

HOA Homefront

New Year Resolutions Toward A Healthier Community

By: Kelly G. Richardson

Along with the customary resolutions to start each year (losing weight, exercising more, being more organized, etc.), consider some resolutions that may help your common interest development association to become a more positive community.

Homeowner association officers and directors — we will:

1. Be familiar with our association's governing documents (CC&R's, bylaws, and rules).
2. Do all we can to beef up communication to the membership, in the form of more frequent written communications to all members, in the form of newsletters, web page updates or bulletins.
3. Keep our meetings to a maximum of two hours length, and will aim for a meeting length of 90 minutes.
4. Come to meetings prepared, having reviewed the agenda and all other documents provided to us. We will arrive at meetings early, in order to read any last minute information given to us to consider.
5. Not require votes to be unanimous, nor will we view dissenting votes as negative.
6. Be judicious with the use of closed executive session meetings, and will clearly disclose the general content of the session both before and after.
7. Remember at all times that we serve the neighbors in our community who entrusted us with the power to vote on this board and that board service is a privilege, not a right.
8. Be open with information and documents requested by members. We will ask "why not?" give someone information, instead of

starting with "why do we have to give it to them?"

9. Look for opportunities to establish committees, to offer opportunities for members to become involved.
10. Avail ourselves of educational opportunities such as those offered by the Community Associations Institute, and will do all we can to be better informed as to operating our association under California law and association best practices.
11. Hire a manager who meets at least the minimum standards to call themselves a Certified Common Interest Development Manager.
12. Call our legal counsel to resolve problems only as a last resort. We will only send lawyer letters to our members when our own letters have not resolved the issue.
13. Remember that ours is a nonprofit corporation, which is different than a business corporate director or officer. Unlike employees, we cannot fire our neighbors. Our corporation is also a community.
14. Be mindful of the fact that many members may be unfamiliar with the governing documents, much less state law, and therefore may need some patience and even education from the board at times.
15. Follow the Golden Rule.

Homeowner association residents – we will:

1. Be familiar with our association's governing documents.
2. Read what the association sends us, whether minutes, newsletters or bulletins.

3. When we come to board meetings, we will have in advance reviewed the agenda, and will have any open forum remarks organized for maximum effectiveness.
4. Remember that there is no "them," only "us," and that the directors are also members who pay assessments and volunteer their time.
5. Help try to find suggested other approaches to the problem, rather than criticize, when we perceive the board to be making a wrong decision.
6. Volunteer to join a committee to help the board on an area particularly important to us.
7. Never first jump to the conclusion that the board is dishonest, when we believe the association is spending too much money.

8. Read the association budget.
9. Ask questions before criticizing or even accusing.
10. Avoid rushing to legal counsel when we disagree with the association, but will first try to talk to a director we know and will exhaust any possible non-legal approaches.
11. Keep in mind the fact that the "my home, my castle" attitude does not work in common interest developments (the word "common" is key here).
12. Participate in all member votes, even if only by mailing in my ballot.
13. Follow the Golden Rule.

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