

## Early History of UpDoNA

In August of 2021, Spire's Board of Directors asked Lisa Pope and Rob Squire to investigate and form a Residential Neighborhood Organization (RNO)\*. This request was prompted by significant concerns that had been expressed by Spire residents about recent conditions in Denver's downtown area. Crime was on the increase including drug use, vandalism, graffiti, public urination and defecation, bike theft, significant violations of Denver's existing camping ban, and many others. Lisa and Rob agreed to the Board's request and determined that the RNO should in general represent the needs and desires of residents of the Upper Downtown neighborhood to the City of Denver in any way that improved the residential experience.

Work began by meeting with several other Denver RNOs to get the benefit of their experience in the formation and operation of an RNO. A meeting was held with the Downtown Denver partnership to determine how the two organizations could best work together. Volunteers were solicited to help in the effort, boundaries were formed, bylaws were written and committees were formed. They developed a contact list for the residences within the chosen boundaries, and started on a website and newsletter.

In those formative months, work was started on the serious problems and the increase in crime that was being seen all over the downtown area. A partnership was formed with LoDo's RNO (LoDoNA) with the intention of working together to improve the many issues Denver faced. One of the committees began community cleanups. In those early months, most of the group was from Spire, so the cleanups were focused in that immediate area. However, it was the intention of the committee to expand those cleanups to other buildings and streets in the Upper Downtown neighborhood. The Downtown Denver Partnership was a great partner in the effort by offering to pick up the collected trash.

Meanwhile, plans were made to become an operational RNO. On December 6, 2021 a Founding Meeting was held. All current members were invited, along with representatives from other residential buildings and organizations. Forty-nine people attended the meeting.

At that meeting, the members voted to form the Association, and elected a seven-member Founding Board of Directors. With those two votes, the Upper Downtown Neighborhood Association (UpDoNA) was born.

The next day on December 7, 2021, the newly elected board met for the first Board of Directors meeting, and elected the Officers of the Association. They were:

Rob Squire – President  
Lisa Pope – Vice President  
Jack Murphy – Treasurer  
Kristin Bennett – Secretary  
Melissa Matuska – City Liaison  
Helen Hedrick – Director  
Ken Coleman – Director

The bylaws were adopted by the Board, and various issues were discussed and finalized.

On December 8, 2021, Lisa Pope submitted the registration to the city, and UpDoNA formally became Denver's newest RNO. The remaining weeks of 2021 were used to attend to the numerous details faced by any new organization and preparing for a January, 2022 membership drive.

\*RNO's are authorized by sections 12-91 through 12-98 of Denver's Revised Municipal Code and are intended to improve the flow of information between them and the city's various groups and agencies.