

MISSION STATEMENT

The Community Block/Tenant Liaison Committee provides an opportunity for representatives of the city's block and tenant associations to collaborate on solutions for their public safety and quality of life concerns. It also provides association liaisons with useful information that can be shared with their individual block/tenant association.

MEETINGS

The meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 pm, the meeting will be held at 400 East Front Street, the Plainfield Senior Citizens Building Conference Room. Parking in the front of the building. For further information please call 908-753-3131 .

A GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A BLOCK ASSOCIATION

Plainfield Police Department
Plainfield United Block Association
Attn: J. Abney
200 East 4th Street
Plainfield, NJ 07060
(908) 753-3131

**SAMPLE
MEETING AGENDA**

ORGANIZATION:

ADDRESS:

MEETING DESCRIPTION:

GOALS:

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

GENERAL MEETING:

OLD BUSINESS:

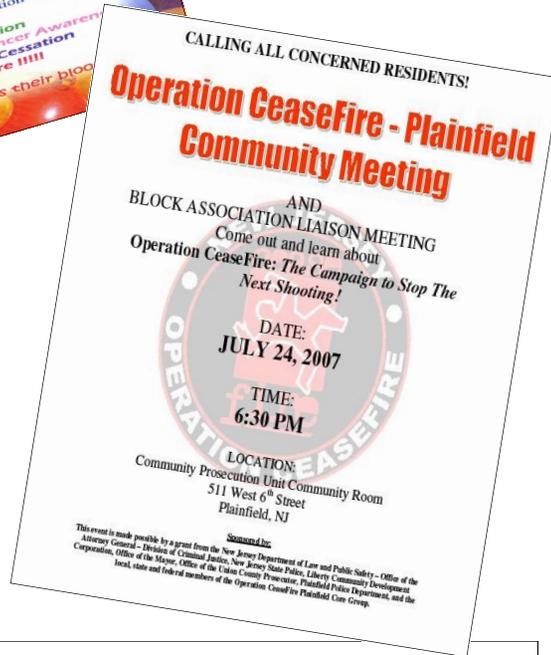
NEW BUSINESS:

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

MATERIALS/RESOURCES NEEDED:

ASSIGNMENTS/TASK



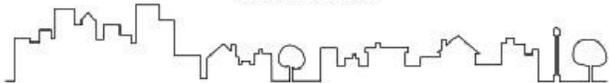
“ONE PERSON CAN HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON ANOTHER. AND TWO PEOPLE...WELL, TWO PEOPLE CAN WORK MIRACLES. THEY CAN CHANGE A WHOLE TOWN. THEY CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.”

- DIANE FROLOV AND ANDREW SCHNEIDER

**CONGRATULATIONS!
TIFFANY WILSON**

FROM:

CRESCENT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
DORSEY PLACE BLOCK ASSOCIATION
PEMBERTON AVENUE BLOCK ASSOCIATION
RUSHMORE AVENUE BLOCK ASSOCIATION
&
RICHARD SZETO



MEETING AGENDA:

Meetings should be regularly scheduled and well planned. A typical meeting agenda should include the following:

Information sharing/gathering - discuss neighborhood strengths, weaknesses and problems. Identify any suspicious activity in the community. Review procedures on what to do if volunteers or residents see, hear or smell anything suspicious.

Patrol report and reports from other committees including finance.

Featured topic - one meeting can feature home security: property identification and engraving, installing outside lighting, security devices, use of automatic timers, hedge pruning and window decals. The watch can also host a crime prevention officer who can arrange for home protection surveys, which involve conducting an inventory of property and the engraving of valuables. Discuss the idea of videotaping the interior of each home or apartment to document contents for insurance purposes. (The videotape should be stored in a safe place outside your home.)

Discussion of other issues, future meetings and events (e.g. sanitation--trash removal & code enforcement).

Assignments - based on the above, delegate tasks to volunteers.

Closing - time & place of next meeting.

Adjournment & refreshments - seek donations for refreshments from local businesses.

Members should receive the meeting agenda before the meeting so all are familiar with the topics.

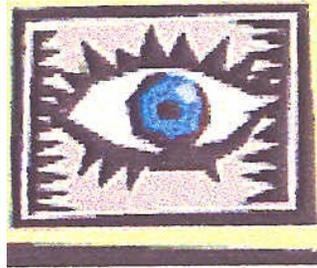
Block Association Guide

Table of Contents

- What is A Block Association.....4
- What is A Block Association is NOT..... 5
- Getting Started.....6
- Startup Meeting.....8
- Second Meeting.....9
- Leadership.....10
- Follow-up.....11
- Meeting Topics.....13
- Maintaining the Block Association.....14
- Effective Block Association Meetings.....15
- Participation in the Block Association.....16
- Sample Letters and Documentation.....18
- Reporting Incidents to the Police.....21
- Block Association Parties.....23
- Meeting Agendas.....26

Reprinted in conjunction with NNO 3rd Ward Committee and PABA.

NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH



WHAT IS A BLOCK ASSOCIATION?

A Block Association Neighborhood Watch or Town Watch is the formation of a group of people, usually from a particular neighborhood, who come together to address the issues within their area in conjunction with their local police department.

A well-organized Block Association Neighborhood Watch or Town Watch encourages residents to become more aware of activities wherever they are while they go about normal routines each day. The primary function of the Block Association is to act as the "eyes and ears" of the police.

Typical observations which should be reported immediately are: unidentified vehicles or people in the area; individual(s) around a vacant house; a vehicle appears to have been abandoned; or any unusual or suspicious activity. Even if the report turns out to be a false alarm, it is better to let the police make that determination.

CRIMINALS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO OPERATE IN ANY AREA WHERE CITIZENS TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CRIME PREVENTION!

ADVANCED PAYMENT REQUIRED.

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

FEE: \$10.00/\$50.00 PAID _____
EACH EVENT DATE

CITY OF PLAINFIELD
MUNICIPAL CLERK'S OFFICE
CITY HALL, 515 WATCHUNG AVENUE
PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07060
(908) 753-3222

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE IN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE SCHEDULED EVENT

PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT/MAYOR'S PERMIT

DATE: _____ PERMIT # ISSUED: _____

APPLICATION FOR: SOCIAL AFFAIR/DANCE USE OF PUBLIC STREETS BLOCK PARTY
 SIDEWALK/STREET ENCROACHMENT PUBLIC (STREET) MEETINGS GARAGE/YARD SALES
 FLEA MARKETS OTHER: _____

APPLICANT'S NAME: _____ SPECIFY _____
ADDRESS: _____
HOME TELEPHONE NO: _____ WORK TELEPHONE NO. _____
PROPERTY OWNER (OMIT IF SAME AS ABOVE): NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TYPE OF ACTIVITY: _____
DATE(S) OF ACTIVITY: _____ HOURS OF OPERATION: _____
LOCATION OF ACTIVITY: NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____ PHONE #: _____
PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE EVENT IS TO BE HELD: _____
DISPOSITION OF FUNDS: _____

I.E., CIVIL, RELIGIOUS OR EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS - PLEASE EXPLAIN FULLY

AMOUNT OF ADMISSION? _____
ANY ADDITIONAL LICENSE REQUESTED? YES NO
ONE DAY LIQUOR LICENSE? YES NO RAFFLE/BINGO/50/50? YES NO
ANY ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY TO BE HELD? YES NO
MECHANICAL AUTOMATIC KIDDIE RIDES? YES NO MOONWALK? YES NO
OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN IN DETAILS? _____

DO YOU PLAN TO SERVE/SELL FOOD? YES NO IF YES, HEALTH PERMIT IS REQUIRED
DO YOU NEED BARRICADES? YES NO IF YES, SPECIFIED LOCATION TO BE DELIVERED.

CHECKED OFF BELOW ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET FOR USE OF CITY OWNED PROPERTY.

LIABILITY INSURANCE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,000,000.00 (PURCHASED FROM AN INSURANCE COMPANY OF YOUR CHOICE
 A CHECK PAYABLE TO THE CITY OF PLAINFIELD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ _____

In consideration of the sum of Ten dollar (\$10.00) or Fifty (\$50.00), we hereby release the City of Plainfield from any and all claims arising from the utilization of property owned by the City of Plainfield for the above purpose on dates and hours as listed, including but not limited to personal and property damage, as well as cleaning of debris in the area resulting from the activity.

(Please initial)

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

PRINT NAME & OFFICIAL CAPACITY IN ORGANIZATION

ADDRESS

APPLICATION REVIEWED BY: NAME _____

DATE FORWARDED TO FIRE DIVISION TO INITIATE PROCESSING _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
INSTRUCTIONS**

**REFERENCE:
STREET CLOSING - PUBLIC ASSEMBLY PERMITS**

On any street closing for Public Assembly, the Fire Division would require the following:

- Maintain an open fire lane for the safe passage of Fire Division vehicles.
- Fire hydrants are not to be blocked in any manner.

REFERENCE: BLOCK PARTIES

You must obtain an entertainment permit for use of City-owned property, which includes the "Hold Harmless" (the City) Clause.

Every applicant desiring the use of City-owned property for public Use of streets for parades, block parties, etc., must execute such clause.

Said permit must then be forwarded to Fire Division (Traffic Engineer for approval, then to the Police Division for approval, and then to our City Yard for arrangements to deliver and pick up barricades or barriers for such blocking of streets.

Insurance coverage must be obtained in the amount of one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) naming the City as co-insurers for events on City-owned property. Such insurance must be submitted to the Clerk prior to event.

Upon approval from those Divisions listed in item #3, the Clerk's office will issue the required permit.

Laddie Wyatt, RMC/CMC/MMCA Municipal Clerk
5/90



WHAT A BLOCK ASSOCIATION IS NOT:

- It is not the formation of vigilante groups.
- It is not a plan whereby individual citizens attempt to pursue or apprehend a criminal or become involved with an actual event (other than making a report to the police from a safe vantage point)
- It is not a law enforcement program, but rather a cooperative effort among responsible citizens to improve security for themselves, their families and their property.

Solving security and other problems in a community can seem daunting. Problems associated with crime, housing, economic opportunities and the environment are complex and interrelated. The best approaches to reducing crime and fear as well as other systematic problems in neighborhoods require organized efforts involving collaborative problem solving. A grassroots neighborhood group has the power, strength and safety of numbers. While a group is more productive than one person, the same is true for organizations that work together as allies. Partnering with law enforcement and joining forces with business and religious leaders, youth-oriented organizations, other civic groups and stakeholders maximizes the neighborhood group's effectiveness.

When you have many people and groups with different views, resources and skills working together to solve community problems, goals can be realized. Neighborhood or block watches are driven by the energy and dedication of their members and the hope of improving their quality of life.

GETTING STARTED:

Getting projects, including a neighborhood watch, off the ground takes time. Take one step at a time. Problems don't develop overnight and unfortunately neither do the solutions.

SURVEY neighborhood residents and business people asking them about their concerns and interests and their willingness to work for their neighborhood. Use the information from the survey to identify a laundry list of issues. Create a detailed list (e.g. name, address, telephone numbers) of those interested in joining a neighborhood or block watch.

SEEK guidance, assistance and information from existing community & not-for-profit organizations and experienced community activists. Members of those organizations may wish to join your effort. Additionally, their by-laws and mission statements may be good models on which to draw. By networking, coordinating, cooperating, sharing and collaborating, neighborhood residents and business people can achieve their objectives more easily than if they were working in isolation. Further, when alliances among different groups are established, people see that they have more in common than they previously imagined, and that there is more to be gained by partnering on projects.

DEVELOP strategies with a core group on recruiting and mobilizing a larger group of interested people in order to hold a start-up/planning meeting. Conduct outreach to other stakeholders including religious institutions, hospitals, schools and businesses. If safety is a concern, advertise the startup meeting only by word of mouth through trusted residents and select a meeting location and time, which will not intensify the anxiety.

CONTACT the police to develop a good working relationship. You might want to invite the police to your start-up meeting. Anti-crime activists achieve good results when they work collaboratively with law enforcement and other justice agencies. Approach the commanding officer of

PROCEDURES FOR HOLDING A BLOCK PARTY

City Clerk's Office

Call 753-3222 or stop by 515 Watchung Avenue (City Clerk's Office, 1st floor) and ask for a Mayor's Entertainment Permit Application

Application fee is \$10.00

Make sure you put in the Mayor's Entertainment Application at least 2 weeks in advance

Get a Block Party Sheet (this is where you provide all the residents name and address from that block)

After you give the City Clerk's Office the application they will give information to the Police Department.

Plainfield Municipal Utilities Authority

Call PMUA Community Outreach Person at (908) 226-2518 x 332 with dates of event and where the excess garbage will be.

PMUA will pick-up trash on your next collection day.

Note: If the above procedures are not followed PMUA will charge \$25.00 per bag picked-up.

START UP MEETING

The key to having a successful first meeting is to involve everyone. It is important that the leader or facilitator motivate and encourage those in attendance to become active participants and express their views to help residents overcome that sense of powerlessness. The organizer must be able to recognize and appreciate different viewpoints. To ensure a successful meeting, below are some suggestions to follow:

- Give your neighbors an opportunity to socialize before the meeting begins.
- Prepare an agenda, which should represent a collaborative effort of a core group of dedicated residents
- Establish guidelines to encourage honesty, confidentiality and responsibility to the group.
- Have those in attendance introduce themselves. Prepare and distribute to the group an attendance sheet with each participant's address and phone number.
- Early in the meeting, allow everyone to talk about themselves, their values, experiences, their stake in the community and their ideas. Identify basic safety issues in and around your neighborhood. Brainstorm about their underlying causes.
- Establish priorities and goals and formulate a mission statement for the watch. While there will be diversity of opinions, build on the ideas that are agreed upon.
- Develop an action or strategic plan identifying specific community changes. The plan should be precise, specifying who will perform each task and the timetable. The planning process should be inclusive, involving people who have influence in the community (e.g. elected officials, clergy) as well as others.
- Identify key people and resources to help you solve problems and lend support (e.g. police, Prosecutor's Office, local elected officials, clergy, youth & business leaders).
- Elect a coordinator or chairperson secretary to maintain records of meetings and important events, and a treasurer to collect, record and disburse funds. The group can collect membership dues, Establish committees, if possible, which will involve other residents and stakeholders. These units can invite guest speakers, distribute flyers and brochures, work on communications and publications and plan events and projects.
- Provide refreshments, which will present another opportunity for socialization.

CRIME PREVENTION INFORMATION

WHAT TO SAY WHEN CALLING THE POLICE

ROBBERY (HOLD-UP)

Location of occurrence

Description of perpetrators

Whether in progress or not

Direction of travel

If the vehicle was involved, then description



BURGLARY:

Location of occurrence

Whether in progress or not

Description of perpetrator when applicable

Description of vehicle when applicable

SUSPICIOUS PERSON(ID):

Location

Description of person(s) and/or vehicle

Direction of travel

What they are doing?

Why are they suspicious?



If you are interested in any of the following positions within the Block Association, please indicate by checking the appropriate line:

- Block Association President
- Block Association Vice-President
- Secretary (minutes, etc.)
- Treasurer (fund-raisers, block parties, etc.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Comments:

SECOND MEETING

The purpose of a meeting is to consolidate a functional plan so that block members can work together efficiently. Specific compliance requirements are stressed.

- The name and addresses of new attendees who wish to participate in the Block Association may be entered into the Block Map by the Block Captain.
- Block Captains and participants must understand the responsibilities of the program and be willing to accept them.
- Regular meetings should be scheduled. Sufficient advance notice should be given to members. These sessions provide an excellent opportunity to:
 - Review current trends in the area.
 - Review crimes and suspicious activities, which may impact the area
 - Discuss practical crime deterrents, which have specific applications
 - Provide social interaction SO that neighbors become better acquainted.
 - Current list of members, including telephone numbers is updated regularly.

BASIC LEADERSHIP:

The coordinator or chairperson is critical to the success of the watch group. Therefore, the group should look for someone who has good communication, listening and negotiating skills. Someone who is well respected in the community and would see the position as a civic duty would be a good candidate. His/her duties may include:

- Maintaining membership rolls
- Acting as a liaison between the group and law enforcement, civic groups, business leaders and elected officials
- Arranging and convening meetings and trainings
- Obtaining crime prevention materials
- Developing strategies to sustain and expand the program

The watch group may also consist of block or street captains who are directly involved with their immediate neighbors and store owners. Their duties may include:

- Acting as a liaison between residents and the coordinator
- Contacting neighbors about meetings and other events
- Relaying and distributing information and resource material to members
- Visiting and inviting new residents to join the watch
- Surveying issues and identifying block problems
- Checking on shut-in residents

Leaders should not serve permanently. New leadership should be cultivated and encouraged to build participation and motivate residents and others.



GET INVOLVED In Crime Prevention

BLOCK ASSOCIATION RSVP

Please return this to me at the address below:

___ I will attend the Block Association Meeting scheduled.

___ Sorry, I can't attend the scheduled meeting, but I am interested in participating.

___ I would like more information about home protection.

My Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone# _____

Email Address: _____

Please call for more information.

Block Association Captain/Coordinator

LETTER TO NEIGHBORS

Dear Neighbor:

Our neighborhood is undertaking a program to reduce the opportunity for crimes to be committed in the area by establishing a network for the concerned citizens to communicate with other neighbors regarding crime and quality of life issues.

The security of our neighborhood depends upon us. No police department can effectively protect life and property without the support and active cooperation of the citizens.

We would like to invite you to attend the organization meeting for our Block Association. The next meeting will be held at:

on _____

at _____ pm

We hope that you will be able to attend and learn how we can together make our neighborhood an even better place in which to live.

Your Neighbor -

FOLLOW-UP:

Congratulations! Now that you have formed the neighborhood watch/block watch and gained the initial enthusiasm, it will require effort to sustain the initiative. Expect that as you build your group, there will be setbacks and disagreements. That is part of the process, and you should not be discouraged. Remember it is the health and welfare of our children, families and neighbors that encourage us to take on these challenges that can feel overwhelming at times. Try to minimize the divisions and problems and focus on what has been accomplished. Then proceed to the next goal. Soon after forming a neighborhood watch, consider the following:

- Distribute an organizational list of members with addresses, email addresses and phone numbers, block maps and telephone tree assignments. If a patrol was established, finalize a tour schedule and distribute to volunteers. (This should be done with the comfort level of your members in mind and with an established confidentiality policy).
- Work toward developing an insignia. Sponsor a contest for the neighborhood youth to design an insignia. Using that symbol, produce window decals and neighborhood signs. These signs will advertise the fact that your community is vigilant. Convicted burglars report avoiding neighborhoods that have watch signs. You should consider contacting local businesses, print shops, banks and newspapers in an effort to secure design, production and financial assistance in creating and distributing these materials. Aluminum signs are preferable. Don't forget to contact the public works or highway department as well as the police to secure permission to affix the signs on streetlights and other poles. Assistance from a local official may also expedite this project. When the signs are ready, arrange a community/block party to celebrate neighborhood pride and unity. Don't forget to invite the media to mark the occasion.

- It is important to try to attract new members. Harness the talents and energies of watch volunteers to recruit new blood. Engage those families in your neighborhood who are not participants in order to maintain a solid organizational foundation. New residents in your neighborhood should be welcomed. The best way to recruit participants is through one-on-one contact and visits.

Although frequent meetings require some energy, they present an opportunity for your neighbors to socialize and become better acquainted.

- In addition to reviewing quality of life issues and tracking neighborhood conditions, the meetings could be educational. There are many resources on which your watch group can draw to help you develop meeting topics. Federal, state and local law enforcement and judicial agencies feature public affairs offices. In addition, municipal or county agencies including consumer affairs and public works departments as well as hospitals and public utilities can provide information/speakers for a meeting.
- Conduct an informal survey (see attached sample) among your members to decide what topics are of interest. Establish priorities for which subjects will be featured at meetings. This should be a collaborative effort. Create a committee to develop the theme of each meeting and arrange for speakers and/or videotapes.

REWARD, RECOGNIZE, RECORD & CELEBRATE SUCCESS



It is important to reward and recognize the value and importance of other people's efforts. These acknowledgments range from simple and generous thank you notes to pins, pens, and certificates.

In a follow-up or subsequent meeting, the neighborhood watch group may want to celebrate accomplishments. Such a celebration may include festivities, food and a meaningful reminder of how people have furthered the organization's mission. Key law enforcement representatives, public officials and local business leaders should be invited and recognized for their support. Outstanding youth in the community can also be acknowledged. The media should be notified of these special events and awards.

As indicated earlier, accomplishments should be documented. This record can be used to secure favorable publicity as well as financial and technical support from colleges, businesses, foundations, government and other funders. Grantors often request information on achievements for grant applications. With this record in hand, grantors can also assist community groups in forming partnerships and other alliances to secure funding and additional resources. Finally, showing appreciation will provide an incentive for members to remain involved in the group.

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION:

It is advisable that neighborhood watch groups reach out to other groups to learn from their experiences. Other groups may be sources of new ideas. Additionally, look to other civic groups and clubs for assistance and membership. Partner with community service and social clubs, faith-based groups, homeowners' associations, business groups and PTA's.

Some of these groups may provide meeting space and access to volunteers. Consider contacting Realtors' associations and ask them to distribute information about your program to prospective homebuyers and tenants. Work with local schools to attract youth participation by sponsoring joint programs and events. Young children can pick up litter and take part in special projects in the community in exchange for service credit. Post information about your program in local libraries and banks. Contact local businesses for free or discounted services as well as their participation. In addition to these ideas, develop a networking tree that identifies associates, friends and family of your members to whom you can approach.

To sustain membership, delegate assignments and engage others. Give people a choice of what to work on and use their skills and talents in a meaningful way. Therefore, in addition to developing a phone tree with contact information create a skills tree or inventory that identifies skills, talents and abilities of members. In addition to delegating assignments, maintain communication. Send out newsletters, safety bulletins, and crime alerts to community residents and others. An informed community will be an involved community.

Consider these meeting topics:

Personal safety	Traffic safety & drunk driving
Self-defense & observation skills	Internet access & security
Child security	Safety strategies for seniors
Home security &, surveys	Graffiti and vandalism prevention
Property identification	Home & garden beautification
First aid	Renters' rights
Fire safety and prevention	Eliminating drug dealing and gangs
Victim rights and services	Conflict resolution/mediation
Court monitoring	
Consumer frauds & scams	

- After setting a meeting date, create an agenda (See sample form) and draft a notice for distribution. The secretary should prepare the minutes from the prior meeting to be distributed with the agenda for the next meeting.
- Use a telephone tree to remind participants of the meeting two days before the event. Consider using e-mail as well.

Keep a record documenting changes brought about by the watch and any feedback. Maintaining this history can be an invaluable guide for the group. Reviewing regularly the watch group's achievements, can spur the group onto even greater heights.

MAINTAINING A BLOCK ASSOCIATION



TEN POINTS

The goals and purposes of your group should be understood and generally accepted by the members.

Your crime prevention goals should be easily identified.

Group members should derive a sense of satisfaction from belonging to the group.

Group members should represent a cross section of the community residents whose support will be required.

Your group's size should stay within a reasonable number.

Group leaders should represent the needs of the members as well as the interest of the community.

Your group should be flexible and adaptable to changing conditions.

Good communication is essential.

Adequate funds, supplies and equipment help to successfully operate a crime prevention mission.

Comfortable meeting places and appropriate social amenities for your group increase its chances for success.

AN EFFECTIVE MEETING

The coordinator or chair should plan a meeting with a group, not by him or herself. It is important to be clear about your purpose for having the meeting in the first place. Meetings without clear goals are confusing, boring and can discourage participation. An effective and informative meeting will encourage participation and enhance the watch's effort and reputation. It will foster a good impression about your group.

When meetings are well run - where people's opinions are respected and an agenda is followed - residents will feel more willing to participate in other activities sponsored by the organization. In addition to formulating an agenda, set ground rules for the meeting, including how long a person may speak on a topic. It is important for the convener to keep the discussion moving and focused. Prioritize the issues. However, the chair must not abuse the power of his/her position. He/she should express appreciation for people's input. No one person should dominate the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the chair should summarize and reflect on what was said at the meeting and discuss next steps or strategies.

The watch group should try to maintain a regular meeting cycle with a definite starting and ending time for each gathering. It is important to have a sign in sheet to update your membership and contact list. After the meeting, prepare minutes summarizing the key points of the meeting which should be distributed to all members and other interested parties.