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# Taking action together

## Ward 3 neighborhood groups meet once a month to exchange information

By Jennifer Sterba  
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

**N**eighborhood associations in Ward 3 have found there's strength in numbers, sharing experience and knowledge with each other once a month.

"It really came out of an initial meeting of neighbors a year and a half ago," said Ward 3 City Councilman Jerry Anderson.

The neighborhood associations' representatives said they thought it was a great idea to meet and wanted to continue. Representatives from the associations make up the agenda and facilitate the meetings. Anderson and his staff lend their support, and Anderson occasionally makes presentations on various issues.

"It kind of focuses around that collaboration and learning from each other and somewhat being a more powerful force in numbers," Anderson said.

Together, associations can bring communitywide issues such as how tax money is being spent, crime, trash and land use to the city's attention.

"As a group, we have more clout than just one association at a time," said John Sawyer, president of the Campbell-Grant Neighborhood Association, a Midtown community. Sawyer puts together the agenda for the Ward 3 neighborhood meetings, compiling what issues the associations want to address.

At tomorrow's meeting, the Ward 3 neighborhood associations plan to review answers to the November workshop where they asked themselves two questions:

► How can associations increase the number of active members?

► What are the top 10 concerns of each association?

Tomorrow, they will answer a third:

► What specific issues should the associations take to the city manager?

The associations also discussed at their November meeting updating an expertise list that identifies what associations have done in the past. (For example, the Balboa Heights Neighborhood Association fought off crime). The list serves as a "Who ya gonna call?" directory of neighborhoods that could be called upon for advice on busting crime or how to get that grant for a community park.



Joshua Trujillo / Staff

Jane Baker, a neighborhood association leader, and Joe Molamphy, a Habitat for Humanity volunteer, discuss new Habitat homes.

► The Ward 3 Neighbors will meet 6:30 to 8 p.m. tomorrow at the Woods Memorial Branch Library, 3455 N. First Ave.

"Say one of the neighborhoods is having a problem with something and another neighborhood had that same problem a year ago and solved it. They could help that association," Sawyer said.

Jane Baker, president of the Balboa Heights Neighborhood Association, agreed.

"I think it's neighborhood sharing," Baker said. "We're there to find solutions. ... Every neighborhood has their own specific set of problems, but we all have similar problems (too)."

She said associations can educate each other on what city resources exist and how to get to those resources (such as grants) to better their neighborhood. Associations can discuss their problems with Councilman Anderson and find out how to get things done. Baker said it's very frustrating to deal with the city bureaucracy, and people tend to throw their up their hands and give up.

"It's very lonely when you

first start out because you feel like you're banging your head against the wall," Baker said.

Balboa Heights, which is between North Stone Avenue and North Oracle Road, and East Glenn Street and East Grant Road, was the prototype for other neighborhood associations on how to deal with crime and get abandoned houses torn down. When the city pushed the prostitutes off of Oracle road, the crime moved one block east into the residential area: Balboa Heights.

"We were overrun with prostitutes, drugs, robberies ... the neighborhood was living in ter-

ror," Baker said. "Nobody was doing a thing about it."

Homeowners moved away to escape the problem. They rented out their houses, contributing to the problem. With homeownership at a low, residents didn't take pride in their neighborhood.

But Baker and the Balboa Heights Neighborhood Association took action. They cleaned up the neighborhood by working with police and city agencies. They cleaned up the neighborhood itself and built a park from private donations. Today Balboa Heights is working on building a community

center, again from donations.

"I know what the sharing of information has accomplished," Baker said. "We were responsible for having 15 abandoned houses taken down in our area."

Now other neighborhoods approach Baker and say, "I can't get one down, Jane. How did you do that?" And Baker said that makes her proud.

"People want to move into our neighborhood now," she said.

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### Get involved

The city of Tucson's Citizen and Neighborhood Services strives to bring focus and priority attention to neighborhood needs and promotes greater involvement of citizens in city government.

with city personnel who can help with problems or projects, such as organizing a neighborhood. The office also coordinates city and community resources for more effective service delivery to the