

The HOA election is over, so what's next?

The ballots have been counted and the new board has been chosen. Immediately following the board member acceptance of their new Board of Directors positions, it's time for business.

Immediate Decisions

The first step is immediate – the community manager officially opens the organizational meeting, allowing the board members an opportunity to choose who will serve as officers of the association. In most cases, there are only four officer positions: president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. But in some cases the governing documents allow for an assistant treasurer or assistant secretary to fill in the position if the officer is unavailable. These additional roles play an important part, but as assistants, they do not have voting power and will not count toward quorum of the board.

The next important piece of business is to determine the signors on the bank accounts. The manager should provide a new set of signature cards with a Corporate Resolution to be signed at that meeting. Most banks require copies of driver's licenses with the submission of the new signatures as well as a copy of the minutes from the Annual and the Organization meeting.

Review and Communication

During the first week of the new board of directors, many items should be reviewed, including existing contracts, delinquencies, financials and any immediate problems for the association. It's also important to take advantage of the momentum of the election and begin communicating with homeowners. An introduction letter announcing the names of the board should be sent out either by the board president or the association manager. This letter is a great opportunity to relate the board's goals for the association in the short term and in the future.

To make sure everyone is on the same page and of singular focus, the new board president and other board members, if they chose, should schedule appointments with their association management company (if they have one), the association attorney, accountant and insurance agent and any contract vendors they may have. It's also imperative for board liaisons to standing association committees meet with their committees and discuss the future of the committee.

One of the most important aspects of serving on a board is the opportunity to communicate. When an association has communication, rumors and complaints are few. Newsletters, websites, unit owners education seminars, small get-togethers and other events are all ways to increase communication.

Serving on a board of directors in an association is a volunteer position, a selfless task. You can either be treated as royalty or as an employee but either way you have accepted a fiduciary responsibility to protect the association, ensure wise spending, and maintain the value of the property by regular maintenance and no "Band-Aid" repairs.

What it Takes

Be prepared to make all types of decisions. You have an obligation to act in the best interest of all owners in your association, who elected you to represent them. It is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses in your community, to work within the parameters of the budget, to know your governing documents, and to be consistent in your actions and decisions. Board members are humans; they may make a mistake, but should always practice full disclosure.

An ideal Board Member:

- Has a general interest in the community as a whole;
- Is able to look at the big picture;
- Can differentiate between pet peeves and major problems;
- Is not interested in actually managing the community, but allows the Manager and staff to do their jobs and works as a team with fellow board members;

- Never makes a decision based on their own likes or dislikes but rather on what is best for the community;
- Must be willing to give a reasonable amount of time to devote to being a director;
- Understands that majority rules and no one board member can make decisions alone.

A good mission statement, for any board of directors: Practice justice in governing, be prudent in business decisions and search for harmony in the community.