

# Summary of Neighborhood Communication Workshop

March 27, 2019

20 attendees

If your neighborhood needs help to set up email, website, or Nextdoor, please let me know and I will find someone to help you! Karen “at” nwnative.us

## Purpose of Workshop

Help ensure that all Kirkland neighborhoods have affordable, easy-to-use, effective communication tools so that all Kirkland citizens receive pertinent information in a timely manner and learn about opportunities to become involved in their community.

## Agenda

- Communications best practices
- Overview of communications tools
- Discussion: coordinating communications between city and neighborhoods

## Communications Best Practices

- Each neighborhood should ideally have:
  - Email
  - Nextdoor
  - Website
- Email lists should be stored in the cloud, *not* on someone’s computer!
- Be sure that everyone on your board has the account and password info for your website, email, and other tools
  - Ensures that others can take over if something happens to the communications person
  - Avoids “handoff panic”
- Don’t fear redundant communication; they say people may have to see something seven times before they remember seeing it

## Neighborhood Communications Survey Results

- November 2018
- 12 active neighborhoods (Totem Lake inactive)
- What tools do NAs currently use?
- How effective are they?

## Results

- Most NAs have 4-5 meetings a year
- Meeting attendance averages 0.55% of population

Note that people who can't attend like to read minutes

- Average percentage of population on email: 10%
- Average percentage of population signed up for Nextdoor: 23%
- Website: 9 have, 3 do not
- Facebook: 6 use, 6 do not
- Street Signs: Several NAs put out before meetings
- Meetup: one NA uses
- Fliers
  - Via US Mail: Several NAs send occasionally, several would like to but can't afford
  - One NA hand delivers newsletters before meetings
- Twitter: One NA uses
- Printed cards: Two NAs have info cards to hand out

## Conclusions

- Nextdoor is more effective than email in terms of the number of people it reaches

## Types of Communication Tools

- The workshop presented a sample of tools—there are others out there.
- Each neighborhood can choose what works best for them.

## How to Choose Tools

- Cost (don't commit to anything you can't afford longterm)
- Ease of setup, use, maintenance
- Ease of handing off to new users
- Secure, private
- Beware taking on too many tools

## Email: Why You Should Use a Listserv

- A listserv is an email list that people subscribe to
- Stored in the cloud (*not* on someone's computer)
- Automatically backed up
- Private (must have permission to view)
- Send email from anywhere in the world
- Control who has permission to send emails
- Email addresses automatically hidden (no chance of forgetting to bcc)
- Send to hundreds of emails at once (without spam controls)
- Easy to add, delete, change email addresses
- Residents can self-subscribe/unsubscribe
- Can easily view and search all posts

## Should your Neighborhood have a Website?

- Helps people find you (via Google search or [city neighborhoods website](#))
- Helps people find out how to contact you
- Best for static info such as
  - Meeting schedule
  - Events
  - Contact info
  - About your neighborhood
- Lightly used but important
- Not good for time-critical information

## How to Grow your Subscriber List

- Mail or hand deliver welcome fliers to new residents (get monthly home sales info from Zillow or real estate agent)
- Send postal mailers with signup info (use grant money)
- Ask current subscribers to spread the word
- Use Nextdoor free invitations
- Put signup info on your website

## Email Tools

Neighborhoods currently use MailChimp, Constant Contact, and Google Groups. MailChimp and Google Groups are free. All of these tools let you import or export your email list. MailChimp includes data analytics (how many people opened the email or clicked on a link).

### MailChimp

- <http://mailchimp.com/>
- Free for up to 2000 subscribers
- Integrates with Facebook and Twitter
- Mobile friendly
- Easy to use
- Includes templates
- Can send emails directly from your usual email program
- Can tell you how many recipients opened the email or clicked on a link
- For more info, see <http://www.kirklandkan.org/uploads/4/9/4/4/49441039/3.mailchimp.pdf>

### Google Groups

- <https://groups.google.com>
- Free
- Easy to set up, use, maintain
- Easy to add, delete, modify email addresses
- No software to learn

- Send emails from your usual email program
  - Can format as desired
  - Can include photos, attachments if desired (avoid attachments, however, due to security concerns and taking up too much space in someone’s mailbox—store docs on Google Docs or your website instead)
- Need free Google account
- Posted topics are stored online
  - Searchable
  - Provides email history and information repository
- Highlands has been using for 15 years
- For more info, see <http://www.kirklandkan.org/uploads/4/9/4/4/49441039/4.googlegroups.pdf> or contact Karen Story (Highlands) at karen@nwnative.us

## Constant Contact

- <http://www.constantcontact.com>
- \$20 a month and up
- City Communications manager thinks it is comparable to MailChimp
- For more info, see [http://www.kirklandkan.org/uploads/4/9/4/4/49441039/2.constant\\_contact\\_overview\\_-\\_2019.pdf](http://www.kirklandkan.org/uploads/4/9/4/4/49441039/2.constant_contact_overview_-_2019.pdf)

## Websites

### How much does a website cost?

It’s free! Unless you want your own domain name:

	<b>If you want your own domain name</b>	<b>If you don’t want your own domain name</b>
<b>Domain name cost</b>	about \$7/year and up	\$0
<b>Hosting cost</b>	about \$3/month and up	\$0/month and up
<b>Total per year</b>	<b>\$38/year and up</b>	<b>\$0/year and up</b>

- What is a domain name?
  - A url/web address, such as YourNeighborhood.org
  - There is an annual fee to “own” one
- What is hosting?
  - A website lives online, on a computer owned by the company (host) you choose. They are hosting your website.
  - There is a hosting fee

## Weebly – a great, free website option

- <http://www.weebly.com/about/#>
- Hosting is free (can pay for extra features)

- Includes unobtrusive Weebly branding
- Does not include optional domain registration
- Web url contains weebly, for example ckcvolunteers.weebly.com
- Easy to create and update site
- Automatically formatted for mobile devices
- For more info, see <http://www.kirklandkan.org/uploads/4/9/4/4/49441039/5.websites.pdf>

## Nextdoor

- <https://nextdoor.com/>
- Private—verifies that person lives in neighborhood
- Can create subgroups and interest groups
- Founder creates group, leads help manage group (can and should have multiple leads)
- Group members can send and receive private messages
- No commercial use allowed
- Categories include classifieds, crime, lost and found, recommendations
- You control what info others see about you
- Control how often you receive emails
- You can “mute” someone whose posts you don’t want to see
- If Neighborhood boundaries don’t match actual boundaries, can ask Nextdoor to change
- Leader can send free postcard invitations
- Anyone can invite a neighbor via email
- Can customize new member welcome email with neighborhood info
- For more info, see <http://www.kirklandkan.org/uploads/4/9/4/4/49441039/6.nextdoor.pdf>

## Discussion Topics

City staff:

Neighborhood Services Coordinator David Wolbrecht [DWolbrecht@kirklandwa.gov](mailto:DWolbrecht@kirklandwa.gov)  
 Communications Manager Kellie Stickney [KStickney@kirklandwa.gov](mailto:KStickney@kirklandwa.gov)

- Connecting with multi-family properties
  - Contact building manager and ask to post fliers or get into their newsletter
- Increasing meeting attendance
  - Get the word out via signs, email, Nextdoor
  - Have interesting topics
- Meeting topic ideas
  - Contact David for ideas
- Reaching under-represented voices in community
  - Think demographics, such as age, and ask someone in that demographic

- Example: Millennials (my 25-year-old son and his girlfriend say they would get the word best via a flier in their postal mailbox and would prefer to receive ongoing communications via email)
- Contact people via sources they already read, such as PTSA newsletter or church bulletin
- Coordinating with city communication
  - Sign up for [This Week in Kirkland](#) and receive a weekly digest of what's happening in Kirkland
  - Forward pertinent information via email and Nextdoor
  - The city really needs our help to inform citizens. Remember that it can take seven times seeing something before it sinks in.

## **Sign rules for neighborhoods**

Unlike commercial signs, Neighborhood association meeting signs are allowed on public property.

- Maximum sign area = six square feet
- Not permitted:
  - in paved vehicular travel lanes
  - in center medians or traffic circles
  - on trees, utility poles, or government signs (such as stop signs)
- Can't block sidewalks (must leave a travel width of at least five feet)

Kirkland temporary sign code:

<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Kirkland/html/KirklandZ100/KirklandZ100.html#100.115>