Share and learn from each other's experience using Word Press for neighborhood websites.

Some things to consider for our discussion are: reliable customer service hosting, security, cost, free user friendly WordPress (WP) templates for neighborhoods, volunteer time/administrators & turn-over, technical assistance and more.

-We started a neighborhood website list-serve to share information.

Steps to get started on New Website

1. Search for a suitable template, and a suitable hosting approach.
2. Installing and configuring the WordPress (WP) platform on whatever hosting server you decide to use, and installing the desired template (and other plug-ins needed for functionality).
3. Setting up the basic site structure: header & footer, navigation bar, pages, and "widgets" (such as Constant Contact sign-up, Contact form, and the CNN calendar)
4. Transferring content from the existing site to the new site, and complete the content input.
5. Work with host/web builder package to edit, modify and maintain the new site
6. Quality check the new site, launch it, close down the existing site, monitor it

Hosting & Support Options
There are basically 3 options for hosting a WordPress website:

- www.Blogspot. or www.blogger.com sites affiliated with the WordPress organization. Hosting is free, but with no technical support.

- **WordPress affiliated companies** that offer hosting, a selection of templates and plug-ins, and technical support, such as http://www.ithemes.com and www.wix.com . While their template and plug-in offerings are more limited than the "WordPress Universe", they offer tech support and added functionality. There is a fee for either purchasing their templates and/or hosting the website. It is important to find hosting with good customer support and how to navigate security back-ups, and reliability (stability of the company). You may have to pay for a good service here. We use InMotion hosting but not as a website builder

package so no tech support on website design (tech support for templates is recommended). Others include GoDaddy, BlueHost, DreamHost, and SiteGround.

- **Hosting on a server** using a template purchased from another site. This would probably be flexible, although not practical with volunteer turn-over. You do not want to place yourself in the position of losing your site or capabilities to access if anyone leaves without transferring knowledge. Transferring and passing on passwords are important for volunteer turn-over.

Development Plan/Website Template

WordPress is a free, open-source Content Management System (CMS), which can be hosted on virtually any server. We also know that it can imbed the CNN Calendar, which is an important requirement.

With WordPress you are free to change the content structure/layout by creating a custom menu so you have more control over what kinds of content you link to. Once you sign up with a hosting account, you simply install the WordPress script, choose a pre-existing template/theme and begin publishing your content. No software needed.

There are literally thousands of WordPress templates/themes. You can start to narrow choices down with "responsive" templates, which can re-size themselves for PCs, tablets, and phones. Most of the new templates being designed by hundreds of companies and individuals are "responsive", and many of them also include other functionality (called "builders", plug-ins, etc.). Many templates are also configurable, with different color combinations, different graphics, different fonts, and a variety of layouts.

Things to consider:
- Responsive – resizes according to the viewing screen size
- Configurable – as much as possible: colors, fonts, layouts, etc. Some themes give you the ability to change a few basic items like a site logo, link colors and the like. Others might overwhelm you with hundreds of options you'll probably never touch-make sure that the options included in the theme give you the ability to change what you want.
- Page Layouts-will you be able to easily change the number of columns, sidebars, etc. for different pages and post types throughout the site? If you envision having all of your site's content using essentially the same layout, this may not be a big deal.
- Includes many plug-ins-social media linkage, layouts, fonts, etc.
- I know it can be difficult to sift through the vast amounts of info related to themes. So the best thing to do is to narrow your choices down to a few that you think will suit your needs. Then, take a look at reviews and comments for those themes and also browse any support requests you can find. You'll get a sense of what

works and what doesn't. You might even find out what types of sites other users are creating with the theme.

In this regard, I have included a number of links to sites that offer templates, with or without hosting. You can also search on Google for "responsive WordPress templates" to find a huge number of companies and individuals that offer templates for sale. The CNN website site is a template that seems more complicated than you need but workable. There is no specific tech support for this template only via online messaging which I steered away from. I found it by doing a non-profit or city/community/neighborhood/town template list search. Our hosting company/InMotion did a fairly good job with some WP support but they can't deal with all or most template design issues you may encounter as mentioned above.

Costs
1. **Template cost**: ranging from free to $100+, mostly in the $30-$80 range.

2. **Hosting costs**: ranging from free to $300/year. Find one with good customer support, and how to navigate security, reliability (stability of the company) and website backups. You may have to pay for a good service here.

TEMPLATE LINKS:

Dan from Roseway works with these wonderful, free, and easy to use WP templates- below are 3 examples:

http://jennathompson.net/
http://familytree.danmayhew.net/
http://roseway.org/

Below are some online examples searches you can make:

www.ithemes.com
www.wix.com
www.themeforest.com

https://wordpress.org/themes/ (That is the list that you can access through a regular WordPress installation)

www.elegantthemes.com
www.html5templatesdreamweaver.com
www.designscrazed.org

http://www.vivathemes.com/wordpress-themes/
http://shapedpixels.com/longevity-pro
www.styledthemes.com/

http://www.themehorse.com/themes/clean-retina-pro/

Feel free to search Google for "responsive WordPress templates" – you'll find hundreds of links.

Below is a list of what content neighborhood websites should include following best practices:

- ❖ Meeting minutes and agendas for general meetings and committees
- ❖ Board of Directors list with title and contact information
- ❖ Neighborhood calendar-link to CNN master calendar which you all update with current events and meetings
- ❖ Meeting notices including emergency meetings
- ❖ Link to CNN coalition website with contact information
- ❖ A brief description of your neighborhood (link to map, bylaws, articles of incorporation, census data or find this with link to *My Neighborhood/ONI* on the CNN website Neighborhood page-see top page links and click on your neighborhood-the other links in orange box on the left are your website links)- http://cnncoalition.org/?page_id=306
- ❖ Contact us info