Community Law Center’s Legal Services

Our mission is to provide legal services to community and nonprofit organizations throughout Maryland to promote stronger and more vibrant neighborhoods.

- Forming, reviving, or maintaining a nonprofit organization, including bylaws, incorporation, and tax-exemption 501(c)(3) applications;
- Transferring real property;
- Zoning appeals;
- Liquor license hearings;
- Community greening;
- Equitable development, including community benefits agreements;
- Drafting and negotiating contracts;
- Employment issues;
- Copyright and trademark issues;
- Vacant property nuisance abatement; and
- Much, much more!
Disclaimer

This presentation is for informational purposes only and shall not be construed as legal advice. Your attendance at this presentation does not make you or your organization a client of the Community Law Center or qualify you or your organization for legal services from the Community Law Center.
Advantages of Working with a Community Nonprofit

- Knowledge of the neighborhood and its resources
- Longevity and sustainability
- Eligibility for grants
- Liability protection
- An attorney (possibly)
- Find your community association - http://cityservices.baltimorecity.gov/cad/
Step 1: Finding Property Owners

- Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT)
  - Real Property Search: http://sdatcert3.resiusa.org/rp_rewrite/

- Maryland Land Records*: http://www.mdlandrec.net

*Requires email registration and password
Step 2: Negotiating with Problem Property Owners

- Importance of face-to-face conversations
- Building a case
  - Keeping a log: Written documentation, photos
    - 311 calls
- What is a nuisance?
  - Trash
  - Weeds
  - Rats
  - Dilapidated buildings
Self-Help Nuisance Abatement

- Putting your concerns in writing
  - Include the full property address, your proximity to the property, and a detailed description of the problem.
  - Use the magic word, “nuisance,” and identify any code violations
  - Note the time when the nuisance was discovered
  - State what you want and give a timeline for remedy and response

- Using the Community’s Voice
  - An organized community speaks louder than one individual
  - Elected officials
Step 3: Other Legal Considerations for Greening

- Zoning
- Unrelated Business Income
- Agricultural laws and regulations
- Liability concerns
  - Volunteers
  - Insurance
- Limitations of self-help nuisance abatement, adopt-a-lot license
  - Risks of owner returning at any time
  - Understand that you do not own the property
Resources Available

- **Workshops**
  - How to Start and Maintain a Nonprofit - Thursday, April 19, 2012 at 6:30 pm.
  - Inserting Community into Community Development - Thursday, April 26, 2012 at 6:30 pm.
  - Registration required [http://communitylaw.org/training-events/workshops/](http://communitylaw.org/training-events/workshops/)

- **Publications - $25 + $3 S/H**
  - Revitalizing Baltimore’s Neighborhoods
  - How to Start a Nonprofit Organization in Maryland
Application for Legal Services

- Page 1 - Basic Information
  - Contact person
  - Board and Membership
- Page 2 - Assistance Needed
- Page 3 -
  - Attachments - including:
    - Board
    - Budget
    - Bylaws - unless you need our help with these
    - Records relating to nuisance issue - 311 call logs, pictures, etc.
  - Application fee - One application per issue
- Page 4 - Affidavit of Eligibility - check a box and sign
- What Happens Next, Working with an Attorney

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