

# HOW TO KEEP THE INSPIRATION ALIVE

By Artemis Avetisyan, CMCA®, AMS®

HOW DO WE KEEP THE INSPIRATION ALIVE FOR HOMEOWNERS TO CONTINUE TO OFFER SUPPORT AND VOLUNTEER ON THEIR HOA'S BOARD?

A HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION—A GOVERNING STRUCTURE THAT OVERSEES AND MANAGES A COMMON INTEREST DEVELOPMENT, WHETHER IT IS MADE UP OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSES, CONDOMINIUMS, OR COOPERATIVES. OWNERS ELECT MEMBERS TO AN HOA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND THESE DIRECTORS ESTABLISH AND ENFORCE THE GOVERNING DOCUMENTS, COLLECT DUES, OVERSEE COMMON AREAS AND MAINTAIN A COHESIVE ATMOSPHERE. SINCE THIS GROUP IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND EVERYTHING HAPPENING WITHIN THE PARAMETERS AND AUTHORITY OF THE ASSOCIATION, THE BOARD NEEDS TO BE ACTIVELY MAKING NECESSARY DECISIONS, ESPECIALLY IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION WHERE EVEN A FEW MINUTES DELAY CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT SOMEONE OR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

Persuading HOA board members and owners to keep serving and stay committed is a challenge. Keeping the board members rejuvenated and homeowners interested in volunteering for the

Board is difficult at times. However, in order for a community to progress, it is essential to have new leadership join seasoned board members to bring a diversity of ideas and new insights.

Board members often have full time jobs and family responsibilities. The thought of volunteering on the board in addition to their already-existing responsibilities may seem like a huge burden to them. Boards should focus on streamlining governance to eliminate detrimental patterns and ensure that owners see board volunteerism as an important and impactful role for the betterment of their community.

**Here are some ways to encourage homeowners/members to volunteer on the board:**

- **WHILE MOST OWNERS TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR HOMES** and do anything they can to protect them, many homeowners struggle to see the bigger picture of living in a common interest development. This can be changed by educating homeowners from day one about the benefits of living in a community association. Once homeowners fully understand the positive impact a well-governed association can have on their property values, they are much more likely to become committed volunteers to protect their investment. The sooner the education process begins, the sooner they become active. Since new owners are typically excited about their new homes, it is a perfect time to educate them about the community and to get them involved!

- **QUALIFIED MEMBERS/HOMEOWNERS** should have an opportunity to participate. Committees are an excellent way to share some responsibilities and get more homeowners involved on their terms. Committees to consider include an Architectural Control Committee, Neighborhood Welcome Committee, Landscape Committee, Homeowner Education Committee, Neighborhood Watch Committee, Finance & Budget Committee, and Contract Review Committee.

- **IT IS IMPORTANT TO GATHER INPUT FROM THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY** and see what types of activities and interests your board should pursue. An annual meeting is a perfect time to gather ideas and to gauge people's interest levels.

- **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ANNUAL ELECTION** to communicate prominent issues and share necessary information. Why not put together an event that motivates, educates, and inspires the association? This will allow the homeowners to learn the importance of participating in serving their community.

It is important to keep in mind that owners will be much more likely to serve if they feel their work is appreciated. Is the Board communicating accomplishments that improve the community or making themselves accessible to owners through town hall events? Consider ways to "humanize" the Board so owners see them as fellow owners and neighbors. It may help the community realize that everyone is working toward the same goal: a better community.



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