates to notice of meetings and board communications.

Discussion and Follow-up

The implementation of these principles would likely result in the transition of the two listservs into a single General listserv to alert interested parties of meetings, events and other notable activities.

The pledge towards the Brown Act is a bit more complicated. As envisioned by some, a more universal use of the Board listserv would result in an archive of all board communications. Its elimination would, therefore, remove this as a means to establish such an archive. Government agencies will typically retain all emails on their servers. For an informal association, that is not the case. Should the Board wish to pursue this “commitment” to operate under the Brown Act (California’s open meeting law), other means would have to be considered if an archive is desired.

Before considering the technical operations available to us, we thought it best to discuss with the Board to solicit your views on this issue as described above.