



July 2018 - The Sharper Focus - HOA Board Edition

Thank you for reading our newsletter. The goal of this newsletter is to touch on general industry news and helpful topics that may help you in your role as an HOA board member.

Every Association is different in their type, size, scope, and how things are organized and established via the Governing Documents. There are, however, a number of universal topics common to all Associations. We hope you will find this newsletter a valuable source of information!

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Board Tips: Overcoming Decision Making Paralysis

There is nothing more frustrating for members, managers, and even homeowners than a Board that is collectively stuck in the muck, endlessly spinning their wheels deeper in the rut of indecision. Rest assured, it is a common condition. If it is not a recognized medical disorder, it should be!



Perhaps it is a large construction project, a delicate homeowner situation needing resolution, a complicated budget crisis, or maybe a vendor change. Many things are thrown at Boards - and often times it is difficult to get to that point where you are ready for the all-important motion to vote.

There are three things that may help you as an individual Board member, and as a collective group.

1. Accept that you will never have 100% satisfaction from stakeholders. Often, time on the Board means time spent making tough decisions that are best for the Association as a whole. Don't let chronically complaining Cathy dictated construction projects. A needed special assessment can't be derailed because it will break broke Bob's bank account. Accept that designer Debbie doesn't do blue and won't like those new shutters. The sooner you realize unanimous acceptance is rare, if not impossible, the sooner you can move on to make necessary decisions.
2. Realize that Board consensus can be difficult to achieve and accept that it is OK. The more complicated the topic, the more likely you are to have varying opinions. Naturally, it

is good to hash it out. Consider all angles. However, at some point you've got to call the vote. Which brings us to our final point.

3. Have a good facilitator among the group. There is nothing more important to group dynamics than for someone to take on the role of task master. Perhaps it is the President acting as the Chairman. Sometimes it is the Community Manager being the neutral party helping facilitate the meeting along. Whomever it may be, a group needs this person! Their primary skill should be recognizing when a debate is over or just plain unproductive, and calling the subject to a vote for resolution. All too often decisions get "tabled" for the next meeting. If it gets "tabled" once - you may as well just move on entirely. You're probably stuck on the two points mentioned above and will always be there. We're sure you can now see how these points all work together!

Consider these remedies for decision making paralysis and hopefully you can be a more productive Board by making decisions and moving forward with your Association's projects and initiatives!

Committees, Committees, Committees!

As a Board member, the responsibilities and tasks to keep the association running smooth can add up quickly. And as a leader, the art of delegation is incredibly important. Committees can be a great resource to, and outlet for, the Board of Directors. The goal of this article is to understand the roles and responsibilities of committees, define the types of committees, and to provide some keys to successful utilization of them.



Types of Committees

- **Mandatory**

- Boards should check their governing documents to find out if they are actually required to have committees. Typically, this can be found in the ByLaws. It is not uncommon for an association to be surprised that they are, indeed, required to have some type(s) of committee(s). Some fairly common mandatory committees include Elections, Nominations, and Architectural.

- **Standing**

- A Standing committee is one appointed by the Board to handle categorical type of initiatives and responsibilities of the Board. These committees are often established by the Board and should be noted in meeting minutes. Some example committees might include Budget, Finance, Grounds, Social, Welcome, and Rules.

- **Ad Hoc**

- Exploratory committee on a singular issue. These committees should have a very specific goal/ purpose and include an end date. Examples of this type of committee include a traffic safety study, neighborhood awareness, new governing documents or amendments, reserve study, or decorating projects.

Role of a Committee

The primary function of a committee is to assist the Board in meeting their many responsibilities. Committees can do this by performing specific tasks (such as the things mentioned above) and performing research. The end goal of the work of a committee is to prepare and make recommendations to the Board. It is imperative to remember that committees (unless governing documents give it with a mandatory committee) are advisory and have no authoritative power. Power in decision making and action remains with the Board. Other benefits include broadening community input and contributions to the Association.

Tips for Successful Committees

- Reminder - committees serve at pleasure of the Board - & are advisory groups
 - Any committee that does have independent authority, should have detailed processes & an appeal process to the Board. Ex: architectural control committee
- Appoint a Board Liaison
- Detailed job descriptions which outline roles & responsibilities

- Keep Minutes
 - Submit official recommendations to Board in writing
 - Motivate & Empower - but Manage Authority
 - Give meaningful tasks
 - Give recommendations serious consideration
 - Give public recognition for performance
 - Committee meetings should be open to members
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Contractor Chat: Weathering Expectations

One of the great construction debates is to sealcoat or not to sealcoat asphalt pavement. Let's review the primary purpose of sealcoating and then the common complaint. Sealcoating asphalt (usually driveways or streets) provides a thin layer of fine aggregate, oil and minerals to help protect and "seal" the aggregate asphalt materials that make up the pavement. It protects it from environmental factors that breakdown asphalt such as water/moisture, UV rays, and temperature change. Sealcoating is similar to painting. It protects the surface, while at the same time giving it an aesthetically pleasing and uniform appearance.



Which brings us to the primary criticism of sealcoating. Everybody loves a freshly sealcoated driveway. It looks all shiny and new! But after one plow season, you're left with blade marks and tire tread patterns. After a year or so, light spots start appearing from areas that hold water or are exposed to heavy traffic. What a waste of money that sealcoating was! After a couple of years the asphalt blends back to that uniform gray look. Did it really matter or make a difference spending the money to sealcoat?

Yes, it did! Unprotected asphalt will undoubtedly break down sooner than asphalt that has been sealed. This is a similar process to what happens with exterior wood surface. If left unprotected by paint or stain, fibers will break down and rot away. The secret to sealcoating is having realistic expectations on how long that shiny new looking driveway will last.

Second Annual Sharper Golf Scramble Was a Success!

Sharper hosted the 2nd Annual Sharper Scramble Golf Tournament on July 20th. By all accounts, it was another success!



We had 96 golfers, a dozen vendors, and two dozen Sharper staff members come together for a wonderful afternoon of golf, food, fun and conversation.

In addition to the bagpiper, heckler, prizes and many other activities to make the round of golf more fun, Sharper was able to generate enough proceeds to sponsor a house with the Hearts & Hammers organization. "It was a wonderful event to show our sincere appreciation to our trusted vendors, dedicated staff and our valued Board members," said owner Matt Froehlich. "We look forward to doing it again next summer!"

Need Help Renting and Managing a Townhome or Condo?

Think Advantage Home

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HOME

A sister company to Sharper Management, Advantage Home helps homeowners and investors manage their single-family residences.

Since your Association is already affiliated with Sharper Management, renting your home through Advantage would have extra benefits you wouldn't find in another property management company. Those benefits include:

- A thorough understanding of Associations
- Information sharing regarding governing documents, rules, and regulations is efficient between Sharper and Advantage Home - Advantage is literally right down the hall
- The Sharper Management maintenance staff is already familiar with your Association's property
- Our emergency response team is fast and effective

If you or someone you know is interested in renting their townhome or condominium, have them contact jeff@advantagehomemn.com.

Learn more at advantagehomemn.com

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