

## **NORTH PORT**



## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

### **BY-LAWS**

2012 Update Revised September, 2012

#### ***ARTICLE I NAME OF ORGANIZATION***

The name of this mutual benefit community organization is North Port Neighborhood Watch INC, a 501 (c) (3) Public Charity by IRS declaration, hereinafter referred to as the WATCH.

#### ***ARTICLE II PROGRAM CONCEPT***

The WATCH program is an organization of concerned citizens working in the community to help prevent crime by being extra eyes and ears for the North Port Police Department (NPPD). Volunteers do not possess police authority and will avoid any direct involvement which could pose a personal risk. Members volunteer their time, vehicles and gasoline for patrols under the direction of the WATCH Operations Coordinator in association with the NPPD. Participants should actively patrol their areas. Whether on patrol or not, Members shall report all suspicious activity as well as other signs of problems such as downed street/stop signs, roads, sidewalks, schools and parks. All Members will be asked to assist with events as organized by one or more of the committees named in Article VIII of these By-Laws.

Under no circumstances shall volunteers for this program represent themselves as police officers. Members are not authorized to take any action that would endanger life or property.

#### ***ARTICLE III. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT***

1. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – This office is responsible for the general administrative functioning of the WATCH in all matters not related to the

operations functions necessary to provide crime prevention services, citizen patrol activities, a child ID video program, or other activities characteristic of a neighborhood watch program. Responsibilities of the Executive Director include but are not limited to:

- a. Act as a member of the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Board.
  - b. Is the public spokesperson for the WATCH interacting with the public, media, and business community to promote the WATCH.
  - c. Plans and manages public events to promote the WATCH within the community.
  - d. He/she presides over all monthly general Membership meetings.
  - e. Oversees the proper preparation, submission, and retention of all required reports and documents for the WATCH ensuring full compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws.
2. TREASURER – This office is responsible for all fiduciary management of the organization. Responsibilities of the Treasurer include but are not limited to:
- a. The Treasurer shall provide a monthly report to Members of the WATCH and keep on file written financial statements to be readily available by members of the Leadership Team as needed or on “demand” consistent with legal requirements of a 501 (c) (3) corporation.
  - b. Request and keep an accurate account of the monies held by the WATCH.
  - c. Fulfill the duties of the Power of Attorney role for all tax matters as designated on IRS Form 2848 identifying the Declaration of Representative of the organization.
  - d. Act as a member of the Board of Directors.
  - e. Collects and dispenses all monies acquired by the WATCH Members in a separate account and keeps an accurate account of all receipts, donations and expenditures.
  - f. Order supplies as needed when requested by the Operations Coordinator .
3. SECRETARY – This office is responsible for keeping all the records of the organization, handling correspondence, sending notices of meetings to Members, taking and recording the minutes, and performing other administrative duties assigned by the organization. Responsibilities of the Secretary include but are not limited to:
- a. Record and transcribe the minutes of all general Membership and all Board of Director meetings/workshops.

- b. Coordinate the distribution of the general Membership meeting minutes with the Membership Coordinator.
  - c. Mail thank you notes to all visiting speakers.
  - d. Maintain a file containing all meeting minutes, all attendance listings and Board of Directors minutes.
  - e. Keep an updated set of the By-Laws on file.
  - f. Act as a member of the Board of Directors.
  - g. He/she shall be back up support for the Executive Director or Operations Coordinator when needed including but not limited to attendance at the Academy classes.
4. MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR – This office is responsible for ensuring; 1) an orderly process of preparing new Members and materials for each scheduled Academy; 2) maintaining Membership records; and 3) auditing each Member’s participative status within the Watch on an ongoing basis. Responsibilities of the Membership Coordinator include but are not limited to:
  - a. Act as a member of the Board of Directors.
  - b. Manage the registration through graduation process of all prospective Watch Members.
  - c. Maintain the official record of Members.
  - d. Perform a semi-annual review of Member participative status within the Watch.
5. OPERATIONS COORDINATOR – The Operations Coordinator assists other members of the Leadership Team as needed. He/she assures all Members are provided with appropriate training and oversees the WATCH program. He/she works and meets with the NPPD on a regular basis to exchange information. He/she works with the Leadership Team to improve the organization and to overcome challenges the organization or its Members face. The Operations Coordinator may delegate any of his/her responsibilities to any other Member of the WATCH at any time. Responsibilities of the Operations Coordinator include but are not limited to:
  - a. Overall operational control and management of the WATCH program to include the selection, appointment, dismissal, and management of Block Captains and Assistants.
  - b. Communicate with the Leadership Team as needed.
  - c. Review progress of Neighborhood Watch operations with the Leadership Team.
  - d. Work with the Membership Coordinator to maintain a current address and phone number listing of all Block Captains and Patrol Members.

- e. Ensure Academy Classes are being established on a regular basis by working with the Membership Coordinator and the Academy Instructor.
  - f. Shall maintain a current listing of equipment and supplies (e.g. notebooks, clip boards, magnetic signs, ID badges, vests, shirts and hats) assigned to WATCH Members.
  - g. Provide the Newsletter Editor with any and all information pertinent to the WATCH organization and/or its Members.
  - h. Meet with the NPPD as needed to ensure synergy between the NPPD and the WATCH.
6. BLOCK CAPTAINS – The Block Captain is responsible for one or more Districts/Beats and all Patrols within same. Each Block Captain is responsible for coordinating the assignment of Members to patrol defined Patrol areas within their respective Districts/Beats. Responsibilities for the Block Captains include; but are not limited to the following:
- a. Communicate with all assigned Patrol Members at least once per month.
  - b. Communicate information to the Patrol Members in their District/Beat/Patrol areas.
  - c. Notify assigned Patrol Members of special situations requiring WATCH Member participation.
  - d. Collect monthly patrol activity reports from patrollers.
  - e. Manage the process for distributing materials for Members that cannot attend the meeting or cannot receive materials electronically.
  - f. Act as a liaison between the WATCH Operations Coordinator and Patrol Members.
  - g. Notify the Sunshine Person of situations requiring attention.
7. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP (a.k.a. Patrol Members or Members) – The Members of the North Port Neighborhood Watch are the eyes and ears for the Police Department, neighborhood and for their community. They work toward keeping the community safe and clean for all those who live, work and visit here. Membership is open to any resident of the City of North Port who is 18 years of age or older, has completed a “ride-along” with the NPPD, has passed a criminal background check, and has completed a training Academy class given by the WATCH. Responsibilities for the Neighborhood Watch Patrol Members include, but are not limited to the following:
- a. Communicate and share information with fellow Patrollers, Block Captains and Board of Directors on a regular basis.

- b. Patrol defined Patrol area(s) and other areas as requested by the NPPD.
- c. Report all witnessed suspicious/criminal activities immediately or as soon as possible to the NPPD Dispatch.
- d. Attend monthly meetings and volunteer for other scheduled events as frequently as possible.
- e. Submit activity reports for all patrols performed and for all other WATCH related activities.
- f. Recruit new Members.
- g. Participate in the training of new Members when requested.
- h. Attend training sessions offered through the WATCH program.
- i. Attempt to dedicate a minimum of twelve (12) hours per month to WATCH related activities. Perform any other duties requested by the WATCH managers and/or NPPD.

#### 8. RULES OF CONDUCT

- a. Any conduct which reflects poorly on the Neighborhood Watch and/or Police department will not be tolerated. Members whose conduct is not professional and courteous while acting in the capacity as a volunteer will be subject to disciplinary action imposed by the BOD (Board of Directors) Public displays of rude or unacceptable behavior towards a Member of the public or fellow Members of the Neighborhood Watch have no place in this organization. Members will not ask for favors, discounts or free items from any person or business for personal gain. Members will also not intimidate or demand anything from the public or a fellow Member.
- b. Even though this is a volunteer organization we must act professional at all times and those who, for whatever reason, cannot put personalities to the side and work for the goals of the organization will be asked to resign their position.
- c. If a problem does occur with a fellow Member it should be brought to the attention of a member of the Board of Directors as soon as possible so the issues can be worked out in private. If a Member is involved in a problem with a citizen all details surrounding the incident will be reported to a member of the BOD as soon as possible so a course of action can be determined to alleviate the problem and to develop a way to handle such an occurrence in the future.

9. PATROL POLICY. The North Port Neighborhood Watch, with the assistance of the North Port Police Department, provides the training and equipment needed to allow Members to patrol their neighborhoods in a highly visible manner, looking for suspicious and criminal activity and at the same time being ready to assist any neighbor in need. This will be

done in a low risk, non-confrontational manner, wearing WATCH shirts, hats and ID badges along with displaying magnetic vehicle WATCH signs.

#### **ARTICLE IV. WATCH LEADERSHIP TEAM.**

The Leadership Team will be comprised of the Board of Directors, Officers of the Watch, and Advisors to the Board as follows:

##### 1. BOARD OF DIRECTORS and OFFICERS

- a. The WATCH program will be managed by a Board of Directors hereby referred to as the Board or BOD. The Board will be comprised of a minimum of five (5) Members and a maximum of seven (7) Members each chosen and elected to office by a majority vote of the general Membership.
- b. Certain of these directors shall also be designated as Officers of the Watch having the following titles: Executive Director (and President), Secretary (and Vice President), Membership Coordinator, and Treasurer. The Executive Director shall be Chairman of the Board.
- c. Members of; 1) the same family; 2) persons dating/living together as a married couple; 3) persons representing any entity conducting business with the WATCH; will not be permitted to serve on the Board during the same period (hereby known as the "Conflict of Interest Policy").
- d. The Board will be responsible for the direction, management, and control of all aspects of the WATCH operation and for identifying and implementing improvements to the operation, changes to existing policies and promoting the WATCH within the general community.
- e. The Board will meet on at least a monthly basis or as called by the Executive Director. In order for the Board to conduct its business a quorum of four (4) Members must be present at least one of whom is an Officer of the WATCH. If a quorum of members cannot be convened in time to address a situation requiring immediate attention, the Operations Coordinator or Executive Director may act upon the situation after obtaining verbal approval from a quorum of Board members at least one of whom is an Officer of the WATCH.

##### 2. Advisors to the Board

- a. Any Member of the WATCH can be made an Advisor to the Board if so determined by consensus of the Board. Generally speaking Advisors will have a lead role in some function, often as a "Coordinator", within the operation of the WATCH.

- b. The Operations Coordinator shall be an advisor to the Board. Unlike other advisors that are appointed by the Board, he/she shall be elected by a majority vote of the general Membership to serve in this position.
- c. These Advisors will be non-voting participants of the monthly Board meetings.

## **ARTICLE V. TERMS OF OFFICE AND ELECTION PROCESS**

1. The terms of office for the Executive Director, Secretary, Membership Coordinator and Treasurer shall be as follows:
  - a. Executive Director: Two years, no term limit. Election to this office will be held in even numbered calendar years.
  - b. Secretary: Two years, no term limit. Election to this office will be held in odd numbered calendar years.
  - c. Treasurer: Two years, no term limit. Election to this office will be held in odd numbered calendar years.
  - d. Membership Coordinator: Two years, no term limit. Election to this office will be held in odd numbered calendar years.
2. The terms of the non-Officer directors shall be two years with no term limits and with elections held in even numbered calendar years.
3. The Operations Coordinator shall be elected to a two year term with no term limits with elections held in even numbered calendar years.
4. Any person who has been a Member of the WATCH in good standing for a minimum of one year shall be eligible to hold the position of Operations Coordinator, and the Officer director positions of Executive Director, Secretary, Membership Coordinator or Treasurer. Eligibility for other non-Officer director positions requires only that a person be a Member of the WATCH in good standing at the time of election.
5. The Annual Election Process shall be as follows:
  - a. At the June Membership meeting the Secretary will explain the election process and identify which positions are open to election in that year.
  - b. At the August Membership meeting any Member in good standing may be nominated by another WATCH Member or may nominate him or herself for the position. Any person who wishes to enter their name for nomination and who does not attend the August Membership meeting must submit a "letter of intent" to run for that position to the Watch Secretary or his/her delegate, no later than August 22nd to be eligible to run for that office.
  - c. Election Controller: The BOD will appoint a non Member (usually someone from the Police Department) to be the independent collector of votes.

- d. ABSENTEE BALLOT: Any Member who wishes to submit an absentee ballot needs to deliver his/her vote in a sealed envelope to the Watch Secretary by August 31st.
  - e. At the September Membership meeting if there is only one candidate for any given position then that candidate will be recorded as the winner of the election. If there is more than one candidate the Election Controller will collect and tally the votes and announce the winner. If there are no candidates for a position then the BOD will appoint a Member to those duties until someone is willing and able to fill that position.
  - f. At the September meeting, upon announcement of the election results, the newly elected Members will assume the responsibility of their new position immediately upon the adjournment of the meeting.
  - g. If a person in an elected position cannot fulfill their term the BOD will assign someone to that position until the next regularly scheduled election.
6. Removal of persons from an elected position.
- a. Any board Member may make a motion for the removal of an elected person from their position. If such motion is seconded, a special, closed meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held within 14 days to decide the issue.
  - b. The motion shall be discussed by the BOD at a closed meeting and a vote to remove the person from their elected position shall be taken. A two-thirds majority vote shall be required to remove an individual from an elected position.
  - c. The BOD shall appoint someone to take over the duties of any removed individual until the next regularly scheduled election.

## **ARTICLE VI AMMENDMENTS**

The Board of Directors will review business needs and/or recommendations for amendment to the By-Laws on a regular basis. Any Member may submit a recommendation for an amendment at any time by delivering it to the Secretary who will review it with the BOD. The proposed amendments, after gaining BOD approval, will be made available to the Membership for at least one month and then at the subsequent Membership meeting a simple call for acceptance will be made. If there is a general consensus at that time the amendment(s) will be deemed accepted.

## **ARTICLE VII WATCH Coordinators**

Coordinators are assigned to leadership roles at the pleasure of the BOD. Some Coordinators may also be Advisors to the Board if requested by the BOD. These positions are not necessarily exclusive in that one person can



hold multiple simultaneous positions and an Officer of the Board can hold one of these Coordinator roles while still acting as a Member of the Board.

**Media Coordinator** – Acts as the liaison between the WATCH and the media. He/she shall put together articles about the WATCH and submit them to the local newspapers. Members names will not be provided to the newspaper when concerning a report of a crime or incident which could lead to retaliation towards the Neighborhood Watch Members. If someone in the group would like to write an article for the paper concerning the WATCH as a whole, it should go to the Media Liaison for review and approval. All articles, announcements, press releases, or other public statement made under the WATCH name shall be submitted to the Executive Director and Operations Coordinator for a final review not less than 24 hours before being released to the media.

**Newsletter Editor** – Composes a monthly newsletter that contains relative information to patrol activity (e.g. hours, miles, observations, happenings, etc.), upcoming events being held or supported by the WATCH, results of recently held events and useful articles. Board Members and Advisors to the Board are expected to write useful articles for the Newsletter on a regular basis throughout the year.

**Sunshine Person** – This position is responsible for contacting Members who have serious ailments or other personal maladies to convey the best wishes of the Watch for their well being as well as communicating accolades for performance of Members and external persons when appropriate. Responsibilities for this position include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Be in charge of the \$100.00 Sunshine Fund.
- b. Purchasing and mailing get well, sympathy, thank you (etc.) cards.
- c. Purchasing and delivering get well baskets (fruit/floral) etc. to Members when needed, a maximum of \$25.00 to be spent per incident.
- d. Informing the Newsletter Editor of events which occurred in the month.
- e. Communicate with Members who have ailments and/or other maladies to express the best wishes of the Watch and determine how the Member wants their personal situation handled from a Watch perspective.
- f. Create letters of congratulations or appreciation to Members and/or external parties
- g. Create letters of appreciation for external organizations, companies, etc. who have provided special services or delivery of goods to the Watch.

## **ARTICLE VIII COMMITTEES**

There shall be programs implemented and taken to the Members of the WATCH, at the regularly scheduled monthly meetings; such as: Fund Raising, Community Service, Membership Drives and Social Events, at which time a person from the regular Membership role shall be asked to chair this committee. All suggestions for activities will be taken to the Board for consideration and action. Each committee will have a team leader as agreed upon by the members of that committee.

**Funding Committee:** Shall have the responsibility of approaching the community to hold fund-raising events to help support the financial viability of the WATCH.

**Membership Committee:** To work with the Membership Coordinator of the WATCH to promote the awareness of our existence and the need of new members from the community.

**Events Committee:** Responsible for working toward creating various activities to bring our Members and the community closer together for social activities. Work with the Operations Coordinator to staff public events that the NPNW will play a role in (e.g. traffic control, Child ID Video programs, etc.)

**Technology Committee:** To work on electronic District/Beat/Patrol maps, WEB pages, computer artwork for NPNW publications and other related technology issues as needed.

Committee reports shall be submitted at all monthly membership meetings if information is available.

## **ARTICLE IX AGENDA – BUSINESS AGENDA AND PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

1. Sign in sheet
2. Pledge Allegiance to the Flag
3. Call for correction to prior month's minutes, newsletter or other communications.
4. Treasurers report
5. NPPD Report
6. Other topics as needed.

## **ARTICLE X Policies and Procedures**

The Board of Directors will review the ever changing governmental regulations. To ensure the Corporation is making every reasonable effort to

be in compliance on all fronts new Policies, and associated Procedures, will be authored by the Board and kept on file by the Secretary. These Policies and Procedures will be made available to anyone with the interest in seeing them consistent with our legal charter.

### ***ARTICLE XI SURRENDER OF MATERIALS***

All materials including uniforms, notebooks, magnetic signs, ID badges, clip boards, forms, vests. etc. shall be returned to the Block Captains, whereupon they shall be returned to the Operations Coordinator for inventory and redistribution.

### ***ARTICLE XII DISSOLUTION***

In the event the North Port Neighborhood Watch should dissolve, all monetary assets of whatever amount which remains after just debts and liabilities have been satisfied shall be donated to the North Port Explorers Program. No part of the net income or earnings of the WATCH shall be transferred to the benefit of any individual Member, or be distributed to its Members or Officers.

***Signature Page***

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Executive Director Date

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Secretary Date

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Treasurer Date

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Membership Coordinator Date