

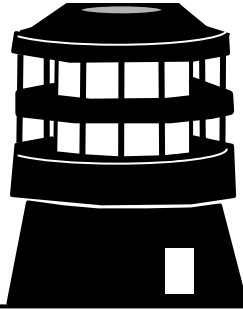
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# THE Board Beacon

*“Exclusively for those who serve the community”*



VOLUME 9, ISSUE 12

APRIL 2006

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## *Effective Association Meetings*

**Who wants to spend two or three hours in fruitless and trivial discussion? Steps can be taken to keep meetings focused, effective, and even shorter.**

To be an effective board member your primary responsibility is to protect, maintain, and enhance the value of the condominium community. However, when your time is spent in unorganized, lengthy, and chaotic meetings, not only is the enthusiasm for active participation of current board members diminished, but you also discourage many future volunteers from sitting on the board. Who wants to spend two or three hours in fruitless and trivial discussion? The president must take steps to make the meetings more focused, effective, and shorter. Most meetings can be conducted in an hour if the board members know what is expected of them.

The property manager's job (or president's and secretary's job if you are self-managed) is to prepare and distribute a meeting package several days before the scheduled meeting. The directors' and officers' job is to read it, study it, and contact each other and/or the property manager to ask questions about anything they may not understand. You need to be prepared to talk about the business at hand and to have enough information to make the decisions necessary to effectively do your job.

The package in your hands should have the agenda, the previous meeting's minutes, the current financial statements as compared to the budget, items that require action, and any appropriate items from the administrative and maintenance calendars. The effective president sets the agenda and goals for the meeting with input from the other board members and the property manager. At the meeting, the president decides what gets discussed and what doesn't and how long any discussion needs to last.

An effective strategy for efficient meetings is to set times on the agenda and stick by them.

### **Call to order**

Set the time and start the meeting. People will learn that you are serious about starting on time and hopefully will cure their habit of showing up 5 or 10 minutes late.

### **Approval of minutes**

Should only take 30 seconds if there are no corrections or additions or up to 3 minutes if there are.

### **Treasurer's Report**

To summarize cash balances, unusual expenditures, and comparison to the budget may take 5 to 10 minutes.

*Continued on page 2*



## WELCOME ABOARD

### NEW CLIENT COMMUNITIES

- Devinwood
- Eagle Drive HOA
- Enclave At Bay Colony
- Fairway Vistas At Greatwood
- Frenchman's Creek
- Hamilton Square
- Highland Meadow
- Lookout Point
- The Seabrook
- Villas By The Sea
- Vistas At Greatwood

### NEW EMPLOYEES

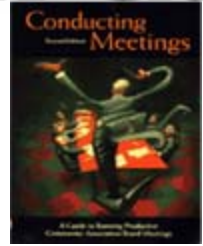
- Rikki Block
- Baldemar Carrion
- Donna Frazier
- Nancy Griffith
- Nita Haywood
- Jeri Houghland
- Joni Houser
- Dana Ladd
- Renita Nelms
- Amy Newman
- Mimi Pham
- Fayez Razaq
- Andrea Turner
- Tina Vaughan
- Mary Young

# HCMS Book Club

## Conducting Meetings:

### A Guide to Running Productive Community Association Board Meetings

Editor: MJ Keats



Proper preparation is the key to productive meetings. Do you know the best place to hold a meeting, and how to stay on the agenda? Do you know how to take meaningful minutes and when and how resolutions should be used? Chapters on tape recording meetings and conducting executive sessions answer some common questions about what's practical and what's appropriate. Of particular interest are tips on effective ways to deal with difficult people and situations that arise in community association meetings.

Available [www.caionline.org/bookstore](http://www.caionline.org/bookstore)

### *Effective Association Meetings Continued*

#### **Property Manager's (or President's) Report**

This will take the bulk of the meeting at 20 to 40 minutes. This is the part of the meeting where the bulk of the motions are made. From the packet, everyone should already be familiar with the goals of the meeting and which items will need to be acted on.

#### **Committee Report**

Should be in writing and timely enough to be included in the packet. Not every committee will have a report at every meeting. If the committee chairperson or board liaison is there to elaborate on the report, this portion may take 5 or 10 minutes depending upon whether one or two committees are reporting.

#### **Old and New Business**

This may take no time at all since all old business was something that had been previously assigned and was discussed earlier in the meeting. New business is nothing more than surprises, and the effective board will not allow surprises to lengthen a meeting without first getting information in writing and researching or questioning the presented facts.

#### **Adjournments**

A target time for adjournment should be set on the agenda and the president must see that it is met. If lengthy meetings are diminishing your enthusiasm for the job, a drastic but effective way of shortening the meetings would be to adjourn them on schedule even if not everything gets covered. Be brave! It won't be the end of the world if some things don't get done. The first month you try this, maybe only half the business will get done. The second month, three fourths will get done, and by the third month, the rest of the board will realize the president is serious and will get on with the important matters at hand of making the decisions that affect the community. People will realize that to get the job done, they will need to do their homework ahead of the meetings and they will learn the importance of keeping their comments brief and to the point.

Any proposal should include enough information and background research to anticipate the questions that might be raised.

*Continued on page 3*

If the proposal involves the expenditure of association funds, approximate costs must be part of the proposal. By asking for information and proposals in writing, we don't get hit with surprises and we don't waste a lot of time searching for the facts necessary to make intelligent decisions. Many items get a lot of discussion when, in fact, the majority of the board may feel the items are either unreasonable or the actual costs to implement them would prove to be prohibitive.

At board meetings, people are to state their opinions and positions on the motions under consideration - - and then vote. Using time in the meeting for gathering information is not effective and is sure to extend the meeting. It is the president's job to keep the meeting rolling and not waste a lot of time.

A lot of meaningless and trivial discussion can be avoided at the meetings if only those items that are on the agenda are the ones that get discussed. If an individual board member wishes to make an outrageous motion like, "I move that we get rid of all the dogs in the community", and someone else decides to second it just for discussion's sake, then you're wasting everyone's time. If the individual has no real support or second to the motion, there is no need to discuss it. Move on to the important business at hand.

***The single most effective strategy for running an organized meeting is to insist that any items open for discussion first be submitted in writing prior to commencement of the meeting.***

Since committee reports should be in writing and in the packet, the committee chairperson does not have to attend the meeting unless they need an additional few minutes to emphasize or elaborate on any particular items in their report. If you can't get written reports from your committees, then it may be time to find a new chairperson who can run the committee and supply you with the information you need. However, if you make your expectations clear to the people working for you, you'll be surprised at how well they're likely to do or at least try to do.

Because the board of directors is in charge of running the community in a professional and businesslike manner, more and more communities are finding it effective to hold their meetings during the day. Most individuals are usually able to leave early from their regular job one day a month in order to attend a board of directors meeting starting at 4:30 P.M. , for example. The daytime setting during regular business hours emphasizes the point that you are in charge of running a corporation and not just finding extra time to socialize.

The president is the key to keeping the meetings on track and, in order to be effective, needs to have the support of the others. Boards that experience constant bickering, ax grinding and back-stabbing only manage to pay less attention to their primary job. Put personal issues to rest and stick to the business at hand. Personal issues and hidden agendas undermine the community. If you feel the president is not doing the job, you can and should run for the position next year.

Your primary job this year is to work together to make the important decisions that serve to protect, maintain, and enhance the community. It may be your home, but the existence of an association makes it also a business. We should remember to treat it like one so that everyone can enjoy the benefits and rewards of community living.

*Article courtesy of William Cretney, Executive Vice President & Chief Technology Officer, Kramer-Triad Ann Arbor, MI*

## Associa Newsletters

Your associations can now receive a professionally prepared COLOR newsletter with Associa Living advertisements!

Send us your unformatted, plain text content ... in 3-4 days, we will send you a color PDF (read-only) to review and approve. When you say you are ready, we will print it!

Whether the association has 50 or 1,050 units/lots/homes, Associa will ship the completed COLOR newsletters to the local office for processing! The association will still be responsible for the costs of mailing the newsletter to owners.

### Staff Achievements

Managers **Thomas Bailey, Julia Cover, Chrystal Conwill-Munoz and Debbie Newnam** earned their CMCA (Certified Manager of Community Associations) designation from Community Association Institute.

### EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

**Nan Jackson – December**

**Beverly McCoy – January**

**Wendi Owens – February**

**Joanne Allen – March**

### EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

**Darlene Ingle**

### Service Anniversary Awards...

**Alfonso Orosco – 20**

**Barbara Haynes – 19**

**Sara Livingston – 11**

**Oliver Smith – 8**

**Aly Long – 7**

**Christina Gray – 6**

**Chrystal Conwill-Munoz and John Black – 5**

**Karen Lopez and Francis Dunn – 4**

**Krissy Bishop – 3**

**Anna Onofre and Cheryl Copeland – 2**

**Marianne Nelson and Wendi Owens – 1**

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## Six Pillars Of Neighborly Living

### Trustworthiness

*Be honest \* Never Deceive, cheat or steal \* Be reliable – do what you say you'll do \* Have the courage to do the right thing \* Build a good reputation \* Be loyal – stand by your family, friends, country and employer.*

### Respect

*Treat others with respect: follow the Golden Rule \* Be tolerant of differences \* Use good manners, not bad language \* Be considerate of the feelings of others \* Don't threaten, physically abuse or hurt anyone \* Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements.*

### Responsibility

*Do what you are supposed to do \* Persevere: keep on trying \* Always do your best \* Use self-control \* Be self-disciplined \* Think before you act and consider the consequences of your actions \* Be accountable for your choices.*

### Fairness

*Follow the rules \* Take turns and share \* Be open-minded; listen to others \* Don't take advantage of others \* Don't blame others carelessly.*

### Caring

*Be kind \* Be compassionate and show you care \* Express gratitude, thank people \* Forgive others \* Help others in need.*

### Citizenship

*Do your share to make your community and company better \* Cooperate \* Stay informed; vote \* Be a good neighbor \* Obey laws and rules \* Respect authority \* Protect the environment.*

Horace Greeley, a 19th century American journalist and educator once said:

**“Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wing, and only character endures”.**

Article courtesy of [Rhonda Major](#), PCAM®, Chief Operating Officer, Houston Community Management Services, Houston, TX

## Community Websites

You don't have to be dependent on volunteers who may move away. Your website will be actively managed by HCMS. We make available to each of our associations a personalized website that allows your association's residents access to a wealth of online services, including a community calendar, private board and committee discussion groups, access to association documents and much, much more. Open up a new form of communication with your members. Residents can get involved at any time and on their own schedule. Catch up on news & announcements, meeting minutes, and share ideas. A Community website is a valuable asset for your association.

# Associa ... The Leader in Community Association Management

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**THE BOARD BEACON**

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