



## **Richland County Neighborhood Council Bylaws**

Revised January 23, 2019

### **Article I – Name of Organization**

The name of this Organization shall be the “Richland County Neighborhood Council,” hereafter abbreviated as RCNC.

### **Article II – History**

The Richland County Neighborhood Council was organized in 1978 for the purpose of linking County neighborhood organizations to Richland County Government on the premise that it would render improved services. The RCNC (whose membership included 40 organizations in the early days and now has over 60 members) structure consist of an executive committee and five ad hoc committees. They are the Education, Constitution, Health and Safety, Public Works and Governmental Affairs Committee. RCNC became inactive in 1991 and resumed as an active organization in 1996. As before, the organization continues to serve as a mechanism or umbrella of neighborhood organizations whose representatives gather to share and receive information that greatly impacts the quality of life for the citizens of those communities. By doing so RCNC members address pertinent issues by presenting informative programs. In 2009, RCNC was assigned an Employer Identification Number (EIN) that identifies the organization with the federal government. Richland County Council signed a resolution in February 2010 to endorse and support the Neighborhood Council for as long as the organization exists.

### **Article III – Mission**

The Richland County Neighborhood Council is a non-partisan body which offers membership to all neighborhoods in the County for the purpose of educating residents, exchanging information, neighborhoods assisting one another, and actively advising local officials on issues affecting our communities.

### **Article IV – Vision**

The vision of RCNC is for Richland County neighborhoods and local governments to actively work together to enhance the quality of life for the residents of Richland County.

### **Article V – Action Statement**

RCNC is committed to preserving and promoting the integrity of Richland County neighborhoods. It serves as an umbrella group whose members are from various recognized neighborhood associations and organizations within the county, and act as a common body of representatives. It provides a forum for the discussion of issues and challenges to the citizens of Richland County neighborhoods and establishes the means by which information can be shared among neighborhoods and the local officials, which it advises on issues of neighborhood concerns. The Neighborhood Council assists Richland County Government in



realizing the needs of various communities. It furnishes a connecting link between the neighborhoods and units of local government, which it advises on issues of neighborhood concern.

#### **ARTICLE VI – Principles**

These principles are the overall pillars that are established to uphold the Richland County Neighborhood Council.

- Together they are committed to serve the residents of Richland County.
- Enlighten neighborhoods through sound, proven and practical techniques.
- Activate the forces that give power to the County and neighborhoods through
- Movement to empower and educate neighborhood leaders into one influential voice.**

#### **ARTICLE VII – Policy**

RCNC is a non-partisan, membership-based community organization.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – Membership**

1. Membership in RCNC shall be open to any citizen in Richland County who “actively” participates in a “Recognized Neighborhood Organization” whose Constitution, Bylaws, or operating principles establish among its goals the preservation and improvement of the residential areas in Richland County.
  - a. “Actively” is defined as having participated in a minimum of three (3) neighborhood events, consecutive Neighborhood Association/Organization meetings, Richland County Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) events (Neighborhood Toolkit, Neighborhood Matching Grant Training Sessions, 100 Plates, Planning Conference etc.).

Acceptable documents include but are not limited to:

    - Sign-In sheet listing your signature, name of event, neighborhood and date.
    - Letter from Neighborhood Association/Organization confirming your membership on letterhead.
    - Confirmation of your attendance from NIP
  - b. A “Recognized Neighborhood Organization” is defined as one which meets the following requirements:
    - i. An identifiable constituency, located within fixed geographical boundaries, at least part of which are within the County limits;
    - ii. At least one public neighborhood meeting annually;
    - iii. An elected body of officers;
    - iv. A non-partisan nature;
    - v. A Constitution and/or Bylaws and/or Statement of Principles of Operation.
2. Every RCNC member shall provide the organization name, Bylaws, board members names, mailing address, telephone number, and email to the Secretary after each election or change of officer(s). This information will be shared with the NIP.



3. There is a \$25.00 membership application fee; this will be a yearly fee along with an updated application at the beginning of the fiscal year which is March. In the event neighborhood leadership changes, the updated application information will be used.
4. Membership in RCNC will be a required eligibility for the Richland County Neighborhood Matching Grant Program effective FY 20/21. Applicants must have a member representing their Neighborhood Association/Organization at RCNC.

#### **ARTICLE IX – Officers of RCNC**

1. The RCNC Executive Committee is comprised of eight (8) elected officials (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President and three (3) At-Large Members).
2. Past President may serve six (6) months or as needed.
3. No more than one officer may be elected from any one neighborhood organization.

#### **ARTICLE X – Election of Officers**

A Nominating Committee excluding current elected officers of RCNC, shall consist of three (3) representatives of RCNC's full – membership organization under the supervision of NIP shall govern the election process.

1. Deadline for all nominee applications will be one week before the May general meeting.
2. RCNC Board will announce accepting officer candidate nominees in the April meeting.
3. Elections of the officers shall be held at the June meeting each year, with the NIP having made those names selected as proposed officers available at the May meeting.
4. Officers shall be installed at the end of the June meeting and shall assume their duties on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
5. NIP shall govern the election process. Responsibilities Include:
  - (a) Accept and review applications for candidacy from nominees.
  - (b) Ascertain the eligibility of nominees to serve by the end of May.
  - (c) A complete list of qualified candidates then will be sent to the RCNC membership at least one week before the June meeting.
  - (d) Ballots will be made available at the June meeting for citizens to cast their votes.
  - (e) NIP will collect and tally all ballots and present to RCNC at the end of the June meeting.
6. To qualify to be an officer an individual must be a resident of Richland County and actively participate in a recognized Richland County Neighborhood Organization. They must submit their petition in person and provide their association's/organization's bylaws, meeting minutes for the last three (3) meetings, EIN, letter confirming their position on association's/organization's letterhead signed by two (2) of their current officers and an ID.
7. Voting for RCNC Officers shall be by written ballot by those representatives in attendance. Votes will be tallied and reported by NIP. Proxy votes are prohibited. In case of uncontested elections, the RCNC Executive Committee may request a vote of affirmation.
8. All officers shall serve a two (2) year term of office once elected and may be re-elected to the same office once.



9. Once elected, RCNC officers may complete their terms of office if they continue to reside within Richland County and remain active in a Neighborhood Association/Organization.

#### **ARTICLE XI – Duties of the Officers**

1. The duties of the **President** shall include:
  - (a) Presiding over all meetings of RCNC
  - (b) Co-signing all checks with the Treasurer,
  - (c) Calling Special Meetings of RCNC as deemed necessary,
  - (d) Speaking for and representing RCNC to other bodies and the news media, or appointing a spokesperson to do so,
  - (e) Preparing and issuing any public statements and letters at the direction of the NIP or by vote of the members of RCNC or as needed by normal operating practices of RCNC.
  - (f) Formation of ad hoc committees as needed
2. The duties of the **Vice President** shall include:
  - (a) Assisting the Chair in carrying out the duties as required,
  - (b) Presiding over meetings in the absence of the Chair and/or unwillingness to serve,
  - (c) Serving as parliamentarian at all RCNC meetings,
  - (d) Certifying that all voting representatives are authorized to vote, as per Article IV, and working with the Secretary to maintain accurate RCNC records in the NIP office at the County Administration Building 2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC.
3. The duties of the **Secretary** shall include:
  - (a) Notifying all members of all regular meetings, and time permitting all called meetings of RCNC at least one week prior to the meeting with all business announced on the agenda, including actions requiring a quorum and minutes from previous RCNC meeting,
  - (b) Acting on behalf of the Vice Chair in their absence,
  - (c) Keeping the minutes of all RCNC meetings,
  - (d) Distributing minutes to the membership and NIP prior to the next scheduled meeting, maintaining membership records and minutes for RCNC at the Richland County Administration Building Neighborhood Improvement Program, 2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC.
  - (e) Distribution and collection of membership renewal forms.
4. The duties of the **Treasurer** shall include:
  - (a) Receiving and co-disbursing, with the Chair, all funds of RCNC,
  - (b) Maintaining accurate financial records of RCNC for review by membership upon request, and
  - (c) Preparing a Consolidated Annual Financial Statement of transactions and balances to be presented at the June meeting of the RCNC.
5. The duties of the **Past President** shall include:
  - (a) To serve as an advisor to the RCNC and perform other tasks as assigned.
6. The duties of the **At-Large Members** shall include:
  - (a) Acting on behalf of the Secretary in their absence (*as appointed by President*)



- (b) Attends all RCNC and Executive Committee meetings
- (c) Coordinates relationships with liaisons
- (d) Initiates contacts
- (e) Provides informational updates (from NIP) to the board and members
- (f) Shares ideas, guidance, and expertise with the Executive Committee
- (g) Assists Executive Committee as requested

#### **ARTICLE XII – Meetings**

1. General meetings will be held on the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Thursday of the month and special meetings may be called by the President or by one-fourth of the full membership provided that a five business day notice is provided to RCNC members.
2. A quorum at RCNC meetings shall consist of five (5) officers.
3. All RCNC regular and special meetings shall be open to the public.
4. RCNC and City of Columbia Neighborhood Council will hold one combined December meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XIII – Circulation of Bylaws**

1. One copy of the RCNC Bylaws will be provided to each new RCNC member organization or as requested.
2. Bylaws will be reviewed by RCNC Board every four (4) years.

#### **ARTICLE XIV – Other Operating Procedures**

Any documents, minutes or other records generated by or received by the Richland County Neighborhood Council shall become the property of RCNC and NIP and shall upon request be made available in uncensored and unaltered form to any member. **These records shall be retained for a minimum of four (4) years.**

#### **ARTICLE XV – Amendments**

1. Any proposed amendments to the Bylaws must be submitted to RCNC board members in writing at a regular meeting, and are subject to review by RCNC and NIP staff.
2. Amendments to the Bylaws must be approved by RCNC board members, followed by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the RCNC.

#### **ARTICLE XVI – Dissolution**

1. In the event this organization is dissolved, any assets remaining in the organization will be donated to a tax-exempt eleemosynary or governmental entity of similar nature as may be designated by the NIP at the time of dissolution.
2. NIP will provide notice of pending dissolution to RCNC in writing if it is found to be functioning outside of the RCNC Bylaws and Policies & Procedures.