

ASSOCIA continued from cover

RESIDENT RESOURCES:

- New resident welcome package
- Complete community directory
- Forums for groups of owners with similar interests
- Interactive customer service submittal forms such as work requests, ACC approval forms, resale information, etc.
- Community real estate listings
- Community news and announcements
- Forum for buying and selling items with other residents
- And much, much, more

As you can see, an Associa Community Website benefits more than just your association's membership at large...it is a powerful tool that will make

your job as a board member a whole lot easier. There is a one-time start-up fee of \$50.00, and a nominal monthly maintenance fee based on the size of your community (100 or less units = \$35 per month; 101 – 200 units = \$45 per month; 201 – 300 units = \$55 per month; 301 – 600 units = \$60 per month; add \$5.00 for every 300 units thereafter. Unit count for developing communities is estimated units closed as of six months from signing of website agreement.) Your association's website will be for the exclusive use of your association's residents, or can be accessible to the public and will be actively managed by us—not dependent on volunteer participation. Join us in this effort to make the latest in technology available to your

community!!!

Each board member is encouraged to view the sample Associa Community Website by visiting BRANCH NAME'S website at: www.houcomm.com. After accessing BRANCH NAME'S website, simply click on "Community Websites," and then click on "Visit a Sample Community Web Site" at the bottom of the page...then browse, browse, browse! As you can see, the site is user friendly and customized to the specific community. Once a community site is up, every owner will receive a postcard announcing the site with instructions about how to register.

Please let us know if you are interested in pursuing a website through us, or if we can provide you with additional information. We are happy to be of service! •

THE Board Beacon

"Exclusively for those who serve the community"

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Clarifying Misconceptions About the Manager's Role

by Gil Cross

Community associations hire managers for two reasons: to carry out the policies of the board of directors and to manage the association's day-to-day business affairs. Frequently, however, residents and even some directors don't understand the manager's role. They see the manager as a referee and information source. They expect the manager to be on call 24 hours a day. They believe the manager works only for them.

That's not how it works. In most communities, the manager meets with the board of directors to report on association business. Often the manager gives advice, suggestions, and recommendations. A board typically directs the manager to perform 10 to 20 tasks before the next meeting. This may include writing letters, soliciting bids, preparing policy statements, and negotiating contracts. The manager also must deal with

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Associa Community Website Service

In this rapidly changing, fast pace, technological world, the idea of community sometimes seems like a nostalgic thing of the past. As consumers we demand fast food, drive through shopping, and instant access to information--but as neighbors we still long for that old fashioned sense of community. As an AssociaSM Member Company (the nation's leading manager of community associations), Houston Community Management Services is pleased to offer an innovative service that perfectly marries both of these concepts--*Associa Community Websites*.

Providing resources for Board members and residents, an Associa Community

Website is the ideal way to keep your membership informed and involved. A basic format is used to start, but the content of each site is customized to reflect the needs and objectives of its host community, including:

BOARD MEMBER RESOURCES:

- Online community calendar for meetings and events
- Discussion forums for board and committee members
- Online customized surveys
- Online access to association governing documents and meeting minutes
- Broadcast email capability

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THE BOARD BEACON

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Congratulations

Congratulations to the following winners of the 1st Annual BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR CONTEST.

Ray Tanking of The Grove submitted by Beverly McCoy

Dennis Fouty of Bay Forest submitted by Susie Powell

Glenn Juenke of Brookwood submitted by Elyse Harkins

Also, thank to our judges, **Charles Daughtry** of Daughtry & Jordan, P.C., **Dick Gregg III** of Gregg & Gregg, P.C. and **Stan Sullivan** of Sweetwater Pools. •



WELCOME ABOARD

NEW CLIENT COMMUNITIES

Cheyenne HOA

Fairway Place HOA

Teal Run HOA

Lakewood Townhomes

El Dorado Trace

CLARIFYING continued from cover

maintenance and rule enforcement problems. The limit on the manager's authority generally is spelled out in the management agreement.

What are the most common misconceptions? Consider the following:

1. The manager is a referee.

Homeowners should not expect managers to arbitrate disputes with their neighbors. Unless the dispute involves a violation of association restrictions, the manager does not need to be involved.

2. The manager is the homeowners' advocate.

Homeowners should have enough interest in their community to present their concerns to the board-- forwarding those concerns is not the manager's job.

The manager does not vote on any board issues. Venting frustrations at the manager may make a homeowner feel better, but it's unproductive for everyone involved. Homeowners should direct their attention to the board. Likewise, managers cannot update each owner on association activities. Residents should attend board meetings to learn what's happening in the association. Those who can't attend meetings should read the newsletter or contact board or committee members for updates.

3. The manager is available at all times. With the exception of on-site managers, most community

managers have commitments to other associations. They are entitled to a courtesy call to arrange a meeting.

4. The manager is responsible for contractors. The board and the manager try to choose the best contractors for the association. But they do not have direct control over the contractors' actions and they are not responsible for poor performance. The contractors are responsible for supervising their personnel, not the manager. The manager is responsible for

monitoring their performance and reporting problems to the board. Homeowners should report any problems with the contractor to the manager, who will forward them to the contractor. The board is responsible

for any subsequent actions.

5. The manager anticipates every problem. Managers typically inspect the property on a monthly basis, but even an experienced manager can miss a problem--particularly if there's no evidence on the building's exterior. Owners should not rely solely on the manager to safeguard their investment--their participation is essential in identifying problems.

6. The manager takes orders from each owner. The manager is accountable to the board of directors, not individual owners. Homeowners who disagree with the board's policies--and, in turn, the manager who carries

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them out--should resolve the conflict with the board of directors.

7. The manager takes orders from individual directors. Managers act under the orders of the entire board of directors, not one individual director or committee member (unless the board grants a particular individual the authority to deal with a specific matter). The management agreement between an association and a management company usually stipulates that the board should identify one person to act as liaison to the manager. Too many bosses creates problems for everyone.

8. The manager is responsible for delinquent accounts. A manager or management company typically has three responsibilities regarding delinquencies:

- Send notices to delinquent homeowners
- Give the board a monthly delinquency report
- Represent the association in court

The manager's collections efforts do not include phone calls or visits to delinquent owners. Beyond delinquent notices, collection activities should be handled by the association attorney.

9. The manager should give advice on everything. Managers have a broad range of expertise, but they are not engineers, architects, attorneys, or accountants. Owners should not expect them to give advice if they are not qualified.

10. The manager responds to all emergency calls. The manager responds to all true emergency calls. Inconveniences, however, are not emergencies. Failing to plan a party around the association's lawn irrigation schedule or getting locked out of the

house does not damage or threaten the community--which is how the association classifies an emergency. Understanding this--and understanding the manager's role--will reduce future conflicts.

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

A community manager carries out association policies established by the board of directors. Each officer of the board has specific responsibilities, including:

President. The president is the association's chief executive officer. Responsibilities include running board and general membership meetings and setting goals. Some documents give presidents the right to appoint committee members. The president may occasionally negotiate contracts, sign contracts and other documents, and oversee their fulfillment.

Vice President. The vice president performs the president's duties in his or her absence and often handles special projects.

Treasurer. The treasurer works with the manager and finance committee to develop the budget. Responsibilities also include monitoring association financial activities, overseeing insurance policies, investing assets, maintaining reserves, and coordinating a year-end audit.

Secretary. The secretary is responsible for preparing and distributing meeting agendas and minutes. The secretary also maintains the association's official records (or supervises their maintenance).

Gil Cross is a community manager with Condominium & Association Resource Group, Inc. in Bloomington, Minnesota. He is a Common Ground contributing editor. •

Meetings that Really Work



An efficient Board holds few Board Meetings. Even the largest Association's can normally get by with monthly meetings, while the majority meet quarterly. That said, it's critical that meetings be productive (simply said "get something done"). Here are a number of pitfalls that hinder productivity:

- Failure to provide meeting information packets prior to the meeting (or failure by the directors to read them).
- Drinking cocktails before or during the meeting.
- Discussing non-agenda items.
- Failing to make decisions.

Long meetings. Meetings must be production intensive! Have an "action" agenda and stick to it. Make decisions. Keep the meeting to no more than two hours. •