

**Dawson Neighborhood Plan  
Contact Team Bylaws  
(Adopted April 11, 2011)**

**Section 1 - Definition**

- A. A Neighborhood Plan Contact Team (NPCT) is an entity required by the City of Austin to fulfill certain statutory obligations regarding the neighborhood planning process per Chapter 25-1, Article 16 of City Code.
- B. NPCT means the individuals designated to implement an adopted neighborhood plan. The neighborhood plan contact team is a separate body apart from any existing or future neighborhood associations.
- C. This organization shall be known as the Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team (DNPCT).

**Section 2 - Roles & Responsibilities**

- A. The role of the DNPCT Membership is to be stewards of the adopted Dawson Neighborhood Plan and to review and make decisions in accordance with Section 6 of these bylaws on all proposed amendments to the Plan.
- B. When appropriate, the DNPCT members may decide to initiate a plan amendment.
- C. The officers of the DNPCT Board are to serve as community points of contact on matters related to Plan implementation and other City of Austin planning initiatives.
- D. The DNPCT Board will administer procedures in accordance with Section 6 to assist the membership in decision-making on planning issues. Administrative board meetings shall have a quorum of the simple majority of board members in attendance.
- E. It is also the responsibility of the DNPCT Board to serve the membership and to work on behalf of all stakeholders in the neighborhood planning area.

**Section 3—Boundaries of the Dawson Planning Area**

- A. North: Oltorf Street  
South: Ben White Boulevard  
East: South Congress Avenue  
West: South First Street

**Section 4- Membership of the Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team**

- A. Knowledge of the neighborhood planning process and participation in meetings are important aspects of continued eligibility for membership. Membership shall be open to individuals who are presently eligible or who apply for membership and meet all requirements as follows:
1. be at least eighteen years of age;
  2. live within or own property within or operate a business within the boundaries of the Dawson neighborhood planning area;
  3. attend one DNPCT meeting whether regularly scheduled, or specially called;
  4. agree to become familiar with the Dawson Neighborhood Plan, its subsequent amendments and its Future Land Use Map (FLUM); and
  5. complete a "Dawson Neighborhood Plan Team New Membership Application Form" and submit it to the Secretary or Membership Committee designee for verification.
- B. Membership and voting privileges shall become effective with attendance at the next meeting within 12 months of a member's initial meeting and verification of information on the application form.
- C. The new member's name shall be noted in the minutes and on the membership roster. He or she shall also be provided a copy of the adopted DNPCT bylaws and other planning information.
- D. Non-resident property owners and business operators shall have the same privileges as other members, limited to two non-resident members per parcel or business entity, except that if a non-resident member owns multiple properties or business entities, membership is limited to two designated representatives for all the properties or business entities. All other eligibility criteria shall apply to the two designated representatives. Churches and their members shall also comply with the eligibility criteria established in this section.
- E. There shall be no limit to the total number of DNPCT members with the exception of the above Section 4B and D.
- F. There shall be three categories of membership: active, pending and suspended. Only active members shall have voting privileges.
1. Active members are members who meet all eligibility criteria specified in this section.
  2. Pending members are those who have attended their first meeting but have yet to either attend a second meeting within a 12 month period or furnish proof of membership eligibility.
  3. Suspended members are existing members whose eligibility was not established at the time these bylaws were adopted or those members who have not met the attendance requirement established in Section G below.

- G. Periodic attendance at DNPCT meetings is required to maintain active membership as follows:
1. Members must attend at least one meeting, whether regular or special called, of the DNPCT in a 12 month period.
  2. The secretary will make a notation in the minutes of each meeting of the names of the individuals whose voting membership will lapse at the next scheduled meeting.
  3. Members who do not attend meetings as indicated above will be suspended and will no longer be eligible to vote until they have re-activated their membership. The secretary will provide notice of the suspension to the individual based on information supplied by the member.
  4. Members who have been suspended may re-activate their membership by attending a meeting and being in compliance with the other eligibility requirements of these bylaws.
  5. Pending members must activate their membership within 12 months of attending the initial meeting. After 12 months, pending members will be suspended.
  6. Suspended members who have not attended a DNPCT meeting in 3 years shall be permanently removed from the membership roster.
- H. The DNPCT Secretary and two DNPCT board members selected by the Secretary shall maintain the membership roster and keep a written record of membership decisions.
- I. The DNPCT membership list shall be forwarded to the City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department by December 15th of each year.
- J. No DNPCT member shall purport to represent the DNPCT unless authorized to do so by the Board.

### **Section 5—Board of the DNPCT**

- A. The DNPCT shall have a Board to be elected by the membership at the regular December meeting, having been nominated at the regular meeting immediately prior, and those board members will serve two-year terms. Half of these initial board members shall be elected to a one-year term, and half shall be elected to a two-year term so that terms shall be staggered to provide overlap of knowledge and expertise. At subsequent December regular meetings, board members shall be elected to replace the board members whose terms have ended. New board members' terms shall begin at the end of the December regular meeting at which they are elected.
- B. The Board shall have at least six seats.
- C. Only active DNPCT members may be nominated for a position on the Board. The Board will have a seat for each of the following three categories: a resident property owner, one member that is a non-property-owning resident (renter), and one

member that operates a business within the plan area. The Board will also have one Board member from each of 4 neighborhood geographic sectors, which are North, North Central, South Central and South within the Plan area.

- D. Should a Board member fail to maintain the DNPCT membership eligibility as set forth in Section 4, or should a Board member resign from their position causing a vacancy to occur outside the normal election process, candidates for the position shall be nominated by the membership in attendance and elected at the next scheduled meeting following the vacancy. The person elected to the vacated office will serve for the remainder of the vacant term.
- E. A Board member who, without prior notice, is absent from three regularly scheduled or specially called meetings of the Board during their term shall forfeit their seat on the Board. Vacancies formed through forfeiture are filled in the same manner as vacancies for other reasons.
- F. Board members may be removed from their position by a two-thirds majority vote of members at any meeting of the DNPCT. Vacancies formed through removal of a Board member are filled in the same manner as vacancies for other reasons.

### **Section 6— Decision Making**

- A. Consensus:  
Decisions of the DNPCT will be made by active members, after a process that aims at consensus. This will be achieved through open discussion, collection and presentation of pertinent information, acknowledgement of all concerns, reconciliation and equitable exchange. The process and outcomes shall be recorded and then concluded with a Vote.
- B. Voting:  
Decisions of the DNPCT will be made by active members in attendance by a Vote based on a simple statement of the issue and after the process of A. Consensus has been conducted. Votes on changes to the text of the Neighborhood Plan, the FLUM, zoning, or compatibility requirements shall require a two-thirds majority passage. All other decisions will require simple majority passage.
- C. Reporting Outcomes:  
Reporting to the City of Austin of decisions by the DNPCT shall include an account of the Consensus process and the result of voting, conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Standing Rules Regarding Workflow

### **Section 7—Meetings**

- A. Unless otherwise specifically defined in these bylaws, all affairs of the DNPCT shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order*, current edition.

- B. Regularly scheduled DNPCT meetings shall be held immediately after regularly scheduled Dawson Neighborhood Association meetings.
- C. Special DNPCT meetings may be convened at any time deemed necessary by the Board to address neighborhood plan issues, plan amendments, or city initiatives with at least one week notice to the active DNPCT membership.
- D. DNPCT meetings shall be open to the public. Community stakeholders are invited to participate in the discussion of the matters at hand but only active DNPCT members are eligible to vote.
- E. Approved minutes of meetings and sign-in sheets, as a record of attendance, will be kept for all meetings of the DNPCT and of its Board and shall be forwarded to the City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department on request.

### **Section 8—Meeting Notification**

- A. All regular meetings will be publicized in the neighborhood using whatever reasonable means are available, for example, but not limited to: flyers, mailings, the Dawson Neighborhood Association listserv and newsletters. The DNPCT agenda will be provided in the Dawson Neighborhood Association newsletter, and listserv.
- B. The agenda shall set forth any issues for which a vote may be called. Changes to the FLUM or recommended zoning changes must be included in a published agenda; failure to do so shall preclude any vote on the matter and any vote taken in violation of this provision shall be void. The agenda for each meeting shall be determined by the Board.
- C. Failure of a member to receive a meeting notice does not invalidate the meeting. However, the provisions of this section must be complied with in good faith.
- D. DNPCT members are responsible for providing a mailing address and a preferred e-mail or phone number for notification purposes or stating in writing how they wish to receive notification for special meetings.

### **Section 9—Officers and Duties**

- A. The officers of the Board of the DNPCT shall be Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.
- B. Duties of the officers are as follows:
  - 1. The Chair shall be responsible for the operation of the DNPCT and its Board pursuant to these bylaws. This shall include conducting meetings, representing the Board at official functions, (add “and”) appointing subcommittees. The Chair shall have the primary responsibility for leading the long-term and short-term planning efforts of the neighborhood and shall also have specific duties as spelled out elsewhere in these bylaws and as delegated by the Board. The Chair

is also responsible to see that the board makes all reasonable efforts to notify DNPCT members of issues as needed.

2. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in preparing meeting agendas and conducting meetings and shall assume all duties of the Chair when required.
  3. The Secretary shall maintain all written records as required by the bylaws, and produce all written communications as directed by the chair, the executive committee, the board or the DNPCT membership. The Secretary shall maintain and provide the DNPCT membership roster to parties as requested.
  4. The Secretary shall submit annually to the City of Austin Planning & Development Review Department a list of the current officers and voting members and the contact information.
  5. The Secretary shall annually submit to the City of Austin Planning & Development Review Department, bylaws based upon a standardized template addressing rights and responsibilities, boundaries, membership, decision making, meetings, meeting notification, elections and duties of officers, finances, conflicts of interest and amendments to the bylaws.
- C. Other duties undertaken by board members may include the following: Parliamentarian, Membership, City Liaison, and Press Liaison.

### **Section 10—Nomination, Election, and Term of Officers**

- A. The Board shall elect officers from its members at the first regular meeting after the December regular meeting.
- B. The terms shall be for 1 year not to exceed 2 consecutive terms.
- C. The Secretary will notify the City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department in writing of the names of the newly elected officers, their contact information, and the date they are due to take office.

### **Section 11—Removal and Vacancies of Officers**

- A. Any elected officer may be removed from office for good cause. Removal shall be debated by the DNPCT and shall require a two-thirds vote of active members present at a meeting of the DNPCT, providing that a resolution proposing the consideration of the removal has been adopted at a preceding meeting and that notice of the vote for removal has been included in the call to the meeting at which the vote shall take place.
- B. Should vacancies occur outside the normal election process, candidates for the unfilled term shall be nominated by the members in attendance at the meeting at which the vacancy occurs and elected at the next scheduled meeting following the vacancy. The person elected to the vacated office will serve for the remainder of the vacated term.

**Section 12—Committees**

- A. The DNPCT Chair may appoint project based standing committees to help conduct the business of the DNPCT.
- B. Committees of the Board shall report to the Board and these reports shall be entered into the minutes.

**Section 13—Amendments**

- A. These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of those present at a regular DNPCT meeting, providing that a resolution proposing the amendment has been adopted at a preceding regular meeting and that notice of the proposed amendment has been given in the call for the meeting at which the amendment shall be voted upon.

**Section 14 —Finances**

- A. The DNPCT may not collect or charge dues of its membership.
- B. The DNPCT may only accept in-kind donations that aid in the prescribed roles and responsibilities of the DNPCT as defined in Section 2.
- C. In-kind donations that create a conflict of interest (see Section 15) are not permitted.

**Section 15—Effective Date**

- A. These bylaws of the Dawson Neighborhood Plan Contact Team shall become effective on the date they are approved and noted in the minutes.

**Section16—Conflict of Interest**

- A. DNPCT members Conflict of Interest
  - 1. DNPCT members may not vote on a change in the Neighborhood Plan, FLUM, base zoning, variance, conditional use or other additional property rights for a property or business in which they have a direct pecuniary interest not common to other DNPCT members. Common interests include land ownership, residency or business operation within the DNPCT boundaries.
  - 2. Direct pecuniary interests may include the following:
    - a) any amount of direct ownership or investment in the property or business in question, however small;
    - b) a financial or business relationship with any applicant or any person or business associated with the applicant or the property at issue; or
    - c) past (within one year) or present employment by any applicant or any person or business closely associated with the applicant or the property at issue,

- including, but not limited to, being a corporate officer or member of the board of directors; or
- d) a known or expected future business, employment, or financial relationship related to the applicant, the property at issue, or any person or business closely associated with the applicant or the property at issue; or
  - e) indebtedness to the applicant or any person or business closely associated with the applicant or the property at issue regardless of the amount of the indebtedness. Indebtedness shall include owing rent on property; renters whose rent payment is in arrears may not vote in matters concerning their landlords' property; renters whose rent is currently paid in full may vote in such matters.
3. DNPCT members must report such interests and recuse themselves accordingly. If a conflict arises as to the applicability of an interest affecting a vote, the Plan Team member's right to vote on the specific matter may be stripped by a two-thirds majority vote of the DNPCT membership and Board present at a meeting.

#### B. Board Members Conflict of Interest

1. All the above Conflict of Interest provisions apply to DNPCT Board Members within the operations and proceedings of the Board and DNPCT members.
2. The written record of each project shall include a Declaration of Conflict of Interest page. All Board members shall complete this page to state in good faith their conflicts or lack thereof at the commencement of a project and updated as needed in the course of events.
3. A DNPCT Board member may not vote on a question concerning a property if they own property, rent, or operate a business that lies within 500 feet of the boundaries of the property in question.
4. A DNPCT Board member may communicate with the DNPCT members or outside entities regarding matters in which a Conflict of Interest has been declared. However such declaration must be made in each written communication or public meeting.

*(Note: The “Standing Rule, Workflow” must be attached to this document).*



## Standing Rule: Workflow Introduction

This Rule sets out the workflow to be followed for all requests for a decision from the Dawson Neighborhood Planning Contact Team. The benefits of streaming all requests for decision through a standardized workflow are, in no particular order, as follows:

- Consistency, fairness, comprehensiveness.
- Enhanced ability to plan, predictability, efficiency, reduced workload, elevated preparedness, reduced stress levels.
- Communicability, transparency.
- Governance.
- Inheritability.
- Review for process improvement.

The workflow procedure is set out in the diagram, “Process Flow”. Each step can be followed by progress to the next step, or reference back for further information and feedback in the previous step. The Board, as the administrator/facilitator, ensures that the process is followed from Intake to archiving. The Board is also responsible to research, interpret and make recommendations to the membership.

The major steps are as follows:

### **Step 1**

#### **INTAKE**

On receipt of the initial Request, it is added to the DNPCT Summary Case List. A project case file is created. The Board completes the Intake Checklist and description with the Applicant, to define the request. Records of details and documents, contact information, research, time constraints and other information are filed. This information is distributed to Board members for input, initial DNPCT member outreach and administrative meetings of the Board are arranged as necessary. The Request is added to the agenda for next regular DNPCT meeting or a special meeting is arranged if deemed necessary. Determine if information needed is sufficient. Contact Applicant or appropriate party to request information. Board members must complete Conflict of Interest declaration form.

### **Step 2**

#### **COMMUNICATION**

The Board must communicate consistently to administer the process and should meet as a quorum to, identify information still required, agree that necessary information has been collected and publicize the details of the Request. The membership should be informed of the initial Request. When a detailed understanding and definition of the Request is reached by the board, distribute full information to members and seek feedback. Utilize all Board members for membership feedback. Continue to receive, acknowledge and record all feedback from all parties interested in the case throughout the process.

**Step 3.****DNPCT MEETINGS**

Schedule Item for next DNPCT Meeting and notify all DNPCT members, DNA officers, Applicant and City of Austin via all appropriate channels. Call a special DNPCT meeting if necessary. The applicant will be allowed to present the Case at the meeting and is allowed opportunity to respond to concerns. The DNPCT may discuss without the applicant in the room. All submissions and discussion are recorded. The Board, as stewards of the Plan, will collect arguments for and against the Request and back it up with pros and cons regarding the Plan.

When, a) Consensus has been reached, based on feedback from the DNPCT Meeting(s) and other discussions, or b) the process has exhausted all opportunities to reach Consensus and no agreement has been reached, a balloted Vote is taken at a regular meeting. Prepare ballot language that is simple and balanced for a yeah or nay vote. Present the basis of the need for a vote and the proposal. Following the Vote prepare the draft Report, summarizing the concerns, agreements and compromises. Allow addition of other concerns.

**Step 4.****REPORTING OUTCOMES**

At the conclusion of the vote, the draft Report is prepared and sent to all members and noted that the Report is about to be published. Any inputs are reviewed and may trigger further DNPCT meetings. When the report is acceptable, it is published and sent to the Applicant and the City as the conclusion. Board members are responsible to present a fair and accurate report of the consensus and vote to the Applicant, Planning Commission, City Council and other city Boards or Commission hearings. Once the Council has ruled and concluded, the Case is closed and archived.

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**Step 5.****MONITOR OUTCOMES AND IMPROVE TEMPLATES**

Any useful feedback and lessons learned after the report has been published should be used to improve the template documents. A standing agenda item for DNPCT member meetings will be Process Improvement. To achieve quality improvement it will be necessary to fine-tune the “Standing Rule: Workflow” documents and component activities over time and so the documents will therefore, be reviewed annually for revision.

## Standing Rule: Workflow Template documents

Standard documents and checklists will guide the process, ensure nothing is missed and ease the workload. These will include:

Stage	Template document name	Description	Who completes or uses
<b>INTAKE</b>	Request	Description of Request. Provides a checklist of items needed to progress the Request to the DNPCT meeting stage.	DNPCT Board completes with Requester
	DNPCT Checklist	Checklist of steps to take Includes prerequisite documentation required. Admin activities, project folder set up, add to current projects Summary Case List.	DNPCT Board
	COI Declaration	To be completed by all Board members	DNPCT Board
	Executive Summary	Description of the request. Should be brief but accurate and convey scope and timeframes. Outline Project Plan. Summary should include details of implied FLUM, NP changes. Known assumptions & limitations.	DNPCT Board
	Contacts List	To be used for primary communication, including but not limited to Neighbors, Requester, City Staff, DNA Officers.	DNPCT Board
	Notification	Notification form for progression to next stage or referral back for more information	DNPCT Board
<b>Communication</b>	Notification of Request	Includes Initial Request, Executive Summary (above), and description of process steps that will follow.	DNPCT Board sends to membership, DNA officers.
	Communication Checklist and Process	Checklist of steps to take in communicating to DNPCT and an outline of possible actions based on immediate feedback	DNPCT Board
	Notification	Notification form for progression to next stage or referral back for more information or modification	DNPCT Board sends to Applicant
<b>DNPCT Meetings</b>	DNPCT Meeting Checklist and Process	Checklist of steps to take in meetings. Outline objectives of meetings, format, rules, conduct, outputs	DNPCT Board
<b>DNPCT Board Activities</b>	Process Outline and Checklist	Guide to options and activities available at this stage.	DNPCT Board
	Notification	Notification form for progression to next stage or referral back for more information or public participation	DNPCT Board sends to Contacts
	Report Format	Format of items in the report including final Executive Summary, votes taken, Board comment page, FLUM, N.Planning / Zoning issues, minutes, correspondence, Contact list, Assumptions and Limitations, etc	DNPCT Board
<b>Report Outcomes</b>	Checklist	Process to follow to publish the report.	DNPCT Board
<b>Monitor Outcomes &amp; Improve Template</b>	Process Improvement Checklist	Process to follow to update <del>the</del> Templates.	DNPCT Board, DNPCT members vote on changes