



MANAGEMENT MONTHLY:

BY KIM HOCKINGS, CCAM

The third and final installment of “The Enforcement Process” will address the daunting yet crucial task of training community board members. Community connection is vital to maintaining an excellent relationship not only with existing homeowners but with others in the community as well. Naturally, this protects the value of the property and enhances the overall reputation of the community. How can this be done effectively?

(PART THREE OF THREE)

CC&R: THE ENFORCEMENT PROCESS, NOT THE ROCK BAND

Investing in training and education

Many times, board members are new to their role in serving on a board. The best way to make sure it is a positive and rewarding experience is to examine the training and education process. Board member training, direction and support should be provided through the management firm to ensure a thorough understanding of fiduciary obligations as they relate to enhancing community property values.

In addition to individual board member training, treasurer training is suggested to ensure that the board is educated regarding the fiscal impact of their decisions. Board members should also be encouraged to join affiliate organizations such as the Community Association Institute (CAI) to acquire knowledge relating to association operations, and they should exchange ideas based on the experiences of other community board members.

The board is charged with the duty of appropriately enforcing the CC&Rs, rules and regulations and architectural guidelines. They must do so in a non-subjective fashion. Fairness and uniformity in the enforcement of the rules is paramount. Board members may not subjectively select which homeowners will receive penalties. Conjoining the involvement of committee members, management representatives and board members ensures objectivity in the decision-making process.

Homeowner education, understanding, compassion and responsiveness are key approaches to encouraging homeowners to comply with community regulations. There are a number of ways to accomplish this. Homeowner education may be delivered in the form of informative and well-produced newsletters and on community websites to reinforce the information. “In person” conversations with the board, or management representatives, explaining association operations and the reasoning behind imposed rules and regulations may translate into a benefit for the homeowner.



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Other methods, such as special community meetings designed to provide information and education regarding specific issues such as future landscape renovations, water management programs and other pertinent topics are also beneficial. Question-and-answer sessions should follow each community meeting to provide homeowners with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Another vehicle that is typically well received is the development of community social events that not only bring the community together but also serve as a forum for conversation to educate and build trust amongst neighbors, board members and committee members.

Board members are typically volunteering their time for these positions, which can be challenging. Without a thorough understanding of how the CC&Rs, architectural guidelines and rules and regulations relate to property values, homeowners may be resistant to compliance. While these

CONTINUED ON PAGE 1 >>>

elements were put in place and are regulated for the benefit of each homeowner, the board is in fact, the enforcement 'body.' While the CC&Rs are designed to enhance property values and livability, thus protecting the homeowner's investment while preserving their ideal lifestyle, board members who are well educated on the process will become the liaison for the association within the community.

It all comes down to positive communication

Managing agents and board members have a fiduciary duty to apply all association policies consistently in order to maintain property values. This is best executed by utilizing creative and compassionate enforcement methods. Should we enforce association rules and regulations, CC&Rs, and architectural guidelines? The answer is absolutely! Remember, however, blending creativity and compassion when considering enforcement procedures will go a long way toward creating a harmonious, highly valued neighborhood. This, in itself, will make the community a great place to live.

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