

The Bend Bulletin ran an article this past week on Neighborhood Associations (NA) and how the City is actively promoting this formal mechanism in order to give residents as loud a voice in City affairs as the lobbyists that echo around City Hall for Developers, the Construction industry and Tourism interests. And there was an editorial a few days later supporting Neighborhood Associations.

<http://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/5520732-151/editorial-giving-bends-neighborhood-associations-voice>

The Awbrey Butte NA (ABNA) lost its certification with the City Council due to inactivity and “we lost our seat at the table”. A small number of Awbrey Butte residents who were engaging with the City on various issues were invited in April by the City to revitalize the ABNA. They have since been working to re-establish the ABNA organization, roles and responsibilities, Bylaws, a website and communications capability and preparing for October elections of seven (7) ABNA Directors.

Since the Kick-off meeting, over 120 Awbrey Butte residents have registered with ABNA. This is a great start. The City has duly recertified the ABNA, re-opened its budget and granted it legal standing. Bill Gregoricus is the Interim ABNA Chair, and is also chairing the next two meetings of the NART (NA Roundtable) when all 12 active NAs will meet to agree priorities and provide Bend-wide input to the City.

As an indication of the clout given to NA's, a member of the board has been advocating for traffic law enforcement on Archie Briggs for over a year. He has been given a sympathetic hearing, had conversations with multiple City and Police officials and even individual traffic officers but without much effect. Once the ABNA had been recertified, one email to the Police Department resulted in the placement of a speed monitor on Archie Briggs when it was not even on the 2017 plan for deployment. This one example demonstrates that NAs have 'standing' with the City and its departments.

However, our influence with the City and the City Council is a function of the number of residents that register with the NAs. The larger our membership, the more seriously our concerns and opinions will be taken! The future quality of life in our community and how and where our limited resources will be directed across Bend needs to be shaped by its residents not just by the real estate companies and developers, construction interests, the businesses community and their campaign check books.

The Neighborhood Association structure is grassroots politics at its best! It doesn't even need your money! Just more residents to register with the ABNA so your board can demonstrate to the City Council, the City Manager and the other NA's that we have the strong desire to work as partners in the efforts to keep Bend livable as it grows.

Please visit www.awbreybutte.org to learn more and to register individually as a member.

Better yet, consider actively participating in ABNA and even standing for a position on the board. The Association's fall annual meeting and election will be held on October 17th at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Skyline Ranch Rd.