



**FACT SHEET:**  
**Bill No. 120889 on Registered Community Organizations**  
**February 1, 2013**

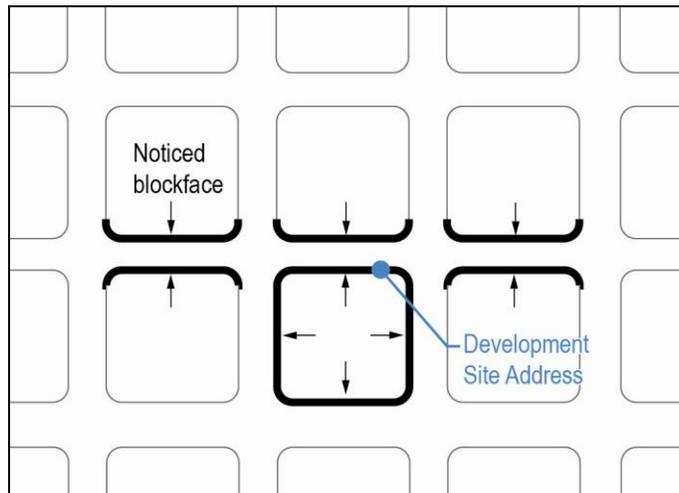
Bill No. 120889 amends the registered community organization (RCO) and Civic Design Review (CDR) system established by the new zoning code. The RCO system of community notice of meetings applies to zoning projects that need to be reviewed by the Civic Design Review Committee, as well as variance and special exception cases.

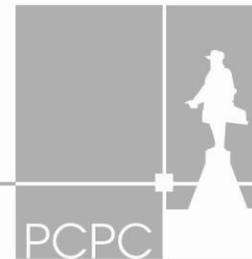
**The bill became law on January 24, 2013 and will go into effect on March 25, 2013.** This Fact Sheet explains how the bill impacts the responsibilities of zoning applicants and RCOs in the zoning process.

**NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

*Existing Code:* The zoning applicant must notify all Local and Issue-based RCOs in writing within 7 days of applying for an appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) or being notified by L&I that Civic Design Review is required (CDR).

*Bill 120889:* In addition to the requirements above, the applicant will need to provide written notice to each occupant on various blockfaces in the vicinity of the project (see diagram below). Bill 120889 also requires the local RCOs to notify, in writing, the same occupants of the time and place of the community meeting on the project. No standards for good faith effort are included.





### RCO MEETINGS

*Existing Code:* Within 45 days, of the applicant’s appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) or applicant’s receipt of notice from L&I that Civic Design Review is required (CDR), the Local RCO must convene a meeting open to the public with the zoning applicant to review the project. In the case of projects with multiple local RCOs, the RCOs must coordinate to convene a single meeting. Additional meetings may be held if the RCOs and zoning applicant agree to do so.

*Bill 120889:* In the case of multiple local RCOs, the Bill allows for the possibility for multiple meetings. A zoning applicant must meet with each RCO separately, if requested by any single RCO and approved by the district councilmember, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC), and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

### RCO ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

*Existing Code:* The Code currently authorizes the PCPC to establish, by regulation, the requirements to qualify as an RCO. The Commission regulations (adopted after a lengthy public process in July 2011) require that RCOs conduct regular meetings, announced to the community; must have an elected leadership; and must have written rules and defined geographic boundaries.

*Bill 120889:* The Bill repeals the authorization for the PCPC to establish minimum RCO qualifications and limits the minimum qualifications to those established by the Code. These Code qualifications require RCOs to submit a registration statement providing its geographic boundaries, purpose, and schedule of meetings.

### RCO REGISTRATION PROCESS

*Existing Code:* The Code requires RCOs to re-register annually.

*Bill 120889:* The Code reduces the re-registration requirement to once every three years, but requires RCOs to update information if their contact information or boundaries change.

### CIVIC DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

*Existing Code:* The Civic Design Review Committee is composed of six regular members and one rotating member, a representative of a local RCO. In the case of projects with multiple local RCOs, the RCOs must agree on a single representative. If they fail to do so, the Executive Director of the PCPC can choose the representative.

*Bill 120889:* The Bill expands the RCO membership on the Civic Design Review Committee to allow for up to two local RCO representatives. The Bill also allows the District Councilperson to designate an additional seat, at his or her discretion.

### FACT SHEET