

Mesquite Ranch Neighborhood Association Kickoff Meeting  
Desert Sky Middle School, Multipurpose Room  
9850 E. Rankin Loop  
6:30 p.m., June 8, 2005

In attendance: 32 Mesquite Ranch residents and interested parties

Randy Pierce, homeowner in the Monterey section of Mesquite Ranch, introduced himself. Randy has made a formal application to the City of Tucson to start a Mesquite Ranch Neighborhood Association (MRNA). Randy has recently been involved in the citizen review of the Houghton Area Master Plan (HAMP). He was successful in having the HAMP modified so that the planned land area usage immediately east of Mesquite Ranch was changed from medium/high density to low density. During this activity, Randy learned of the many benefits associated with neighborhood associations, and has proposed that a Mesquite Ranch Neighborhood Association be formed.

Randy indicated that the current Mesquite Ranch Homeowners' Association has different responsibilities than a neighborhood association. A homeowners' association has articles of incorporation, while a neighborhood association does not. Both have by-laws, although the scope of responsibilities differ. The homeowners' association is typically involved in CCR compliance, maintenance of the common areas, and architectural reviews. A neighborhood association is recognized by city government and various service agencies. It is notified when new development and rezonings are planned in nearby areas. There are programs available to neighborhood associations to help curb vandalism. Neighborhood associations have been very effective in affecting private and public programs such as planned developments, placement of streets, and crime enforcement policies.

Randy noted that the area of the proposed MRNA would be bounded by Poorman Road on the south, Bilby Road on the north, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base on the west (approximately where Harrison Road would extend south from Irvington), and the Pantano Wash on the east. The possibility exists to expand the southern MRNA boundary to Valencia but this action will be an issue for the new MRNA Board of Directors to consider. Randy has created a Mesquite Ranch web site at [www.mesquiteranch.org](http://www.mesquiteranch.org).

Max Torres, Ward IV Council Administrative Assistant to Shirley Scott, addressed the group. Max encouraged the formation of the association, and indicated Ward IV is ready to help in the association formation and with future activities. Max noted that neighborhood associations can be very effective, and are a way to have a direct voice to the Mayor and Council. He pointed to the successes of the RRNA, which has been very effective in influencing commercial and city plans in its area. Max encouraged the association to identify goals of the MRNA, and also resources needed. He also stated neighborhood associations are an excellent way to prevent being "surprised" when new developments are planned adjacent to our neighborhood. Neighborhood associations also have the resources of the Tucson Fire and Police departments available to them for a variety of activities, such as advice on crime containment, graffiti abatement, or fire hazards and unsafe structures.

Leticia Bermudez, administrative assistant in the city's Department of Neighborhood Resources (DNA), next presented general information about neighborhood associations, and spoke about the process of becoming recognized by the City of Tucson.

She noted there are 140 neighborhood associations in Tucson, and five coalitions (clusters of neighborhood associations). There are a number of services the City of Tucson provides to registered neighborhood associations:

1. Assistance in registration of the neighborhood association
2. Free monthly mailing services of newsletters or meeting notices
3. Free meeting space at schools, churches or libraries
4. Roll-off containers provided free of charge for area-wide clean ups twice a year
5. Investigation of property and housing complaints, consistent with the city's Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance
6. Assistance in arranging youth programs
7. Participation in the City's "Back to Basics" infrastructure improvement program
8. Graffiti abatement
9. Geo-based services assistance (see discussion below by Bob Martin)

A brochure describing the Department of Neighborhood Resources was distributed to meeting attendees. DNR has a web site at [www.tucsonaz.gov/dnr](http://www.tucsonaz.gov/dnr). The site provides links to lists of all registered neighborhood associations in Tucson, event calendars, sample by-laws, the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance, and much other useful information. In addition, a brochure describing City of Tucson services was made available to attendees.

Leticia noted that neighborhood association by-laws must first be created by the group wishing to form a neighborhood association. The DNR reviews the by-laws, which must also be approved by the City Attorney. Once reviewed and approved by the city, they must be approved by the residents of the new association. Leticia noted that all property owners, renters and businesses in the specified boundaries can be members of a neighborhood association. She mentioned that homeowners' associations and neighborhood associations can co-exist, and have different responsibilities and scope. It was recommended that homeowner associations and neighborhood associations conduct business separately, though. One key advantage of neighborhood associations is that the DNR neighborhood association database is shared with all city departments, providing the means to receive notifications from these departments of pending activities affecting a neighborhood.

Bob Martin, Deputy Director, Tucson Parks & Recreation Department, next spoke to the group on the subject of geo-based services. Bob noted that there are many knowledgeable employees working for City departments who are responsible for providing resources, assistance and services to specific areas of our community. The City of Tucson has begun to better coordinate the work of these City employees through an effort called geo-based services. The geo-based services effort is in the process of being implemented, but is being modeled after earlier "NetTeam" projects. A geo-based team would consist of representatives from major city departments, who would be empowered to re-allocate resources if necessary to solve problems that previously had not been resolved using conventional approaches. The teams would be formed geographically, and would use the five existing TPD geographical boundaries (East, Mid-town, Downtown, South and West). Bob is a member of the East team, and described the four goals of the teams:

1. Establish connections to neighborhood associations, businesses, and religious and non-profit organizations, to let them know that help is available to resolve issues concerning city services.
2. Maintain partnerships by responding to requests, and resolving issues

3. Provide communications and coordination to city services
4. Provide accountability and report on effectiveness

To reach intake for geo-based services, residents may call the general city services number at 792-CITY, or may submit a request by following the link for "Contact Us" at the City of Tucson web site ([www.tucsonaz.gov](http://www.tucsonaz.gov)). Bob noted that requests are triaged by DNR. If the request requires the services of more than one city department, a geo-based city team will get involved. Part of the accountability process is that one team member is assigned to the issue from beginning to end of resolution, so that hand-offs do not result in loss of tracking of the issue.

Leticia Bermudez and Randy Pierce next discussed the neighborhood association establishment process.

1. The first step is to apply for recognition as a neighborhood association, which Randy Pierce has already initiated.
2. A first meeting of residents is required, at which attendees must agree to its formation. Leticia noted that this meeting met that requirement, and asked for a show of hands to indicate attendees' approval of the formation of the Mesquite Ranch Neighborhood Association. There was unanimous agreement of the Mesquite Ranch residents in attendance.
3. A by-law committee should be established to create the by-laws. The by-laws must be reviewed and approved by DNR and the city attorney (this takes about a week, per Leticia). Randy indicated that a draft version of the MRNA by-laws has already been created, based on the RRNA by-laws. DNR can assist in mailing the by-laws, or could place them at the DNR web site. Copies could also be made available at the Ward IV offices on the Eastside. Randy will also post them to the MRNA web site.
4. A second meeting is required to present the by-laws to residents. Although the by-laws could be approved at this meeting, Al Wirth of the RRNA recommended that residents be allowed to take the by-laws home to allow time for adequate review.
5. A third meeting would be needed to approve the by-laws. After approval, elections of officers may be held at that time, or at a later meeting.
6. Once elections are held, the association documents are filed with DNR, and the neighborhood association would become official.
7. Annual meetings are recommended to hold elections. DNR requested that they be notified of the annual meetings.

Liz Storms, a member of the Mesquite Ranch Homeowners' Association, noted that although she was speaking as a resident, she stated that the MRHA is not in opposition to the MRNA, and that they will be complementary to each other. A good relationship has been established to date.

Randy Pierce asked for volunteers to serve on the by-laws committee. Nine individuals volunteered. Randy will follow up with these persons to begin the by-law process. The next meeting was scheduled for July 20, 2005. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes respectively submitted by Roger Montemayor