Building Community
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Please Note: All legislative references are current as of the date of this publication,

June 22, 2012.

Please read the latest version of NRS 116 at
http://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-116.html

and the latest version of NAC 116 at
http://www.leg.state.nv.us/nac/NAC-116.html

and check the Real Estate Division's website at
http://www.red.state.nv.us/

before using any of these references.

Building a Sense of Community
DCAL

Created by: NV Chapter CAI Education Committee
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Agenda

35 Minutes: What is a "Sense of Community" and why do we care?

10 Minutes: Break

55 Minutes: Solutions & Case Studies

10 Minutes: Break

70 minutes: Class Project & Reports

Sense of Community… What is it?

- Community Pride
- Community Identity
- A Feeling of Belonging
- A belief that their Community adds value to their life
- Community Activities & Involvement

Why is a Sense of Community Important?

- Because it's what people want!
- 2010-2013 Gallop Poll of 30,000+ residents over 3 years in 26 communities around the country.
- Findings: Top 3 elements affecting residents' attachment to their communities were:
  - **Social Offerings, Openness, & Aesthetics**
  - All 26 communities selected these 3 elements as their top 3
  - Social Offerings were chosen #1 by all 26!

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Define the Top 3

- Social Offerings:
  - Availability of social community events
  - Good place to meet people
  - People care about one another
- Aesthetics:
  - Beauty of the physical settings
  - Park areas
  - Trails
  - Recreational amenities
  - Playgrounds

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Define the Top 3

- Openness:
  - Good place for: older people, racial & ethnic minorities, families with kids, LGBT, young college grads, immigrants, young adults without kids

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Common Interest Communities
Not a New Thing

- Communities forming pact for common good
- Establishing System of Government
- Setting rules
- Pooling resources
- Protectionism

CICs: a Brief History

- Mayflower Compact, 1620
- Gramercy Park in New York, 1831
- Roland Park Company, NY, 1891
- City Housing Corporation, NY, 1924
- Hamilton Park, TX, 1950
- Irvine, California, 1959
- Federal Housing Administration, 1960s

CICs: an Evolution

- Fair Housing Act of 1968
- Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act
  - Uniform Condominium Act – 1977 & 1980
  - Uniform Planned Community Act – 1980
  - Model Real Estate Cooperative Act – 1981
  - Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act – 1982
- **The Basis of NRS 116**

Community Associations Institute (CAI)

- Founded (1973) through joint efforts of:
  – Urban Land Institute
  – National Association of Home Builders
  – US League of Savings & Loan Associations
  – Veterans Administration
  – US Department of Housing & Urban Development
  – 23 Builder/Developers
  – Numerous Community Association Professionals

Community Associations Institute (CAI)

- Major National Membership Organization
- 30,000+ Members
- 60+ Chapters Nationally & Internationally
- Membership:
  – Board Members & Homeowners
  – Managers
  – Business Partners

Community Associations Institute (CAI)

- The leader in providing education and resources to volunteer homeowners and community managers who govern community associations.

Why do We Care about Building a Sense of Community?

- **Because It's What Residents Want!**

  - **Social Offerings:** People want to know and care about one another socially

  - **Aesthetics:** People want to live in a community that looks beautiful and that they can be proud of

  - **Openness:** People want to live in a community where they feel welcome

Impact of Housing Boom

- Local governments could not keep up with infrastructure

- Builders put in sewer systems, streets, and street lighting, parks & recreational facilities making them private

- Community associations formed to maintain these now-private "amenities"

- Communities built to sell quickly, not to establish "neighborhoods"

Impact of Housing Meltdown

- Partially built communities left in decay
- Abandoned homes
- Unpaid Assessments
- Reduction in services & maintenance
- Loss of pride in community
- Problems distracted many boards from community-building activities
- Many communities now need to... _REBUILD_ a Sense of Community

Apathy in the Community

- Lack of passion

- Low level of interest

- Often the result of a sense of helplessness, hopelessness, or powerlessness

Selective Apathy

- Lack of interest in a particular activity
  - Physical limitations
  - Cultural & language differences
  - Age differences
  - Families vs. Seniors
  - Poor planning & operation
  - Lack of rewards & incentives

Do Boards Like Apathy?

- Higher apathy may mean fewer complaints
- But:
  - Will they attend social events?
  - Will they join committees?
  - Will they vote?
  - Will they run for the board?
  - Will they care?
- Do you want residents to care?
- Board members need to decide!

People Today

- Want to feel they can have an effect on the things around them

- Are less patient and want results now

- Crave anonymity

- May lack a sense of purpose

- Not everyone will want to participate

We Know the Problems

What are the solutions?

Coming up in the next section!

Break
Please return to your seat
within 10 minutes

So Let's Look at Solutions
#1 Just be Reasonable!

– Look for win-win solutions

– Be a neighbor first

– Smile!

– Never criticize the *person*

– How people are treated determines how they feel about their community

– First… do no harm!

Community Spirit

- Always be a cheerleader for your community!

- Do not get discouraged by a lack of involvement, especially at the beginning.

Form Committees

- Involve people
- Work together for common purpose
- Create next generation of board members
- Offload board workload
- Let people participate in their community

Conduct Homeowner...
Meetings, Town Halls, Education

- Discuss significant issue with members
  - Crime, safety, new legislation, impact of government projects, common area redesign
  - Invite 3rd parties to speak (City, County, Utilities, vendors etc.)
  - Invite member input
  - Solicit committee members
  - Make a record of all suggestions and unanswered questions

Communication is Key

#2 Just Communicate!
– If you do nothing else, communication will do more to keep residents happy
– Many ways to communicate – use several
– Communicate a lot!
– Provide ways for them to communicate with you

Communication - Newsletters

• Newsletters that include the meeting notice
• Mail to owners <u>and tenants</u>
• Email if you have email addresses

Communication

• But how to get them to read it?
– Free Classified Ads in newsletter
– Pictures of events
– People like to hear about people they know
– People love photos... especially of themselves!
– CAI publications for newsletters
• http://www.caionline.org/members/Pages/CAICopyService.aspx

Communications – New Residents

- New Owner Packets
- New Resident Packets
- New Resident Social Events
  - Newcomers Club

Email Blasts

- Develop database of email addresses for as many as possible
- Great way to alert community of unexpected events
  - or send out reminders for upcoming events

Post the News

- Clubhouse bulletin board
- On gate
- *Near* mailboxes

Surveys & Focus Groups

- Send out email surveys using "Survey-Monkey" or other online resources
- No more than 10 questions on survey
- Incentives to return survey
- Focus groups with specific demographics
- Report the results to the residents
- Act on the results

Contests & Events

- Focus on residents working together
- Give opportunity to socialize with neighbors
- Residents with home businesses like to give raffle prizes for publicity
- So do nearby businesses

Social Media?

- Facebook, Meet-up, Google, Yahoo, NextDoor
- Make sure it is a closed group
  - Someone moderates and verifies identities
- Becomes official communication of CIC
- NRS requires CICs to give members equal space to respond to CIC statements
- Good communication… but can become a venue for abuse and misinformation

Handling Violations

- Make the first "courtesy notice" as friendly as possible – "you might not be aware, but"
- Focus on compliance, not fines. Revoke or reduce fines upon compliance
- Never, EVER, gossip or give out confidential information!

Hearings & Outcomes

- Welcome with a smile & introductions
- Seat guest at table with the board
- Act like a Neighbor, not a Cop
- Manager explains status of violation
- Listen to the guest
- Respond to what the owner said
- Ask for his help solving problem

Hearings & Outcomes

- Consider alternate solutions – Win-Win
- Show you're looking for a solution, not punishment
- Thank owner for attending
- Advise when owner will be advised of decision
- Board deliberates in closed session
- Consider fines as LAST RESORT

Conflict Resolution

- Never pit one resident against another or take sides
- Never talk about others behind their backs
- Be professional & stay above the issue
- Use community in barking dog issues

Conflict Resolution

- Try to find other sources for enforcement
- Make the governing documents, not the neighbors, the "bad guy"
- Use the Neighborhood Justice Center for conflicts between residents
  - www.clarkcountycourts.us/lvjc/njc/ NJC.htm
  - (702) 455-3898

Community Aesthetics

- Importance of maintaining & improving common elements
- Importance of enforcing community standards throughout the community

Community Events

- Hold community events for holidays
- Have a pool party
- Don't have a clubhouse? How about a Pot Luck party in the street?

Projects, Teams & Groups

- Bring people together for a common purpose
- Do not expect a lot of people at the beginning – give it time
- Some groups:
  - Exercise groups
  - Book & investment clubs
  - Babysitting co-ops
  - Discussion groups

Helping Neighbors in Time of Need

- Health or other issues
  - Elderly man with distant family
  - Child with cancer
  - Home fire
  - Flood
- Use Care Pages - www.carepages.org
  - Scheduling program

Other Ideas

- Make a disaster plan
    - Get help from local Fire Department
- Hold block parties
- Hold candidate forums for local politics
- Neighborhood Watch
- Don't make it difficult or expensive for residents to use amenities
- Start a community garden

Build a Safer Community

- Historically man lived in communities for safety & security
- Today's "garage door up, garage door down" culture hinders sense of community
- People who know their neighbors they...
    - Watch out for their neighbors
    - Care about those around them
    - Are more likely to help out in time of need
    - Ask questions when things don't look right

Case Study

Chicago Homes – 36 Single Family Homes

- Residents are expected to participate
- Some of their regular programs:
    - Progressive dinner during the holidays
    - Community picnic
    - Book Club
    - Tutoring children at the neighboring school
    - Adopt-a-Street

Case Study
Rancho Viejo – 312-unit condo conversion

- Very diverse residents
- UNLV Recreation Management Intern
  - Tango lessons
  - Poker nights
  - Family movie night/bedtime story night
  - Singles mixers & family barbecues
  - Sidewalk chalk art contest
  - Group trip to Neon Graveyard

Case Study
Riverwoods – 640 Single-Family Senior Homes

- Promote participation in charitable events
  - Meals on Wheels
  - Volunteer groups at nursing homes, hospitals, senior centers, humane society, etc.
  - Association-sponsored "Sharing With Others"
    - Make and purchase items for foster children and battered women's shelter
  - Raised money for a scholarship fund

Case Study
Stonecreek/Redhawk – 8 Single Family Homes

- Halloween "haunted cul-de-sac"
- Holiday meals
- New Year's Eve
- Easter "traditional" water balloon fight

Case Study
Summit – 171 Single Family Homes

- Holiday decorating contest

Case Study
Landfall – 1,000 Single Family Homes

- Formed a charitable foundation separate from the association
- Raises funds for causes and activities
  - Fourth of July celebration
  - Beautification club
    - Includes lectures and workshops
  - Habitat for Humanity

Break

Please return to your seat
within 10 minutes

Building Community Plan

1. What are Community's Assets?
2. Who Lives in Community?
3. What are Their Needs?
4. How can Assets Fulfill Residents' Needs?

Building Community Plan

1. Identify community assets

   – Community pool

   – Near public park

   – Gated community with low traffic areas

   – Residents with "connections" or special expertise

Building Community Plan

2. Who lives in the community?
   – Seniors
   – Young families
   – Section 8
   – A little bit of everything
   – People with health issues
   – Snowbirds

Building Community Plan

3. What are their needs & Interests?
   – Social time with neighbors
   – Low-cost entertainment
   – Travel
   – Time away from children
   – Specific to a health issue
   – Recreation

Building Community Plan

4. How can your community assets fulfill residents' needs & interests?
   – Group prices on local events
   – Neighborhood party in a cul-de-sac
   – Community garden in the common area
   – Help a family in need
   – Sponsor a youth sports team

Class Project

Building Community Plan

Either sit with other members of your association, or sit with others who live in a similar association to yours:

   – Age Restricted
   – Condominium
   – Single Family Homes
   – Master Association

Class Project

Building Community Plan

1. Identify community assets

2. Demographics of residents

3. What are residents' needs & interests?

4. How can community's assets satisfy residents' needs & interests?

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Class Project

Make a plan:

- Identify 3 projects for the coming year

- Decide how you will implement the projects?

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Class Project

Share your plans for next year

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Thank You!

Questions?

best
practices

R E P O R T # 5

Community Harmony & Spirit

Published by
the Foundation for Community Association Research

FOUNDATION FOR
community
ASSOCIATION RESEARCH

Acknowledgements

Panel Members
Pearl Atkinson-Stewart
Denise Bower, CMCA®, AMS®, PCAM®
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best practices

Community Associations Institute (CAI) and the Foundation for Community Association Research are dedicated to conducting research and acting as a clearinghouse for information on innovations and best practices in community association creation and management. As part of the Best Practices project, operations related to various function areas of community associations—including governance, reserve studies/management, financial operations, strategic planning, community harmony and spirit, energy efficiency, and transition—have been produced and are available at www.cairf.org as a free download or for sale in CAI's bookstore.

What Are Best Practices?

The development of function-specific best practices in the community association industry has been a goal of CAI and the Foundation for Community Association Research for several years. The Foundation is currently developing best practices in select topic areas using a variety of sources—including, but not limited to, past winners of the National Community Association of the Year Award, recommendations from industry experts, various industry-related publications and, once developed, recommendations from those communities scoring highly on the Community Performance Index. The subject areas for the initial best practices were selected through a survey of the CAI and the Foundation for Community Association Research national leaders.

The anticipated outcomes of the Best Practices project include:
- documented criteria for function-specific best practices,
- case studies of community associations that have demonstrated successes in specific areas, and
- the development of a showcase on community excellence.

The benefits of benchmarking and best practices include: improved quality; setting high performance targets; helping to overcome the disbelief that stretched goals are possible; strengthened cost positions; more innovative approaches to operating and managing practices; accelerating culture change by making an organization look outward rather than focusing inwardly; and, bringing accountability to the organization because it is an ongoing process for measuring performance and ensuring improvement relative to the leaders in the field.

Accordingly, this project represents an ongoing exploration of best practices used in community associations. The first series of best practices will set the bar, which applied research will then continue to raise.

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SECTION ONE
Overview and Introduction

Community Harmony & Spirit

According to Foundation for Community Association Research's *National Survey of Community Association Homeowner Satisfaction*, the average community association resident volunteers twice a year for community-sponsored events. Nearly 60 percent of respondents said that they participate in each of the following community-wide events: parties, holiday celebrations, neighborhood watch programs, and community holiday decorating. Forty-five percent of respondents said that they participate in other social events. However, 45 percent of community association residents also admitted that they either never volunteer or only volunteer in their associations once a year.

How do managers and boards increase resident involvement within community associations? By treating all residents as stakeholders and developing and conducting community harmony and spirit-enhancing programs and including residents in the initial stages of program development.

Building community spirit is more than informing residents about board action and improvements. It's asking their opinions and developing programming that they will enjoy that will spur further community involvement.

Community spirit means pride in a community. The community associations of today are neighborhoods of yesterday. Spirited communities, like safe neighborhoods, have higher sale values. Community spirit creates an emotional equity that sets communities apart from the rest.

SECTION TWO
Ways to Promote Community Spirit

To promote community spirit in your community, try one of these activities:

- **Create a neighborhood assistance program**. Seabrook Island Property Owners Association in Johns Island, South Carolina, established the Good Neighbor Connection. Residents volunteer to provide neighbors with all types of assistance and a monthly coordinator assigns volunteers to their respective jobs. Ford's Colony at Williamsburg Homeowners' Association, in Williamsburg, Virginia, chartered Caring Neighbors under its Activities Committee. These volunteers provide cards and personal calls, transportation for medical appointments and rides to the airport, meals for families with an illness or death in the family, loaner items for medical equipment such as canes and crutches, loaner items for grandparents with visiting grandchildren such as cribs and high chairs, handyman services for small jobs, and an extensive resource of those willing to discuss their medical experiences with those facing these challenges. Volunteers coordinate each major service under an elected program director.

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- **Hold a neighborhood swim-a-thon.** The Greenbriar Community Association in Greenbelt, Maryland, held a community swim-a-thon. Residents solicited pledges from neighbors for each lap they swam. Greenbriar donated the event's proceeds to the American Cancer Society.

- **Print a community T-shirt.** The management of Village Cooperatives, Inc., in Ann Arbor, Michigan, printed community T-shirts and sold them for $10 each. The back of the shirt read, "I Live on 64 Acres," and the front had the community's logo. Not only does this increase community spirit, but it also generates additional revenue for the association and serves as a marketing tool.

- **Hold a clothing drive.** The board of Atrium in Arlington, Virginia, developed a program to support the work of the charitable organization, Unity Health Care. The organization put bins in Atrium's health club. Residents put items—both new and used—in these bins. Unity Health Care then distributes these items to other charitable organizations in the metropolitan Washington, DC area.

- **Build and install park benches along walking trails and ponds.** Find the craftsmen in your community and have them build community park benches with materials provided by the association. This saves money and is a great community spirit project both for the volunteers and the enjoyment of the residents. Rent an auger for easy installation and don't forget to call your local utility companies to help you mark underground utilities!

- **Discover ways in your community to support local charities and schools.** A measure of success and contentment can be evaluated in the level of dedication to giving back to the greater community. Sharing your time, talents, and financial resources as individuals, small groups, and as a corporate entity is a true reflection of community spirit. Examples of such efforts at Ford's Colony includes: collecting food at the community center each Thanksgiving for a local food bank and the Salvation Army; opening the community twice each year to a Walk/Run for Hospice and Housing Partnerships with corporate sponsors; sponsoring golf tournaments to support local schools and charities; and contributing direct financial support to public and private school booster clubs, a humanitarian medical center, and an environmental monitoring group. In addition, the clubs in the Ford's Colony Activities Committee sponsor a charity of choice. The Craft Club makes booties, hats, and blankets for the hospital and nursing homes. The nature club, Trailblazers, support environmental monitoring and education in a critical wetland habitant. The William and Mary Fan Club supports the local college athletic department. The Theater Club performs for the nursing homes. The Garden Club collects an extra dollar per person at the monthly luncheons for donations. The Country Club restaurant hosts dinners for charities, such as the Make a Wish Foundation. Given this level of public outreach, the community association is often mentioned in local newspaper articles.

- **Recognize children.** Use your newsletter to note worthy accomplishments in academics and athletics for the teenagers in your community. Coordinate with high schools and your neighborhood parents to get a list of national honor students, first honor students, varsity athletes, and other special honors. Ford's Colony publishes these noteworthy events twice a year.

- **Sponsor a safety seminar.** Did you know that more than 80 percent of child safety seats are improperly installed in vehicles? Coordinate a safety seminar with Emergency Services to educate parents and grandparents on this and other issues such as bicycle safety, Ident-a-Child, medical and medicine alert folders for 911 EMS responses to your home, and Neighborhood Watch.

- **Promote health and well-being.** Use your community center to host a blood drive and/or blood pressure and cholesterol screening. Call your hospital for area coordinators and services. Provide lemonade and cookies as snacks. This is also a great time to pass out a resident survey or just meet residents and gauge their needs.

- **Schedule a poolside movie night.** On Friday nights, the aquatic center at First Colony Community Services Association (FCCSA) in Sugar Land, Texas, is turned into a movie theater where people can relax on a lounge chair or float on a raft while watching a movie.

- **Conduct a resident survey.** Every year since 1994, FCCSA contracts with a professional research firm to conduct a survey of membership opinions on service and issues facing the community. The results of the survey help the board and management budget services. If your association can't hire an outside firm to conduct the survey, go door to door, send the survey via snail- or e-mail, or conduct it on your association's website.

- **Facilitate neighborhood block parties.** Use your newsletter to encourage each neighborhood in your community association to have an annual block party. It is a great way to meet new neighbors and foster community spirit. Friends tend to work out concerns without involving the Rules Committee. One or two families can be the "Block Heads" that coordinate the time and date; determine the needs for salads, entrees, and desserts; provide a few portable tables; secure the cul-de-sac from traffic; open their homes for restrooms; and dispose of trash. Potluck with a dish that serves six to eight usually works well. Individuals bring their own lawn chairs.

- **Choose a signature shrub or tree and celebrate each Arbor Day.** Ford's Colony chose the Pink Crepe Myrtle as its signature tree. Each Arbor Day, the community plants a dozen crepe myrtles in a ceremony keyed to our environment with adults and children participating. The association negotiated a price with a landscape company to install a six-foot crepe myrtle in resident yards on request and uses the monthly newsletter as a reminder.

- **Publicize upcoming events via e-mails and the web.** More and more community association members have websites and e-mail addresses—why not use them? They're an inexpensive way to promote upcoming special events and meetings. Additionally, residents can reply to the e-mails and boards can obtain instant feedback!

- **Publish event photos.** What better way to promote community spirit than to show non-participants all the fun that they're missing?

All of the above-mentioned activities are great in theory, but how do you really get residents involved? Here are some tips.

- **Hook them from the get-go.** When new owners move in, send over a board or committee member to welcome them to the community. Find out a little about the new residents and their interests. Let them know about the community and how it works. Don't just bombard them with copies of your community's rules, regulations, and CC&Rs. Follow-up with a phone call approximately four- to six-weeks later just to check in and see if the residents have any questions. This is also a great time to have them fill out a questionnaire to find out the activities in which they would participate. Ask those who give you new and exciting ideas if they want to help organize the activity.

- **Create activities for new residents.** For instance, Ford's Colony has a Newcomers Club. New residents mingle each month with other new residents. Information is provided at each monthly meeting, with rotating subjects, to help indoctrinate the members into the area. Mostly it is a social opportunity for those with a common bond of being newcomers. An effort is made to not duplicate the interests served by the Activities Committee and to integrate the newcomers into the mainstream activities. Discharge papers are officially presented to Newcomers Club members after their two-year eligibility is up.

- **Give away freebies.** Everyone likes to get something for nothing. Solicit a donation of goods, services, or the money to purchase give-a-ways for your next event. The sponsor will gain visibility within your community and you'll draw more people to the activity. When the residents do make it to the activity, they can mingle with each other and learn more about the association and its benefits.

- **Send thank-you notes.** When someone volunteers—in any capacity—say thanks. Knowing that the board or manager appreciates their involvement goes a long way. It also may start a chain reaction of positive publicity for the board.

- **Practice positive customer service.** If a resident writes a letter, sends an e-mail, or leaves a message, make sure that you reply within 24 hours, even if you don't have a definitive answer yet. Let the resident know that you've received their message and that you're working to find an answer—and give them a realistic time period during which you will respond. This does two things: it acknowledges their concern and it provides a realistic expectation of the time that it will take to get back to them. Make the 24-hour policy known—post it on your Web site, put it on your e-mail away message, and spell it out on your voicemail. Sometimes, a perceived lack of customer service creates animosity between residents, board, and management, and results in lack of resident participation in association-sponsored activities.

- **Hold board office hours.** Have one or more members of the board available once every month to address residents' concerns or questions. With a five-member board, this is only about two nights out of the whole year for each board member. Publish the office hours and location—whether it is at the association's clubhouse or the board member's home itself. This openness counteracts the rumor that boards are not open to input. Have the association's governing documents, resolutions, and meeting minutes available just in case someone wants to see them. Again, this interaction shows residents that the board cares about the community and is open to new ideas. It also personalizes the board and puts faces with sometimes-infamous names.

- **Hold quarterly town hall meetings.** Ford's Colony holds quarterly town hall meetings that are dedicated to information sharing. While board meetings are held for two hours beginning at 3:30 p.m., town hall meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. The board presents an agenda of current issues and conducts a question and answer forum. The board responds to questions but doesn't take action as a board in this forum. Town hall meetings are very well attended with five to ten percent of the adults expected.

- **Look for a reason to celebrate.** Celebrate your association's success. Celebrate holidays—big and small, traditional and quirky. It's a great way to meet neighbors and get people enthusiastic about the community.

- **Sponsor association participation in community-wide events.** Don't limit involvement to the boundaries of your association. Encourage resident participation in local organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, the YMCA, or Rotary Club. Send local officials and organizations your association's newsletter and upcoming programs so that they know about your association—and that your residents are ready to participate in their events.

- **Support community awareness in local politics.** Use your community clubhouse to host a Candidates' Night in October of election season. It is a great way for residents to meet the candidates in either a night dedicated to each political party or in a debate forum. The candidates will eagerly provide refreshments for this opportunity. Allow an insert, paid by the candidates, in your November or October newsletter in a standardized information format that includes a 3x5 inch picture along with the candidate's short bio and campaign focus points. Appoint a group of volunteers that are willing to rotate attendance at each local government meeting as liaisons for the association. The liaisons demonstrate your community's interest in governmental affairs, get early leads on issues, and report back to the board. The liaisons should also have direct relationships with the local government planning department for early warnings as well as feedback into the very important planning staff recommendation.

- **Establish standing committees with meaningful responsibilities and clean charters.** If people have defined roles and responsibilities with a goal in sight, they're more apt to participate. Also, hold your social events at locations where people are already gathered. Have a pool party or a volleyball contest during operating hours. You might involve people who weren't planning on it.

Case Studies of Community Harmony & Spirit

case study #1

The Landfall Council of Associations, Inc.

Age:	16 years
Size:	1000 homes
Location:	Wilmington, North Carolina
Board Size:	Seven (7)
Contact:	Don Stallings, CMCA®, AMS®, PCAM®, General Manager
E-mail:	Landfallpoa@prodigy.net

Landfall is a 2,200-acre gated community master association with 22 sub-associations comprised of two condominium associations and nine villa communities. It has 1000 homes on its 1,800 lots. Landfall's beauty, peace, and tranquility are prevalent in its owners' attitudes, spirit of giving, and cooperation, and are enhanced by its natural surroundings. Landfall Council of Associations works closely with its members. Residents initiate and sponsor the many programs supported by the community association. Further, residents belong to charitable organizations that benefit both Landfall and the Wilmington community. They participate in sports associations that utilize its recreation fields, seek political involvement through Landfall elections and political forums, and support the beautification of both Landfall and the Wilmington area. Landfall residents enliven the senses with their efforts to not only create, but also to maintain the harmony and spirit of life.

The Landfall Foundation

The Landfall Foundation is a charitable organization formed in 1996 to establish a community support effort specifically originating from Landfall residents. The Landfall Foundation's purpose is to provide financial support to charitable organizations and activities principally for the Greater Wilmington area and New Hanover County. It donates funds to federal tax-exempt charitable organizations whose missions are to support health and welfare activities, education, and the arts. Priority is given to organizations with low administrative overhead and high volunteer participation. In 2000, the Grants Committee gave $35,000 to charity, and by the close of 2001, the goal of at least $45,000 will be reached.

The Foundation raises funds through individual solicitations and special events throughout the community. Many Landfall residents actively contribute both time and money to the Foundation's causes and activities. Landfall residents hope that the Foundation will be a vehicle through which they can maximize their support to local smaller charities and activities. Typical grants are distributed in the $500 to $2,000 range, and the Foundation will give priority to projects where such amounts can make a difference.

Landfall's Annual Fourth of July Celebration

Landfall's Fourth of July Committee starts preparations in January for the community's largest annual celebration. This event requires advanced planning, dedicated volunteers, and lots of hard work. This all-day, fun-filled event has activities for residents of all ages, such as golf and tennis competitions, kids games, sack races, a pie eating contest, a dunking machine, a two-generation softball game, a vehicle and children's parade, and a

flag raising ceremony. It concludes with an old-fashioned cookout at the clubhouse. In 2001, more than 800 residents participated in this event.

The Great Oaks Club

Founded in 1991, the Great Oaks Club encourages environmental improvement and aids the protection and conservation of native trees, plants, and wildlife. The Great Oaks Club has more than 200 members who help beautify the common grounds of Landfall. Some of the club's activities include decorating for Christmas, arranging workshops and educational seminars relating to Coastal Carolina, and a variety of social activities for those interested in Southern classic plants, wildlife, gardening, perennials, and more.

Habitat for Humanity

A Landfall resident, who is a local builder, and his wife have organized the construction of a Habitat for Humanity home. Resident volunteers are constructing a four-bedroom home in Wilmington, NC. The association's Great Oaks Club is donating their landscaping expertise to the project, and a resident attorney is donating his legal services. Construction began August 1, 2001.

Provisional Membership Program

The Country Club of Landfall is an integral part of its community and the center of social activities. It is a private equity club and members must be Landfall property owners. Therefore, the board of the Country Club of Landfall has created an exciting program that offers non-club member residents an opportunity to try a provisional membership free for one year. Payment of the yearly dues along with the food and beverage minimum, paid in advance, entitles the non-club member to all of the privileges of that particular membership. Once the provisional membership expires, the provisional member may join the Country Club of Landfall by paying the equity initiation fee.

Tree Replacement Program & Fall Festival

Tens of thousands of trees have been destroyed as a result of six hurricanes and tropical storms over the past five years. Therefore, the Planning Committee developed an aggressive tree replenishment program with the installation of 500 trees and 300 saplings annually for the past two years. It has been, beyond all expectations, a contagious effort by the owners. Consequently, a tree sale and vendor fair is evolving into a community wide event. A Fall Festival is in the works with help from the Agricultural Extension Office, the local authorities, fire and police, the association's landscaping staff, and many other vendors that the Landfall Council of Associations deals with every day. This festival will be a great opportunity to ask questions to the landscapers, fire department, the agricultural office, the lake contractor, and many others. It will also be an ideal time to purchase trees, shrubs, plants, etc. from the wholesalers themselves.

case study #2

Riverwoods Plantation RV Resort Condominium Association

Age:	19 years
Size:	640 units
Location:	Estero, Florida
Board Size:	Seven (7)
Contact:	Marilyn Donaldson, CMCA®, CAM®
E-mail:	rpcondo@aol.com

Riverwoods Plantation is a National Community Association of the Year (NCAYA) Hall of Fame 2000-2002 member located in southwest Florida. Of its 78 acres, residential park homes are constructed on 60 acres, while a recreational area, private roadways, a boat ramp, boat docks, a picnic area, a pitch and putt golf green, and a 116-space boat storage facility comprise the remaining land.

Two of the top priorities at Riverwoods are promoting community involvement and volunteer programs. Many residents participate in various civic and service organizations and are acquainted with members of the Lee County Board of Commissioners. These volunteers coordinate many Lee County projects such as establishing bike paths, developing four-lane roadways, establishing a senior health center, building stop lights at dangerous intersections, landscaping roadways, and instituting hurricane shelters and water conservation projects. Additionally, association residents played an integral part in preventing a land development company from developing adjacent land, which was home to a family of bald eagles, Florida panthers, black bears, and land tortoises.

Residents also have the opportunity to participate in numerous charitable events throughout the year including:

- Volunteering for Meals on Wheels.

- Volunteering at local nursing homes, hospitals, senior centers, blood banks, churches, and the Humane Society.

- Becoming part of the association-sponsored group Sharing With Others, which sews and purchases items for local foster children and battered women organizations.

- Giving a scholarship to a worthy local high school graduate to attend a local university.

- Holding the Senior Mini-Olympics, an event where people from Ft. Myers, Cape Coral, and Naples compete in various Olympic-like events. The association donates all event proceeds to Estero High School.

- Volunteering at the association's senior friendship clinic and center.

However, the most unique program at Riverwoods is the ½ Bubble Construction Company. In 1987, nine residents who work in or have a hobby in the building industry established the ½ Bubble Construction Company. It's goal? To help the association's maintenance staff complete its tasks—without adding additional costs. The group is overwhelmingly successful. The number of volunteers has grown to 134 in the past 14 years. Company members include electricians, plumbers, mechanical and electrical engineers, brick layers, artists, blue print drawers, cement finishers, designers, draftsmen, architects, carpenters, roofers, aluminum workers, heavy machine operators, painters, and

telephone technicians. The company's coordinator, Mid Kitchen, works with the county on permits and sets up as many as six different projects a week, organizing volunteers for each of the projects. He orders the materials for all the projects and designates both a job foreman and a foreman for each trade needed to complete the project. The association also has both a photographer and a reporter who chronicle the company's projects in the association newspaper. To protect the association and its volunteers, the association purchased extra insurance that covers up to 70 volunteers at a time.

The various projects that the company has completed include:

- Repaired retaining walls, pilings, finger piers, walkways, and ramp at riverfront.

- Converted old sewer plant and holding ponds over to a RV storage area that holds 70 RVs, 82 sheds, and 32 cars or trucks.

- Installed a solar electric system for the pool and spa.

- Dug and installed irrigation lines with sprinklers throughout the entire 83 acres.

- Installed 14 air conditioners and new air handlers, 42 pieces of duct, and 42 registers.

- Built a 59x28 pavilion with counters, sinks, handicap restrooms, and patio for barbecues.

- Put two new spillways into one of the lakes.

In addition to these larger projects, the company also does most of the minor repair jobs. Most volunteers work every Wednesday from November until May. This program has saved Riverwoods a substantial amount of money. In fact, for some projects it's not just the manpower that is donated—it's also the materials. For instance, private individuals paid for the installation of two lake fountains, and the pavilion was funded by the association's memorial fund and dedicated to residents who have passed away. Every year staff conducts a resident survey to help determine what projects the ½ Bubble Company will tackle next. The program has been extremely successful and representatives have visited other communities to talk about and explain how others can start a similar program.

case study #3

Chicago Homes of Dearborn Park Homeowners Association

Age:	Six (6) years
Size:	36 single-family homes
Location:	Chicago, Illinois
Board Size:	Five (5)
Contact:	Bonnie McGrath
E-mail:	BonMcGrath@aol.com

Chicago Homes, located near Chicago's south side, is a community that embraces community spirit. This sense of community is attributed to individual residents' commitment to, and involvement with, the homeowners association. Whether their roles are large or small, residents can choose the degree of participation with which he/she feels comfortable. Additionally, each resident respects and accepts their neighbors' involvement. In

fact, non-board members plan some of the activities. Just what activities do all these volunteers plan?

- **Holding a progressive dinner.** For instance, a resident regularly organizes a Christmastime progressive dinner. Residents volunteer to open their homes and cook one component of the meal. Neighbors go to the assigned homes for each of the dinner's courses and proceed to the next home for the next course.

- **Planning a community picnic.** Residents organize a picnic in the association's driveway (the back of each home is on the driveway) each summer for residents to mix and mingle.

- **Coordinating a book club.** Another resident began a monthly book club. It's still strong and growing after three years.

- **Participating in the City of Chicago's "Adopt-a-Street" program,** which recognizes residents who beautify and maintain their community.

- **Tutoring** children at a neighboring school.

- **Attending Community Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) meetings** at the neighborhood police station to learn about crime and quality-of-life problems in their neighborhood or to report problems they have noticed in the area.

No one in the association is pressured to do anything beyond their level of interest. No one is asked to do anything they would prefer not to. For example, instead of asking a resident to start a homeowners Web site, the association waited until one resident (who hadn't been involved with the association at all) suddenly found his "niche" and came up with the idea to start one!

This is the secret to Chicago Homes' success—encouraging residents to participate in and coordinate activities that complement their natural interests (and not to pressure or ask anyone to contribute beyond that natural interest). Residents know they are appreciated and respected and not looked down upon if, for instance, they don't attend board meetings.

case study #4

Pelican Cove Condominium Association, Inc.

Age:	26 years
Size:	731 condominium units
Location:	Sarasota, Florida
Board Size:	Nine (9)
Contact:	Robert Malan, General Manger
E-mail:	pelicancove@home.com

Pelican Cove Condominium Association, Inc. is a residential community that full-time residents, part-time residents, and snowbirds call home. The association, constructed in a native hammock, on 75 acres on the east side of Little Sarasota Bay in Sarasota, Florida, consists of approximately 80 two-story residential buildings, six swimming pools, three recreation centers, four tennis courts, one sauna, one spa, two small gazebos, and five and a half miles of private roads. Clower Creek meanders through the property, and a man-

made channel provides boat access from Pelican Cove's 85-slip harbor to the Bay and Gulf of Mexico.

The 35-member staff works hard to maintain and improve this unique property for the benefit of the active and informed membership of approximately 1,200. Likewise, the board of directors recognizes that sound financial management, proactive capital projects, and frequent, effective communication are the keys to maintaining this dynamic and progressive community.

It's well known that volunteers make the world a better place in which to live. It's also known that volunteers are one of the key ingredients in creating a true community out of a condominium association. They are needed to serve on the board, research topics for committees, organize parties for clubs, and take reservations. The best volunteers do not give of their time and talents in order to receive never-ending praise—they give in order to witness others enjoying the fruits of their labors.

In an attempt to draw attention to this noble, extremely low-paying, and often thankless job, the association began a recognition program for volunteers at the February 2000 annual meeting. The winners were announced during the meeting in front of an audience of approximately 300 unit owners. One of the awards presented was the Sterling Award named after the then-president, Sterling Emerson, who has always been a major proponent of volunteering.

These award winners are fine examples of the importance of volunteers—for it is these individuals who go the extra mile to conceive and organize events and programs that truly make Pelican Cove a wonderful place to live. A public thank you and a $50 gift certificate to a local restaurant is the least the association can do in recognition of their accomplishments.

case study #5

The Ford's Colony at Williamsburg Homeowners' Association, Inc. (FCHOA)

Age:	17 years
Size:	2,400 residential units
Location:	Williamsburg, Virginia
Board Size:	Five (5)
Contact:	Drew Mulhare, CMCA®, AMS®, PCAM®, V.P. Operations for Management Agent
E-mail:	dmulhare@fordscolony.com

Ford's Colony is a 2,800-acre gated-community, mostly single family, with one sub-association of townhomes. The community is zoned for 3250 residential units and a hotel/conference center. More than 2400 residential units are sold with 1500 homes built as of August 2001. There is a private golf resort of three championship courses and a country club, which has an AAA Five Diamond restaurant open to the public. Marriott Vacation Club owns a 200-unit timeshare in the golf resort area. A 35-acre, 400-room hotel is planned for the future.

Ford's Colony is a National Community Association of the Year (NCAYA) Hall of Fame 2000–2002 member located near Williamsburg, Virginia. More than 50 percent of the 2800 acres is open space with more than 500 acres in wetland preserve and ponds. The association maintains 38 miles of private roads in this gated community with private security. The community transitioned to an elected board of directors in February 2000. The

association retains the developer, Realtec Incorporated, AAMC®, as the management agent. Realtec employs 65 people in administration, recreation, maintenance, and security. Ford's Colony is the winner of numerous awards in land planning, environmentally sensitive development, marketing, golf, restaurant operations, and association management. Most notable awards include the Take Pride in America Award, Number One Master Plan in the United States, AAA Five Diamond, DiRona Award, and CAI's NCAYA. Ford's Colony is listed among the Top 50 Places to Retire in North America.

The association board of directors chartered nine committees to assist and advise in matters of activities, communications, covenants, facilities, finance, nominating, road maintenance, security, and strategic planning. The Activities Committee is comprised of sixteen clubs and groups and is charged with the community spirit programs. There are several smaller groups, but any group comprising at least 25 people can petition to join the Activities Committee for priority scheduling of the common facilities and dedicated print space in the monthly newsletter. Members of this committee include bowling, bridge, caring neighbors, computer, crafts, dinner, garden, hospitality, newcomers, swim team, tennis, theater, Trailblazers, travel, William and Mary Fan, and youth activities.

In addition to the club activities, community spirit programs include: an annual yard sale with residual items donated to Kings Daughters Hospital; a Walk/Run each spring and fall with proceeds to Housing Partnerships and Hospice respectively; thirty neighborhood block parties each August; quarterly trash pickup on a local road; host facility for annual CAI ABCs training for associations in the Central Virginia Chapter; and quarterly theme dinner socials. Ford's Colony is renowned for its volunteerism and charitable giving. Most clubs connect with a local charity and provide personal time, gifts, or financial contributions. The association's budget includes a line item for charitable contributions made to high school booster clubs, environmental monitoring, and a medical center for the needy. A significant portion of the association's annual meeting is in celebration of community volunteerism. Churches, nursing homes, schools, local government, charities, and the hospital are the beneficiaries. The association is a Connected Neighbor with other associations in the county area and assists smaller associations with advice and training. The newspaper routinely acclaims the volunteerism in Ford's Colony resulting in breeding even more community involvement.

Through the Caring Neighbors program, volunteers assist the association's residents in temporary need. Two program directors coordinate the mission and disseminate leads to the appropriate sub-group. Each sub-group is led by two or more coordinators. Cares and Concerns writes personal cards and makes phone calls to express sympathy and compassion. Chauffeur on Loan provides transportation for medical services or an airport pickup for arriving family in bereavement. Cook's Pantry provides meals for those unable to prepare meals due to a death or illness in the family. Often casseroles are prepared in advance and kept frozen. Granny's Attic maintains a list of residents willing to lend a crib, highchair, car seat, and other items for visiting grandchildren. Handyman is a list of volunteers willing to do odd jobs for those that need a little help around the house. Medical Information Network is a resource of people willing to talk about a personal experience with a medical condition to discuss medical treatment and recovery. Nurse's Closet maintains a list of those willing to loan medical equipment such as walkers, crutches, and wheelchairs. Overall, Caring Neighbors is so successful, yet simple in operation, that it is being emulated throughout many associations across the country. It is rooted in volunteerism and community spirit. Minimal program costs are quickly supported by donation. Recipients are touched by the community compassion and wish to return the kindness to others. What you would do for your family and closest friends is being done on a community-wide basis.

Additional Resources

Best Practices Reports *(available at www.cairf.org)*

Reserve Studies/Management   *Community Harmony & Spirit*

Governance   *Energy Efficiency*

Strategic Planning   *Transition*

Financial Operations

Additional Resources From CAI*

Surveys: A Guide for Community Associations, Community Associations Press, 2006.

True Stories of Survival & Triumph in Communities Like Yours, Community Associations Press, 2006.

Building Community: Proven Strategies for Turning Homeowners into Neighbors, Community Associations Press, 2005.

Volunteers: How Community Associations Thrive, A Guide for Association Practitioners, Community Associations Press, 2005.

Be Reasonable: How Community Associations Can Enforce Rules Without Antagonizing Residents, Going to Court, or Starting World War III, Community Associations Institute, 1998.

Communications for Community Associations, Guide for Association Practitioners #15, Community Associations Institute, 2000.

Community First! Emerging Visions Reshaping America's Condominium and Homeowner Associations, Community Associations Institute, 1999.

For more information or a catalog, please call the Community Associations Press toll-free Customer Service line (888) 224-4321 (M–F, 9–6:30 ET) or visit www.caionline.org/bookstore.cfm.

Other Books

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets by John P. Kretzmann, John L. McKnight; ACTA Publications, 1997. ISBN: 087946108X.

Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference (The Jossey-Bass Nonprofit and Public Management Series) by David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson. John Wiley & Sons, 2001. ISBN: 0787900036.

Community Building: What Makes It Work: A Review of Factors Influencing Successful Community Building by Paul Mattessich, Barbara Monsey; Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1997. ISBN: 0940069121.

Websites

Community Associations Institute—*www.caionline.org*

Foundation for Community Association Research—*www.cairf.org*

CAI's Homeowner Education Track

Please contact your local CAI chapter for class dates, times, and locations.

For a complete list of CAI chapters and contact information, visit CAI's website at www.caionline.org or call 888-CAI-4321.

About the Foundation for Community Association Research

The Foundation for Community Association Research is a national, nonprofit 501(c)(3) devoted to common interest community research, development, and scholarship. Incorporated in 1975, the Foundation is the only organization both recording the history of, and identifying trends in, residential community association living; supports and conducts research; and makes that information available to those involved in association governance and management.

The Foundation's mission is to promote positive change for all stakeholders who live and work in homeowner, community, and condominium associations by:

- Discovering future trends and opportunities
- Supporting and conducting research
- Facilitating and promoting cooperation among industry partners (owners, managers, and product and service providers)
- Providing resources that help educate the public

Operating under the belief that community associations reflect a deep commitment to grassroots democracy, the Foundation has fostered the growth of associations by providing educational and research support through CAI's chapters. We are committed to providing quality research and publications for promoting academic interest in community associations.

To learn more about the Foundation for Community Association Research, call CAI Direct at (888) 224-4321 or (703) 548-8600 (M–F, 9–6:30 ET) or email foundation@caionline.org.

About Community Associations Institute (CAI)

Community Associations Institute (CAI) is a national, nonprofit 501(c)(6) association created in 1973 to provide resources and education to America's 300,000 residential condominium, cooperative, and homeowner associations and related professionals and service providers. The Institute is dedicated to fostering vibrant, responsive, competent community associations that promote harmony, community, and responsible leadership.

As a multidisciplinary alliance, CAI serves all stakeholders in community associations. CAI members include condominium and homeowner associations, cooperatives and association-governed planned communities of all sizes and architectural types; individual homeowners; community association managers and management firms; public officials; and lawyers, accountants, engineers, reserve specialists, builder/developers, and other providers of professional services and products for community associations. CAI has nearly 30,000 members in its chapters throughout the U.S. and in several foreign countries.

CAI serves its members in the following ways:

- CAI advances excellence through seminars, workshops, conferences, and education programs, some of which lead to professional designations.
- CAI publishes the largest collection of resources available on community associations, including books, guides, *Common Ground* magazine, and specialized newsletters on community association finance, law, and management.
- CAI advocates community association interests before legislatures, regulatory bodies, and the courts.
- CAI conducts research and acts as a clearinghouse for information on innovations and best practices in community association creation and management.
- CAI provides networking and referral opportunities through both the national office and local CAI chapters, CAI-sponsored insurance programs for directors and officers, and discounts on products and services.

For membership or other information, call the national office at (888) 224-4321 (M–F, 9–6:30 ET) or visit our "Why Join CAI?" section on the CAI website, www.caionline.org/join.

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best practices

REPORT # 2

Governance

Published by
the Foundation for Community Association Research

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Acknowledgements

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best practices

Community Associations Institute (CAI) and the Foundation for Community Association Research are dedicated to conducting research and acting as a clearinghouse for information on innovations and best practices in community association creation and management. As part of the Best Practices project, operations related to various function areas of community associations—including governance, reserve studies/management, financial operations, strategic planning, community harmony and spirit, energy efficiency, and transition—have been produced and are available at www.cairf.org as a free download or for sale in CAI's bookstore.

What Are Best Practices?

The development of function-specific best practices in the community association industry has been a goal of CAI and the Foundation for Community Association Research for several years. The Foundation is currently developing best practices in select topic areas using a variety of sources—including, but not limited to, past winners of the National Community Association of the Year Award, recommendations from industry experts, various industry-related publications and, once developed, recommendations from those communities scoring highly on the Community Performance Index. The subject areas for the initial best practices were selected through a survey of the CAI and the Foundation for Community Association Research national leaders.

The anticipated outcomes of the Best Practices project include:
- documented criteria for function-specific best practices,
- case studies of community associations that have demonstrated successes in specific areas, and
- the development of a showcase on community excellence.

The benefits of benchmarking and best practices include: improved quality; setting high performance targets; helping to overcome the disbelief that stretched goals are possible; strengthened cost positions; more innovative approaches to operating and managing practices; accelerating culture change by making an organization look outward rather than focusing inwardly; and, bringing accountability to the organization because it is an ongoing process for measuring performance and ensuring improvement relative to the leaders in the field.

Accordingly, this project represents an ongoing exploration of best practices used in community associations. The first series of best practices will set the bar, which applied research will then continue to raise.

Governance and Resident Involvement

It is CAI's purpose to foster vibrant, responsive, competent community associations that promote harmony, a sense of community and responsible leadership. Common characteristics of such community associations include good communication, trust in the management and board of directors, continuing education of board members and homeowners, and uniform, flexible and reasonable enforcement of governing documents. Inclusiveness—the involvement of as many residents of the community as possible—is a critical element in fostering a sense of community.

Looking for a way to assess the governance-related operations of your community association? Minimally, a quality community association should comply with all of the following statements.

- There is a functioning board that meets regularly and that is carrying out its duties and responsibilities as prescribed by applicable laws and governing documents.

- The board has disclosed to the owners the association information that is required by law and the governing documents.

- The association's legal documents, resolutions, books and records are kept in a location that is open to inspection by owners on reasonable notice during regular business hours.

- Owners may attend board meetings, except when the board meets in executive session.

- The board provides for due process (the opportunity to be heard) for owners in association-related matters and the board encourages the use of alternative dispute resolution in appropriate matters.

- The board conducts, and produces minutes of, an annual owners meeting as required by the governing documents.

- Election procedures conform to the governing documents and applicable law, with information regarding the process available to all owners.

- A system is in place to respond to owners' requests for association maintenance and for other association-related matters.

- A system is in place for property inspections and monitoring to ensure proper maintenance and appearance, both current and preventive.

- The board communicates with the owners periodically to provide information concerning the association and to get feedback from the owners.

- There exists a mechanism and procedure for assuring residents' obligations to adhere to the governing documents, and a confidential and safe forum for the resolution of disputes.

- Management is licensed, certified or holds appropriate credentials evidencing its competence to manage the community.

- Appropriate insurance—such as commercial general liability, property damage, directors and officers liability, workers' compensation and fidelity insurance—is maintained by the association as required by the governing documents and applicable law.

- A system is in place to administer property damage and personal injury claims.

- The board budgets for ongoing education of members of the board, particularly for newly elected or appointed members.

The Policy Governance Model

Developed by Dr. John Carver, the Policy Governance model defines the role of the board as this: **the board, on behalf of the owners, must see to it that the organization achieves the desirable while avoiding the unacceptable.** Period. This model of governance allows boards to feel comfortable about delegating the day-to-day operations to staff so they can focus on the bigger picture—longer term needs of the organization. Organizations nationwide have embraced this model with great success. Because it is universally applicable, it works for organizations that are new or mature, large or small, profit or nonprofit and troubled or successful. One example of Policy Governance in action can be seen in First Colony Community Services Association (FCSSA).

First Colony Community Services Association (FCCSA)

FCSSA is a 19-year old master community of 8,428 single family homes, 697 townhomes and condominiums, 3 apartment complexes and various non-residential properties in Sugar Land, Texas. It has a seven member board of directors and is managed by Sandra K. Denton, CMCA®, PCAM®.

In June 2000, FCCSA adopted the Policy Governance model. While the community has not had a full year (at time of this publication) to evaluate its effectiveness, they have seen positive results at the staff and board level. For the first time, the board is spending most of its meetings discussing and planning for the future, versus dealing with operational matters and bemoaning the lack of planning time. Through Policy Governance, the board seeks out members (residential and commercial) in a more proactive way to be involved in decision making relating to ownership issues. Staff then involves the members in developing plans to achieve those decisions.

In Policy Governance, the FCCSA board believes it has found a superior model of governance which improves the way the association functions and, more importantly, elevates the involvement of the volunteers and members in planning for the future. The board of directors focuses most of their energy on the ends to be achieved by the association, while the staff works on the means to achieve the prescribed ends. At each monthly board meeting, the board spends the majority of its time establishing Ends policies. Ends policies answer the question "What results, for which people, at what cost?" To formulate an Ends policy on a specific topic takes approximately four meetings. The board process includes the following four steps:

1. **Philosophy-Environmental Scan & Partnership Discussion**
   The staff provides the board with a background paper that includes an overview of the topic and a list of invited guest expert speakers and relevant partners in the com-

munity. Neighborhood representatives are mailed a copy of background paper. At the meeting, staff presents background material to the board and the board hears the invited speakers, both experts and partners. Neighborhood representatives are encouraged to discuss the topic with neighbors and be prepared to share feedback with the board at the next meeting.

2. **Member/Public Comment—Board of Directors Dialogue—Draft Consensus**
The board of directors allows time for member/public input. Announcements are included in the newsletter and on the website. Following this, the board of directors discusses what good, for which people, at what cost. Then, if appropriate, staff presents the budget impact.

3. **Review Documentation & Draft Ends Statement**
The staff assists the board in reviewing previous discussions, public comment, background paper, etc. Staff also presents to the board a budget analysis (5-year forecast), if appropriate. The board of directors then drafts the Ends statement.

4. **Adoption of Ends Statement**
The board reviews the final proposed language and adopts the Ends statement, which will be communicated to the membership.

The board then repeats the process with the next issue. Ends development is only one part of the Policy Governance model. Besides the ends to be achieved by the association, board policy will cover three other areas—Executive Limitations, Board-Staff Linkage, and Governance Process. More specifically, Ends prescribe what benefits will occur for which people at what cost; Executive Limitations describes the prudence and ethics boundaries on acceptable staff acts, practices and circumstances; Board-Staff Linkage describes the delegation and accountability linkage through the CEO; and, Governance Process clarifies the board's own job and rules, including how it connects to its ownership.

One very important facet of Policy Governance is that the board has a moral obligation to the ownership or membership of FCCSA. According to Dr. Carver, "…**governance is a 'downward' extension of ownership, not an 'upward' extension of management.**" Therefore, linkage with the membership in as many ways as possible is extremely important for the board to be able to do its job as owner-representative. With Policy Governance, the board of directors, as well as staff, will be able to improve upon their ability to involve the membership in planning for the future.

Extending Policy Governance with a Book of Governance
For years, experienced association managers such as Doug Christison, PCAM, have helped community associations adopt their own book of governance. Also based on the ideas of John Carver, Ph.D., the book of governance establishes the board as a legislative body (the policy maker) and the manager as the executive. The function of the board of directors is to set policy. The function of the manager is to carry it out; thereby creating a more efficient community association.

The book of governance should contain the following: a vision statement, the association's mission and all policies. The vision statement should capture the meaning,

direction and values of the community association. The classic vision of a community is "To protect, maintain and enhance the value of the property." The association's mission is simply to fulfill the vision. The mission and vision are further defined by the association's policies, which make up the bulk of the book of governance. Many communities divide their policies into the following categories: general board policies, procedures, and board and management relationships.

Transition from Developer Control
The first opportunity that owners will have to become involved in their community association is during the process that the association transitions from developer control. This process contains various steps that include, but are not limited to, forming committees, educating homeowners about their role as board and/or committee member, and holding general elections. The following is an example of the process by which one developer successfully transitions its communities to homeowner control.

A Model for Developers
IDI Group Companies is a well-known developer in the Washington, DC metro area that has developed more than 12,000 primarily luxury high-rise condominium units. IDI Group Companies continually demonstrates best practices for developers, such as the right way to bring on a new community association, the right way to negotiate warranty claims and the right way to have people feel they are immediately a part of the community. Below is the basic model used by IDI Group Companies to transfer control from the developer to the association.

- Shortly after 25 percent of new owners in a building settle, a resident orientation is held and owners are encouraged to participate in the committee structure. The committees usually start out with terms of reference and other pertinent information found in a notebook given out to help them become familiar with the community association's structure, etc. Generally, IDI establishes five committees in the beginning—Activities, Budget & Finance, Building & Grounds and Communications & Rules. IDI oversees the Covenants Committee until the owners understand how the due process works.

- When the settlements are nearing 35 to 45 percent of the building, the developer holds an election to place at least two owners on the board. Based on experience, those who are elected are the owners who have been active in the committees, most often Chairs. This also prepares owners to accept responsibility for the building's management sooner than required by law.

- The developer establishes an Ad-Hoc Engineering Warranty Committee comprised of owners who have some engineering or related background to assist in selecting an independent engineering firm to evaluate the building for warranty purposes. Owners are given samples of specs as well as names of firms who are qualified to do this work. Once the engineer provides a report, it is sent to the developer for comment. The developer then meets with the committee and reviews what he is prepared to do and negotiates with the committee and usually the board. This has worked very well over the past 25 years. There has never been a lawsuit or argument about the developer not acting fairly. The owners have been genuinely happy and the only attorney fees involved were

the cost of the attorney to review the engineering report and final settlement papers. Generally, a reserve study is performed at the same time as the engineering study so that the owners are satisfied that the developer provided enough funds to leave the association in good standing.

- By the time it is legally required to place unit owners on the board (50 or 75 percent of settlements), many of the unit owners have already been trained and educated on matters of budget, building structure and so forth. On the night of the election of the full unit owner board, the developer attends to welcome the new board and compliment them on their progress.

The first committee that starts working is the Activities/Welcoming Committee. This group plans the "Get to Know Your Neighbor" parties and attempts to get the residents involved in a social way that makes them feel a part of the community. Residents of the Washington, DC area may have noticed several recent articles in the Real Estate Section of *The Washington Post* that identified what people liked and disliked about their community. The positive comments focused on how people immediately welcomed them into the community and asked them to join the activities. The negative comments consisted of people saying how their neighbors watched them move in but never came over to offer a handshake or a hello. Proper welcoming of all owners is a best practice that will set the tone from the very beginning.

Five IDI-developed properties have won the National Community Association of the Year Award: The Rotonda, Porto Vecchio, Montebello, Belvedere, and ParkFairfax. The lesson to be learned — if the structure is set up correctly in the beginning and properly maintained, it will last a lifetime.

Ways to Promote Resident Involvement

- **Add youth members**—By formal resolution, the Radisson Community Association added youth members to each of its standing committees as a way to involve and empower youth. The person assigned to the board of directors would be a senior member of the youth groups and would not have a vote, but would shadow the board. All others were assigned competitively, as we do with other volunteers, and were voting members of the committee to which they were assigned. This could have been a technical problem since association membership begins at 18 and most of these youth were 15 and up. The board position attracted some attention but no one stuck with it and the position never became institutionalized. The youth regularly attended four of the six standing committees, but have only made an impact and stayed with the Recreation Committee. Those youth that participated and then went off to do other things stated that they had a much greater appreciation for community governance and shared the "we care" message with other youth in the community. The board will recruit new youth members every two years, as the children grow up and out of the community. The resolution, as approved by the Radisson Community Association—a 2,000-home community in Baldwinsville, New York—follows:

WHEREAS the Radisson Community was founded on the principal of individual and group participation in cultural, educational, and recreational programs, and

WHEREAS the Community's youth, aged 12–18, represent a significant population, and

WHEREAS the Long Range Planning Committee reports a growing interest among Association members to promote and develop the civic involvement of youth and the delivery of youth-oriented programs, now therefore be it

RESOLVED that commencing January 2000, one or more youth, age 12–18, will be nominated, selected and appointed to positions of "youth representative" on each standing committee, and further

RESOLVED that the Recreation Committee shall establish a sub-committee team to plan and execute youth programs, and further

RESOLVED that two youths, age 15–18, will be nominated, selected and appointed as non-voting youth participants on the Board of Directors.

APPROVED this 25th day of October 1999.

- **Publish a resident handbook**—The Village Cooperative Homes, Inc. in Ann Arbor, Michigan publishes a resident handbook. The handbook includes the following: a new co-owner information sheet, emergency key information sheet, a proxy, the association's key policy, a welcome letter from the board president, a letter from the association's managing agent, helpful area telephone numbers, board member information, and residency rules.

- **Develop a community discount card**—The Village Cooperative Homes, Inc. also negotiates discount with local merchants—a dry cleaner, bakery, and bookstore—for its residents who use the Village Cooperative Discount Card.

- **Send postcard updates**—Community associations frequently use newsletters, flyers and signs to promote community events. Some associations also use postcards as a reminder of upcoming events or to collect feedback. Postcards are both effective and relatively inexpensive as they can be printed for less than photocopying flyers and require less postage to mail. The board of the Woodwinds Council of Co-owners wanted their neighbors' input on a proposed landscaping project. So, the directors of the Reston, Virginia association enclosed a self-addressed, stamped postcard in the newsletter. Nearly 15 percent of the 144-unit garden condominium and town-home community responded. The feedback was so valuable that the association now distributes the postcards up to three times a year.

- **Hold one-on-one meetings with residents**—A couple years age, the Society Hill Towers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, noticed a need for improved communication between board members, management and residents of the three-building, 690-unit condominium community. Although the board held open meetings, the setting provided an uncomfortable atmosphere for residents to express their views. In response, the board members made themselves available for regular one-on-one chats with residents. More specifically, four times a year, board members designate an evening to meet with residents, who are assured that at least two to three members of the seven-person board will attend. The meetings are publicized for weeks in advance through as many means as possible. The community's response to the program has been extremely positive. Board members and residents alike agree that the meetings are a valuable source of information and contribute to the quality of the community.

- **Utilize group calling services**—Keeping in touch isn't always easy for a board of directors. So when the local phone company offered residential voice mail—which includes group calling services—the board of the Seneca Park Homeowners Association in Gaithersburg, Maryland decided to try it. The service allows each director to call a voice mail system and leave a message, which is then sent to every member of the board. When a board member has left a message, the other directors hear several beeps when they pick up their phone receivers. Consequently, the board can keep each other informed with only one call. Group calling turned out to be more than a great time saver. The board members agree that the service drastically increased the efficiency of board communications. It saved them from calling special meetings, helped them make faster decisions and allowed then to respond more quickly to resident inquiries. The expense—25 cents per person per call—was minimal. Community associations should contact their local phone company to see if it offers similar services.

- **Send thank you notes**—Homeowners get bombarded with lots of mail regarding the association—special notices, payment books and meeting agendas—sometimes it seems like they're being bombarded with requests and demands. One Maryland manager suggests adding something else to that list—thank you notes. It's a simple way for board members to let homeowners know that their contributions are appreciated. Whether it's for assisting with an official program or just doing a neighborly favor, a thank you note might make the difference between a resident resenting the board and becoming a consistent volunteer.

- **Utilize your newsletter**—Newsletters are a great way to inform residents about community activities, keep them abreast of financial and other managerial decisions, and increase revenue for your association by selling ads to local merchants. It's also a way to show residents how their fees and assessments are being used. Wailea Community Association in Maui, Hawaii put an interesting spin on one of the editions of their newsletter—they did a photo spread of the maintenance and community improvements occurring in the community. This gives owners an opportunity to see how association funds are being used. And, it's great for owners that just skim the articles—you can't miss the pictures!

- **Use friendly terminology**—Would you rather live in a complex or a property? A unit or a home? A Virginia manager suggests that community association boards consider changing their terminology to make residents feel more at home. Here are some other suggestions—use words like pool and tennis court rather than saying amenities; say resident rather than tenant or occupant; or call a work order a service request. But, before making any of these changes, be sure to check with your association's governing documents, local laws and state statutes to determine if they require you to use specific terminology.

Case Studies of Governance and Resident Involvement

case study #1

Braewood Heritage

Size:	Gated community of 400 attached homes
Age:	Built in the mid-1970's
Location:	Las Vegas, Nevada
Board Size:	Nine (9)
Contact:	Kay Dwyer, board member
Email:	Kaycd@ix.netcom.com

Common grounds include three swimming pools, three tennis courts, and an additional tennis court that has been turned into a sports court for the use of the children in the community so that they need not play in the streets. Braewood Heritage employs a certified manager, who has an excellent relationship with the board and the homeowners. Residents have respect for her, as she is open with them and concerned with their issues. She also serves as a liaison with the residents for anyone who might need errands run, a ride to an appointment or lawn care due to illness.

The association's board of directors meets monthly. Newsletters are also sent monthly with the minutes from board meetings, agendas for the next meeting, and a calendar of events. There are usually 10 to 20 homeowners in attendance at the board meetings. The board always allows a period of time at the beginning of the meeting for the residents' input.

Annual homeowners' meetings are well attended. There has never been a problem with quorum. The meetings run smoothly because there has been continual communication and openness with the residents. The homeowners also appreciate the fact that the board takes seriously its duty to "protect, maintain and enhance" the values of the properties. The CAI Nevada Chapter's Homeowner Council holds educational seminars on the premises to help educate homeowners and board members. Residents and board members from other associations are always welcome.

Kay Dwyer admits the CC&R's are complex, mostly due to Nevada's legislated requirements. However, their attorney is helpful in sorting out these issues. Should there be a need for changes in the CC&R's, the board holds two workshops for the homeowners prior to any voting. The last time there was a vote on an issue, it passed overwhelmingly on the first ballot. There are few infractions of the CC&R's and Rules and Regulations—mostly parking and barking dogs. There had previously been problems with scooters, but now they are to be used within a designated area. CC&R's and Rules and Regulations are uniformly enforced. A committee determines the rules and regulations, which were reviewed and re-written in 1998. If there is a resident who seems to be in conflict or confrontational, that resident is invited to give input and assistance with that particular issue. This generally resolves the confrontation.

Although it can be difficult to get residents to serve on committees, when there is a necessity and volunteers are requested, there is not a problem. For example, an ad-hoc committee was formed consisting of about six homeowners and two board members to develop a five-year plan for the association. Among other things, the committee hopes to expand the clubhouse and build a larger office for the manager. As for social events,

the owners held a parade on the Fourth of July and a home tour at Christmas time so that residents could see renovations done by other homeowners. Both were a great success. The residents form their own social groups for crafts, cards, swimming and such.

case study #2

Northgate Homeowners Association

Size	101 single-family homes
Age:	Six (6) years old
Location:	Las Vegas, Nevada
Board Size:	Three (3)
Contact:	Kevin Ruth, CMCA, Thoroughbred Management
E-mail:	Thoroughbredmgt@Juno.com

This community is run by a certified manager who brings knowledge, professionalism, experience, leadership and an objective opinion to the association. Governance is efficient and acceptable to the residents because the board and manager are proactive in resolving issues before they become problems. Both board and manager are fair and respectful to the homeowners, listening to their issues and requesting that homeowners assist with providing solutions to any problems that may arise. The board of directors meets every two months, with approximately ten homeowners at every meeting. There is usually membership input for approximately thirty minutes of every meeting.

Prior to annual homeowners' meetings, secret written ballots are mailed. The quorum was lowered to twenty (20%) percent, and there has been no problem with achieving quorum since. Annual meetings run smoothly and there are typically guest speakers from the city or county, refreshments are served and there is a raffle drawing for gift certificates.

CC&R's are being updated, as the present CC&R's are lengthy and in some sections poorly written. There are few infractions, mostly minor in nature. Rules and regulations are common sense rules and guidelines, such as when trash should go out, lawn maintenance responsibilities and so forth. Reviewed annually, the rules and regulations were developed by a membership committee and sent to all homeowners for review. They were then modified based upon homeowner input, and finally approved by the board of directors.

Developer transition issues still remain. Consequently, the manager continues to work for a smooth transition with the board and homeowners by showing there are common goals of developing a beautiful community backed by an efficiently run association. Board members are encouraged to make themselves available to the educational opportunities sponsored by the CAI Nevada Chapter. In addition, a three-hour seminar on "how to be a board member" is provided by an outside source. Homeowners are also encouraged make themselves available for CAI educational opportunities and information is regularly mailed to the homeowners regarding changes in Nevada's Common Interest Community statute, the ombudsman's office, etc.

Three social events are planned each year—two garage sales and the annual meeting. There are no formal programs in place for assisting residents, but lawn care in the

event of illness, for instance, is available. Every two months there is some form of communication with the homeowners. There is a bulletin board on the gate on which residents may post their needs, wants and issues. Approximately 20 percent of the community is involved with committees or the board of directors, their involvement being motivated by the desire for a good community.

case study #3

Third Creek Homeowners Association

Size:	151 condominiums
Age:	Nine (9) years old
Location:	Incline Village in northern Nevada
Board Size:	Seven (7)
Contact:	Norman Rosensteel, CMCA, AMS, PCAM, Associated Management, Inc.
Email:	normanr@ami.incline-village.nv.us

Third Creek is an established association whose board of directors meets every other month, or six times per year, in addition to an organizational meeting following the annual meeting to elect officers. There are usually four to ten units represented at the board meetings. The board allows comments from the owners throughout the meeting. Informational letters with board meeting notices are sent to the residents six to eight times a year. Owners who cannot attend meetings call the manager to express their opinions on association issues. Owners also will communicate with other owners prior to a vote on a big issue. Many board members attend CAI functions and work at staying current with community association issues. The manager also mails educational updates to all board members about four times a year.

Voting for board members is done by secret ballot, as required by Nevada's Common Interest Community statute. Voting on other issues is by written ballot, which is included on the proxy mailed to all owners. Owners can also vote in person at the annual meeting. There is no problem with quorum except for the budget ratification meeting, which is held in late November for the sole purpose of ratifying the budget. Most owners feel no need to attend this meeting because by this time their questions regarding the budget have been answered. Annual meetings run smoothly because of good communication prior to the meeting regarding the issues, detailed preparation and anticipation of problems that may arise during the meeting. In addition, a good facilitator runs the meeting.

For the most part, the CC&R's are simple with a select few that require interpretation. Amendments are needed to remove developer language and to make them more easily understood. There are few infractions of the governing documents, with most owners making corrections when violations are brought to their attention. Rules and regulations are quite rigid, but the board is very flexible with enforcement, using a common sense approach to violations. Rules and regulations are reviewed about every two years with input from the membership. The manager handles 95 percent of the problems that arise with members. Where procedures to not address a situation or the owner is not satisfied with the manager's decision, the issues are turned over to the board for direction and res-

olution. The manager talks with the board president at least weekly and with the other board members at least monthly.

Third Creek development began in 1982, but because several developers went bankrupt, the developer transition did not occur until 1994. The project was built in seven phases under four developers and five different builders. The association is currently in construction defect litigation with two developers and two general contractors. Although this association has faced several difficult issues in the past year, the board has been open, honest and communicative with the residents, explaining the various issues. As a result, the board has had the support and cooperation of the residents in the resolution of some of these issues. The residents and the board are working together in negotiations on other issues, which will avoid litigation. Community spirit has been enhanced through these joint efforts.

case study #4

Tapatio II

Size:	73 condominiums
Age:	Five (5) years
Location:	Henderson, Nevada
Board Size:	Three (3)
Contact:	Pat Taylor, CMCA, PCAM, Taylor Association Management
Email:	TAM00Pat@aol.com

In 2000, there was a smooth transition from the developer, with items of concern being taken care of to the board's satisfaction. Most board members are CAI members and attend CAI's seminars for educational purposes. The board of directors meets bi-monthly, with homeowners in attendance given the opportunity to speak. The board is fair, taking all facts into consideration before making a decision. The board has a high visibility, is easily accessible and works hard to make sure the rules are followed while taking into consideration the particular situations of the residents. There is good communication between the board, the owners, and the manager. The manager follows the board's directions, monitors violations and attends all meetings.

Annual homeowners' meetings are held in compliance with Nevada's Common Interest Community statute, as are voting procedures, and there has never been a problem with quorum. Annual meetings run smoothly due to strong organization and a president who keeps to the agenda. CC&R's have also been revised to comply with Nevada's Common Interest Community statute and are very user friendly. There are few violations. Rules and regulations are flexible and considerate of individual situations. These are reviewed annually with membership input.

Tapatio II has several social events throughout the year including potlucks, poolside get-togethers and a Christmas decoration contest. A newsletter is produced by the secretary of the homeowners' association and is published bi-monthly. Residents tend to get involved because Tapatio II is a small community and everyone knows their neighbors. Most of the residents feel connected. There is community spirit and a desire to continue to make the community a good place to live.

Green Valley Ranch Association

Size: Master association of 3,907 apartments, town homes and single-family homes. There are 32 sub-associations, of which sixteen are gated communities.

Age: Six (6) years

Location: Henderson, Nevada

Board Size: Seven (7)

Contact: Sara Barry, PCAM

Email: seblv@aol.com

Now under owner control, Green Valley Ranch Community Association's board of directors meets monthly, with approximately 20 to 30 members attending. Members are given an hour in which to speak prior to the board's discussions. Elections for the annual homeowners' meetings are by proxy and secret ballot. Annual meetings run smoothly because of thorough planning, calling and communications. Members of the board of directors are provided training, including updates on new laws and the community.

A monthly delegate meeting is held to help facilitate communications between the board and homeowners. In addition, the board has adopted committee charters with a board member meeting with each committee to provide help and direction. The Legal Committee meets on a monthly basis with the developer and its general counsel to discuss transition issues and to assure communication between the developer and the association.

Governance in this community is efficient and acceptable to homeowners because of constant communication via the Web site, newsletter, special notices and social events. The newsletter is mailed to all residents every other month and has gone from four pages to twelve pages because of the residents' appreciation for communication within the community.

The board of directors realized that building a real community was a key priority in helping to weather the transition from the developer, which was underway in 2000. Social events for residents helped to resolve issues related to the transition. These social events included a summer "open house" at which owners could have their questions answered by individuals or committees in a social setting. Tables with information about the committees were set-up. The Henderson Police Department, association management company and landscape contractor also had tables. T-shirts with the Green Valley Ranch logo were displayed and sold at-cost to residents. A fall "hoe down" was held in a local park within the community. Local merchants and residents who own businesses in the community were also involved. There have been other social events as well, including special socials for children. All of the events have been extremely well attended.

President's breakfasts are held quarterly to invite city of Henderson officials, board of directors, the developer's representatives, delegates and presidents of the sub-associations for the purpose of working together to resolve issues facing the community. The board created a Political Action/City Liaison Committee for the purpose of working with the city of Henderson on issues facing Green Valley Ranch. This has been so successful that the city is involving the board in several other areas where community input is needed. Residents volunteer readily for the board and committees because they are dedicated to improving property values and building a sense of community.

SECTION TWO

Conflict Resolution

Community associations face an interesting challenge: they function very much like a government, including having the authority to enact and enforce "laws." Yet some residents do not recognize this jurisdiction and simply feel no obligation to abide by the rules set down in the community's governing documents, particularly the covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs). Inevitably, conflict arises.

Resolving conflicts between residents and the association is a difficult and delicate task for boards of directors. Boards have an obligation to enforce the CC&Rs because that's how they maintain the appearance and value of the community and ensure a high standard of livability for all residents. On the other hand, residents are neighbors and friends, and they are entitled to reasonable treatment.

Ways to Resolve Conflict

CAI recommends the following progression of steps to resolve conflict successfully when it does occur:

- Start with a casual conversation. Perhaps the resident is simply unaware of a particular rule or is in the process of correcting it already. Get some information, gauge the resident's attitude, and offer to help.

- Send a friendly letter reminding the resident of the conversation. The letter should state the rule that has been violated, and it might explain why it's important for all residents to observe the rules. Be positive, and again offer to help.

- Send a second letter. Be business-like and firm, and cite the specific section of the CC&Rs that has been violated. Give the resident a date when the problem must be corrected, and grant a reasonable amount of time. Explain what will happen if the problem isn't resolved by the specified date. For example, the letter may state that the association will suspend privileges or impose financial penalties.

- Send official notification that the association is about to take action. Schedule a hearing when the resident may address the association. Be willing to negotiate a date and time that allows the resident to attend.

- Conduct a fair hearing and treat the resident with respect. Avoid a confrontational situation. Allow the resident to bring witnesses or counsel to the hearing, and let them know when they can expect a decision. The panel hearing the case may comprise members of the board or rules committee, the managing agent, or some combination of these. In some serious cases, association counsel may be invited to observe.

- After the hearing the board will decide how to proceed. There are numerous options, and the board should be willing to compromise on a solution that achieves the desired result. For example, the board may grant an extension of time to comply with the rule, suggest an alternative solution, suspend privileges, impose monetary penalties, or some combination of these.

- Allow the resident to appeal the decision. Be sure the body hearing the appeal is different than those who participated in the hearing or decided its outcome. For example, a panel of past board members might comprise an appeals committee—these individuals have a history in the community and knowledge of the governing documents, but they're removed from current governance and operations.

- Pursue alternative disputed resolution (ADR) options if the association and the resident cannot resolve their differences.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

ADR is less costly and more productive than litigation. It is comprised of three phases: negotiation, mediation, and arbitration. In negotiation, the parties identify the issues, educate one another about their needs and interests, propose settlement options, and bargain over the final resolution. In mediation, a neutral mediator facilitates the negotiation between the association and resident to help them agree on a solution that is acceptable to each of them. In arbitration, a neutral arbitrator hears both sides of the case and renders a decision based on evidence and testimony. An arbitrator's decision is as legal and binding as a court decision; however, the process is much less formal and far less expensive.

Ways to Minimize Rules Violations

In addition, there are several actions the association can take to minimize rules violations, reduce conflict between residents and the community and to build consensus. For instance, the community association can:

- Educate residents about the rules—what they are, why they are important, why compliance maintains property values, and so on. Use every vehicle and opportunity to remind residents of the rules.

- Enforce rules consistently and even-handedly.

- Intervene as early as possible; don't allow the violation to continue or to become serious.

- Modify association governing documents or pass a resolution confirming the association's commitment to alternative dispute resolution.

- Establish a policy that outlines how the association will resolve conflicts. This policy may suggest timelines, hearing procedures, hearing panel composition, and support the association's commitment to alternative dispute resolution. Adhere to the policy and apply it in all situations.

Appendices 1–3 contain a sample dispute resolution policy, a provision for mediation, and a provision for the selection of a mediator for large communities to assist community associations with the modifications of governing documents.

Case Studies of Conflict Resolution

case study #1

Northgate Homeowners Association

Size:	101 single-family homes
Age:	Six (6) years
Location:	Las Vegas, Nevada
Board Size:	Three (3)
Contact:	Kevin Ruth, CMCA, Thoroughbred Management
Email:	Thoroughbredmgt@Juno.com

Should there be a violation of a governing document, the goal of the community is to obtain reasonable compliance. The first step is a friendly letter to remind the homeowner that there has been a violation. If the issue is not resolved at this stage, a second letter is sent, and, if necessary, followed by a request for a hearing. The board and management handle the compliance issues, and feel the best way to mitigate a problem is to have the homeowner understand and agree with the solution.

Violations of governing documents are quite infrequent and so far all have been resolved within the community. Thus, formal ADR processes have not yet been necessary. Attorneys are used prudently when, for example, there is need for interpretation of the law or documents, or in a complex issue.

case study #2

Third Creek Homeowner's Association

Size:	151 condominiums
Age:	Nine (9) years
Location:	Incline Village in northern Nevada
Board Size:	Seven (7)
Contact:	Norman Rosensteel, PCAM, Associated Management, Inc.
Email:	normanr@ami.incline-village.nv.us

The board believes that all owners have the right to be heard. So far, the board and owners have worked out their problems in a mutually acceptable resolution in all disputes. Since disputes are infrequent, the association has never been involved in mediation or arbitration by outside parties. All disputes, other than the construction defect lawsuit, have been resolved within the community. Attorneys are generally used for such advice as, "Does the board's proposed resolution sound fair?" or "Is it legal?"

case study #3

Tapatio II

Size:	73 condominiums
Age:	Five (5) years
Location:	Henderson, Nevada
Board Size:	Three (3)
Contact:	Pat Taylor, PCAM, Taylor Association Management
Email:	TAM00Pat@aol.com

The association's governing documents provide for hearings by the board of directors on any conflicts or violations that may arise. Every effort is made to come up with a win-win solution to each issue. Issues are infrequent and, so far, all have been resolved within the community. At this point, attorneys haven't played a role in any of these conflicts.

case study #4

Green Valley Ranch Community Association

Size:	Master association of 3,907 apartments, town homes and single-family homes. There are 32 sub-associations, of which 16 are gated communities.
Age:	Six (6) years
Location:	Henderson, Nevada
Board Size:	Seven (7)
Contact:	Sara Barry, PCAM
Email:	seblv@aol.com

Governing documents provide for an enforcement policy and a compliance committee. The board attempts to conciliate any problems. While issues such as parking, signs and landscaping are frequent, ninety-nine percent of the violations are resolved within the community. Violations are referred to an attorney only when many attempts have been made without success to resolve the situation. Mediation through the Nevada Real Estate Division is the process that is used and there is usually a resolution through that process. So far, no issues have gone to arbitration or litigation.

case study #5

Heron's Cove Condominium

Size:	406 units
Age:	30 years
Location:	Montgomery Village, Maryland
Board Size:	Five (5)
Contact:	Rose Hopp-Capriotti, Manager
Email:	heronscovecondo@earthlink.net

The bylaws of Heron's Cove Condominiums give the board of directors authority to take action to enforce the obligations of the unit owners under both the bylaws and the association rules and regulations. In order for action to be considered on a reported grievance, a written statement must be submitted. The board of directors distributes a grievance form to assist residents with presenting their grievance to the board. On the grievance form, the board/management specifies that they are not required to respond to each complaint and that they reserve the right not to hear grievances that aren't within the scope of the board's jurisdiction. The grievance requires that residents fill in the following information:

- Contact information for self and the person(s) involved in the dispute
- The action that occurred that prompted the grievance
- Date/location of incident
- Pet name/description/owner (if applicable)
- Names/contact information of witnesses
- Additional comments

Board members hear appropriate cases and decide on a fair and reasonable solution. Thus far, the process has been very successful in preventing the escalation of conflicts.

Appendix #1: Sample Dispute Resolution Policy

Any owner or occupant must give written notice to the board requesting a hearing with the board and must attend such hearing to discuss amicable resolution of any dispute before that owner or occupant files any lawsuit against the association, the board, any director, or any agent of the association. The owner or occupant shall, in such notice and at the hearing, make a good faith effort to explain the grievance to the board and to resolve the dispute in an amicable fashion, and shall give the board a reasonable opportunity to address the owner's or occupant's grievance before filing suit. Upon receiving a request for a hearing, the board shall give notice of the date, time and place of the hearing to the person requesting the hearing. The board shall schedule this hearing for a date neither less than seven (7) nor more than twenty-one (21) days from the date of receipt of the notice of hearing by the person requesting the hearing.

Appendix #2: Sample Provision for Mediation

A. Dispute Resolution

No dispute between any of the following entities or individuals shall be commenced until the parties have submitted to non-binding mediation: Owners; Members; the Board of Directors; officers in the Association; or the Association.

Disputes between Owners that are not regulated by the Declaration shall not be subject to the dispute resolution process.

B. Outside Mediator

In a dispute between any of the above entities or individuals, the parties must voluntarily submit to the following mediation procedures before commencing any judicial or administrative proceeding. Each party will represent himself/herself individually or through an agent or representative, or may be represented by counsel. The dispute will be brought before a mutually selected mediator. Such mediator will either be an attorney-mediator skilled in community association law, a Professional Community Association Manager ("PCAM®") as certified by the Community Associations Institute, or a Certified Property Manager ("CPM®") as certified by the Institute of Real Estate Managers. In order to be eligible to mediate a dispute under this provision, a Mediator may not reside in _____, work for any of the parties, represent any of the parties, nor have any conflict of interest with any of the parties. The Board shall maintain a list of no less than five (5) potential mediators, but the parties will be in no way limited to their choice by this list. Costs for such mediator shall be shared equally by the parties. If the parties cannot mutually agree upon the selection of a mediator after reasonable efforts (not more than thirty (30) days), each party shall select their own mediator and a third will be appointed by the two selected mediators. If this selection method must be used, each party will pay the costs of their selected mediator and will share equally the costs of the third appointed mediator.

C. Mediation is Not a Waiver

By agreeing to use this Dispute Resolution process, the parties in no way waive their rights to extraordinary relief including, but not limited to, temporary restraining orders or temporary injunctions, if such relief is necessary to protect or preserve a party's legal rights before a mediation may be scheduled.

D. Assessment Collection and Lien Foreclosure

The provisions of this Declaration dealing with Alternate Dispute Resolution shall not apply to the collection of assessments and/or the foreclosure of the Assessment Lien by the Association as set out in the Declaration.

E. Term
This Article XV, Alternative Dispute Resolution, shall be in full force and effect for an initial period of three (3) years from the date of execution of this Declaration. However, this Article shall remain in full force and effect unless, at the first open meeting of the Association after such initial period, a majority of the Board of Directors votes to terminate the provisions of this Article XV, Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Appendix #3: Sample Provision for Selection of Mediator—Large Community

Section 1. Dispute Resolution. No dispute between any of the following entities or individuals shall be commenced until the parties have submitted to non-binding mediation: Owners; Members; the Board of Directors; officers in the Association; or the Association. Disputes between Owners that are not regulated by the Declaration shall not be subject to the dispute resolution process.

Section 2. Outside Mediator. In a dispute between any of the above entities or individuals, the parties must voluntarily submit to the following mediation procedures before commencing any judicial or administrative proceeding. Each party will represent himself/herself individually or through an agent or representative, or may be represented by counsel. The dispute will be brought before a mutually selected mediator. Such mediator will either be an attorney-mediator skilled in community association law, a Professional Community Association Manager ("PCAM®") as certified by the Community Associations Institute, or a Certified Property Manager ("CPM®") as certified by the Institute of Real Estate Managers. In order to be eligible to mediate a dispute under this provision, a Mediator may not reside in _____, work for any of the parties, represent any of the parties, nor have any conflict of interest with any of the parties. The Board shall maintain a list of no less than ten (10) potential mediators, but the parties will be in no way limited to their choice by this list. Costs for such mediator shall be shared equally by the parties. If the parties cannot mutually agree upon the selection of a mediator after reasonable efforts (not more than thirty (30) days), each party shall select their own mediator and a third will be appointed by the two selected mediators. If this selection method must be used, each party will pay the costs of their selected mediator and will share equally the costs of the third appointed mediator.

Section 3. Mediation is Not a Waiver. By agreeing to use this Dispute Resolution process, the parties in no way waive their rights to extraordinary relief including, but not limited to, temporary restraining orders or temporary injunctions, if such relief is necessary to protect or preserve a party's legal rights before a mediation may be scheduled.

Section 4. Assessment Collection. The provisions of this Declaration dealing with Alternate Dispute Resolution shall not apply to the collection of assessments by the Association as set out in the Declaration.

Section 5. Term. This Article XV, Alternative Dispute Resolution, shall be in full force and effect for an initial period of three (3) years from the date of execution of this Declaration. However, this Article shall remain in full force and effect unless, at the first open meeting of the Association after such initial period, a majority of the Board of Directors votes to terminate the provisions of this Article XIV, Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Additional Resources

Conflict Resolution: How ADR Helps Community Associations, A Guide for Association Practitioners, Community Associations Press, 2004.

Be Reasonable: How Community Associations Can Enforce Rules Without Antagonizing Residents, Going to Court, or Starting World War III, Community Associations Institute, 1998.

Communications for Community Associations, Guide for Association Practitioners #15, Community Associations Institute, 2000.

Community First! Emerging Visions Reshaping America's Condominium and Homeowner Associations, Community Associations Institute, 1999.

Introduction to Community Association Management, Governance, and Services, Guide for Association Practitioners #1, Community Associations Institute, 2002.

Everyday Governance: The Community Association's Guide to Flags, Rentals, Holiday Decorations, Hoops, and Other Headaches, Community Associations Press, 2006.

For more information or a catalog, please call the Community Associations Press toll-free Customer Service line (888) 224-4321 (M–F, 9–6:30 ET) or visit www.caionline.org/bookstore.cfm.

Websites
Policy Governance by Dr. John Carver—*www.policygovernance.com*
National Center for Nonprofit Boards—*www.ncnb.org*
Community Associations Institute—*www.caionline.org*
Foundation for Community Association Research—*www.cairf.org*

About the Foundation for Community Association Research

The Foundation for Community Association Research is a national, nonprofit 501(c)(3) devoted to common interest community research, development, and scholarship. Incorporated in 1975, the Foundation is the only organization both recording the history of, and identifying trends in, residential community association living; supports and conducts research; and makes that information available to those involved in association governance and management.

The Foundation's mission is to promote positive change for all stakeholders who live and work in homeowner, community, and condominium associations by:

• Discovering future trends and opportunities
• Supporting and conducting research
• Facilitating and promoting cooperation among industry partners (owners, managers, and product and service providers)
• Providing resources that help educate the public

Operating under the belief that community associations reflect a deep commitment to grassroots democracy, the Foundation has fostered the growth of associations by providing educational and research support through CAI's chapters. We are committed to providing quality research and publications for promoting academic interest in community associations.

To learn more about the Foundation for Community Association Research, call CAI Direct at (888) 224-4321 or (703) 548-8600 (M–F, 9–6:30 ET) or email foundation@caionline.org.

About Community Associations Institute (CAI)

Community Associations Institute (CAI) is a national, nonprofit 501(c)(6) association created in 1973 to provide resources and education to America's 300,000 residential condominium, cooperative, and homeowner associations and related professionals and service providers. The Institute is dedicated to fostering vibrant, responsive, competent community associations that promote harmony, community, and responsible leadership.

As a multidisciplinary alliance, CAI serves all stakeholders in community associations. CAI members include condominium and homeowner associations, cooperatives and association-governed planned communities of all sizes and architectural types; individual homeowners; community association managers and management firms; public officials; and lawyers, accountants, engineers, reserve specialists, builder/developers, and other providers of professional services and products for community associations. CAI has nearly 30,000 members in its chapters throughout the U.S. and in several foreign countries.

CAI serves its members in the following ways:

• CAI advances excellence through seminars, workshops, conferences, and education programs, some of which lead to professional designations.
• CAI publishes the largest collection of resources available on community associations, including books, guides, *Common Ground* magazine, and specialized newsletters on community association finance, law, and management.
• CAI advocates community association interests before legislatures, regulatory bodies, and the courts.
• CAI conducts research and acts as a clearinghouse for information on innovations and best practices in community association creation and management.
• CAI provides networking and referral opportunities through both the national office and local CAI chapters, CAI-sponsored insurance programs for directors and officers, and discounts on products and services.

For membership or other information, call the national office at (888) 224-4321 (M–F, 9–6:30 ET) or visit our "Why Join CAI?" section on the CAI website, www.caionline.org/join.

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FOUNDATION FOR
community
ASSOCIATION RESEARCH

225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314
www.cairf.org

WHO SHOULD JUDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION SUCCESS?

The residents who live in community associations!

NATIONAL RESEARCH BY IBOPE ZOGBY INTERNATIONAL

WHAT DO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION RESIDENTS SAY?

On a scale of one to five, with one being very bad and five being very good, how would you rate your overall experience living in a community association?

Positive (4 & 5)
Neutral (3)
Negative (1 & 2)

Numbers represent percentages.

Totals in charts may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Year	Positive (4 & 5)	Neutral (3)	Negative (1 & 2)
2012	70	22	8
2009	71	17	12
2007	72	19	9
2005	71	19	10
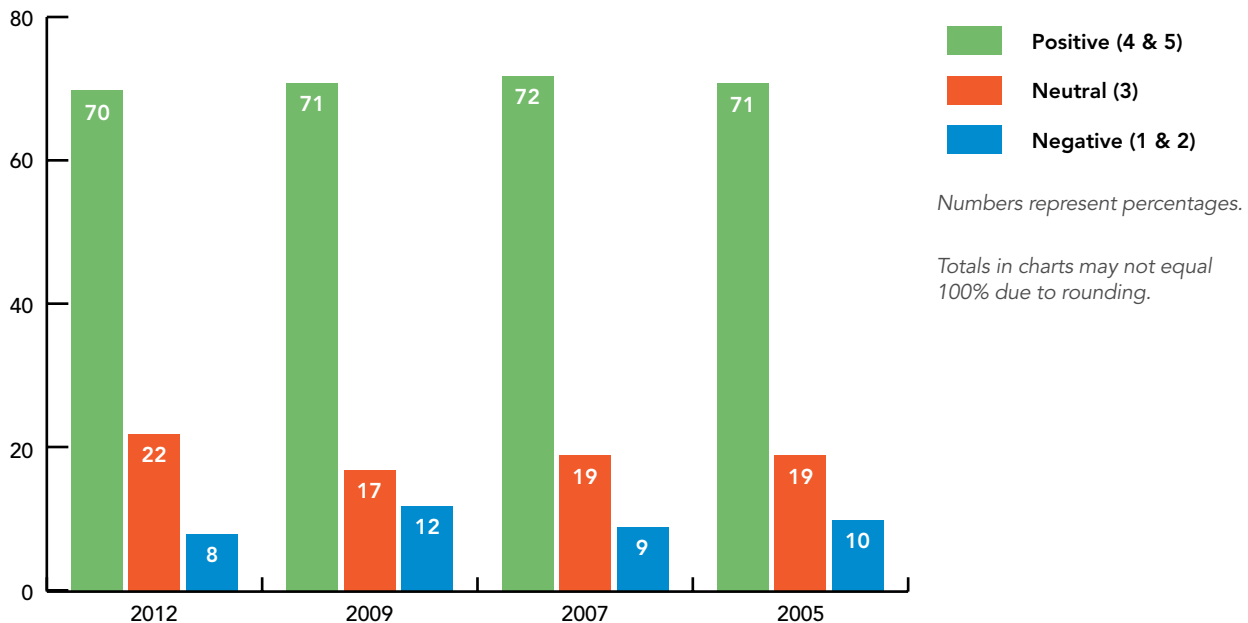
A national survey conducted in February 2012 by IBOPE Zogby International affirms what we learned from similar national surveys in 2005, 2007 and 2009.

▌ Residents rate their overall community association experience as positive—
   by almost a nine to one margin!
▌ Association board members strive to serve the best interests of their communities.
▌ Community managers provide value and support to associations.
▌ Residents believe overwhelmingly that association rules protect property values.
▌ Homeowners value the return they get for their association assessments.
▌ Residents do not want additional government intervention in their communities.

The findings from national tracking surveys in 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2012 were based on telephone interviews with random, nationally representative samples of adults residing in homeowners associations, condominiums, cooperatives and other planned communities, collectively called "community associations" in this report.

FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
research

The 2012 IBOPE Zogby survey was sponsored by the Foundation for Community Association Research, a CAI-affiliated, nonprofit organization dedicated to community association research, development and scholarship.

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Difficult economic times typically create more negative public views toward most institutions—whether Wall Street, the U.S. Congress or industry. But that hasn't happened in the case of the more than 315,000 U.S. community associations. Despite serious economic and housing issues, community associations continue to get high approval ratings from their residents—the people who know best.

Critics of community associations like to focus on largely isolated, anecdotal reports in the media. Conflicts make headlines, and that's what most Americans read in newspapers and see on television about community associations. These stories are news because they are the exception to the rule. We read about the plane that crashed, not the thousands of flights that landed safely the same day.

Unfortunately, "good news" is close to being an oxymoron. We don't see stories about the tens of millions of homeowners who are satisfied in their communities. We read few media profiles about volunteer board members who lead their associations quietly and effectively. We rarely see stories about managers and other professionals who provide invaluable guidance and support to their community association clients.

But when you ask residents about their own community associations—when you ask the people who know—the news is overwhelmingly positive.

But not perfect. Utopia doesn't exist. Some community associations contend with disagreements and conflict—not unlike our workplaces, schools, social organizations and places of worship. There are opportunities for disagreements and conflict in every type of neighborhood, including community associations. While all community associations do not function as well as we might like, it's reassuring to know that reality is much more positive than some HOA critics would have us believe.

We encourage homeowners who are dissatisfied to step up and play a positive role in their associations. Homeowners get out of their communities what they put into them. There's no substitute for active and constructive homeowner involvement and no better way to build a true sense of community. This vision is reflected in associations that become better—even preferred—places to call home.

CAI offers a variety of tools and resources for the homeowners who lead their associations, as well as three levels of professional education for community managers. Visit www.caionline.org/edcenter.

GOVERNING BOARDS

Do you think the members of your elected governing board strive to serve the best interests of the community as a whole?

Legend:
- Absolutely (green)
- For the most part (orange)
- Not at all (blue)
- Not sure (yellow)

Numbers represent percentages.

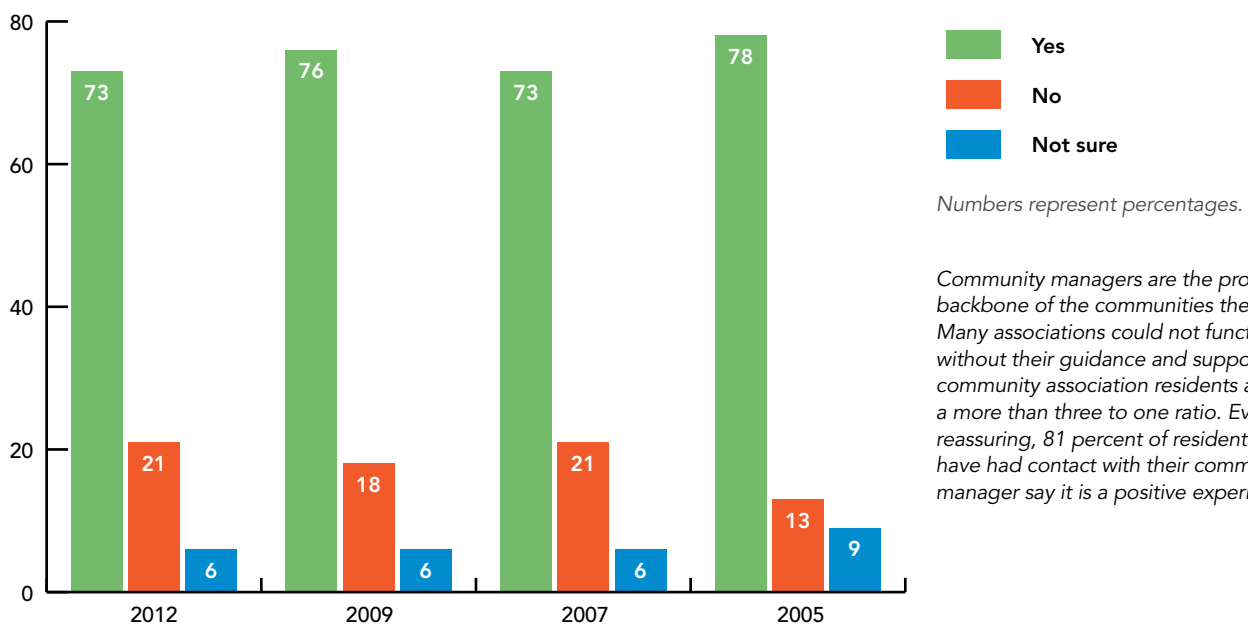| Year	Absolutely	For the most part	Not at all	Not sure
2012	44	44	10	2
2009	44	45	7	4
2007	47	41	10	3
2005	54	35	9	2

It's specious to condemn community associations when nearly 90 percent of all residents believe their governing boards strive to serve their communities—and when 91 percent say they are on friendly terms with their board members. These findings validate reality: the vast majority of people who govern community associations are committed volunteers working diligently to build and sustain successful communities.

COMMUNITY MANAGERS

Does the community manager provide value and support to residents and the community as a whole?

Legend:
- Yes (green)
- No (orange)
- Not sure (blue)

Numbers represent percentages.

Year	Yes	No	Not sure
2012	73	21	6
2009	76	18	6
2007	73	21	6
2005	78	13	9

Community managers are the professional backbone of the communities they serve. Many associations could not function without their guidance and support, and community association residents agree by a more than three to one ratio. Even more reassuring, 81 percent of residents who have had contact with their community manager say it is a positive experience.

ASSOCIATION RULES

Do the rules in your community protect and enhance property values, harm them or make no difference?

Protect and enhance
Harm
No difference
Not sure

Numbers represent percentages.

Rules and restrictions can be a source of disagreement and discontent in any environment. Many people simply don't like to be told they can't do something. Despite this very natural tendency, only 3 percent of community association residents believe their association rules harm property values, while 76 percent say the rules protect and enhance property values.

Best aspects of living in a community association

24% Neighborhood attractiveness
17% Less maintenance for owners
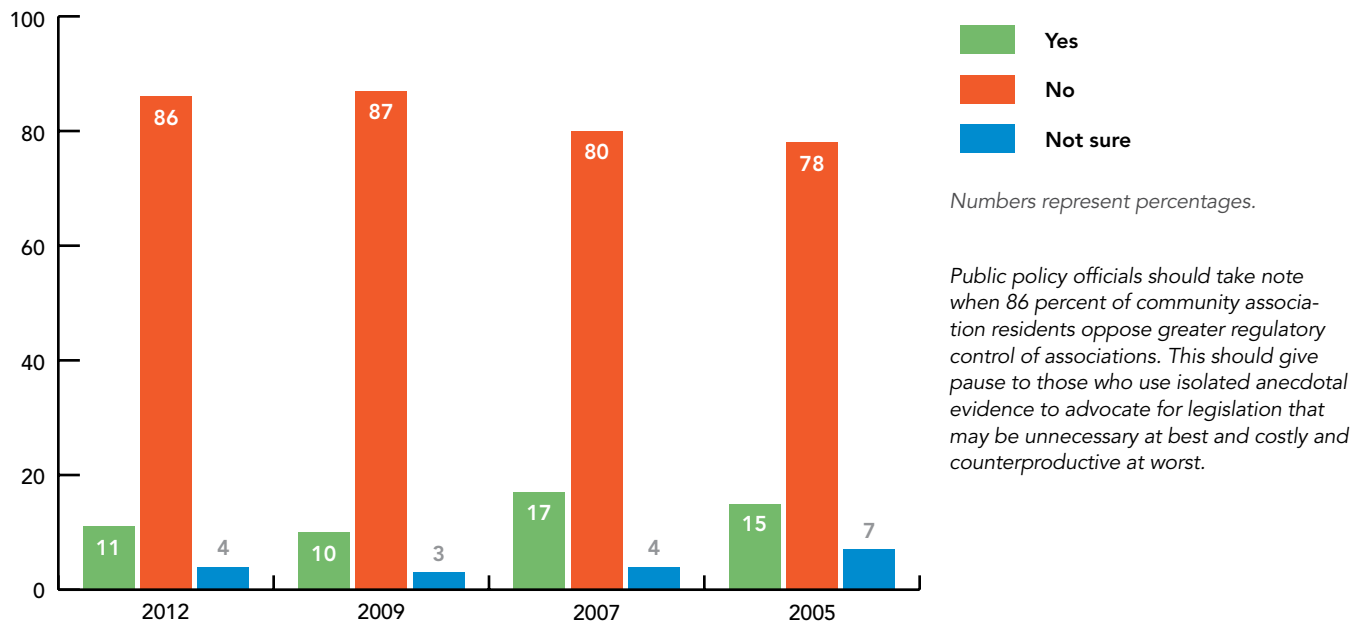13% Community safety
12% Property values
 8% Responsible neighbors

Worst aspects of living in a community association

34% Nothing bad about the association
15% Restrictions on exterior improvements
10% Dealing with neighbors
 9% Paying assessments
 8% Dissatisfaction with association board
 7% Restrictions on parking

Twenty-five percent of respondents reported a "significant" personal issue or disagreement with their associations in the past. Of those, 42 percent were satisfied with the result, while 35 percent were unsatisfied. For most of the others, the issue was unresolved at the time of the survey. It's interesting that 25 percent had experienced a significant issue and that 35 percent of them were unsatisfied, yet only 8 percent of residents are unsatisfied with their associations overall. This strongly suggests that the vast majority of residents recognize and appreciate the net benefit of living in their communities—even when there are differences of opinion.
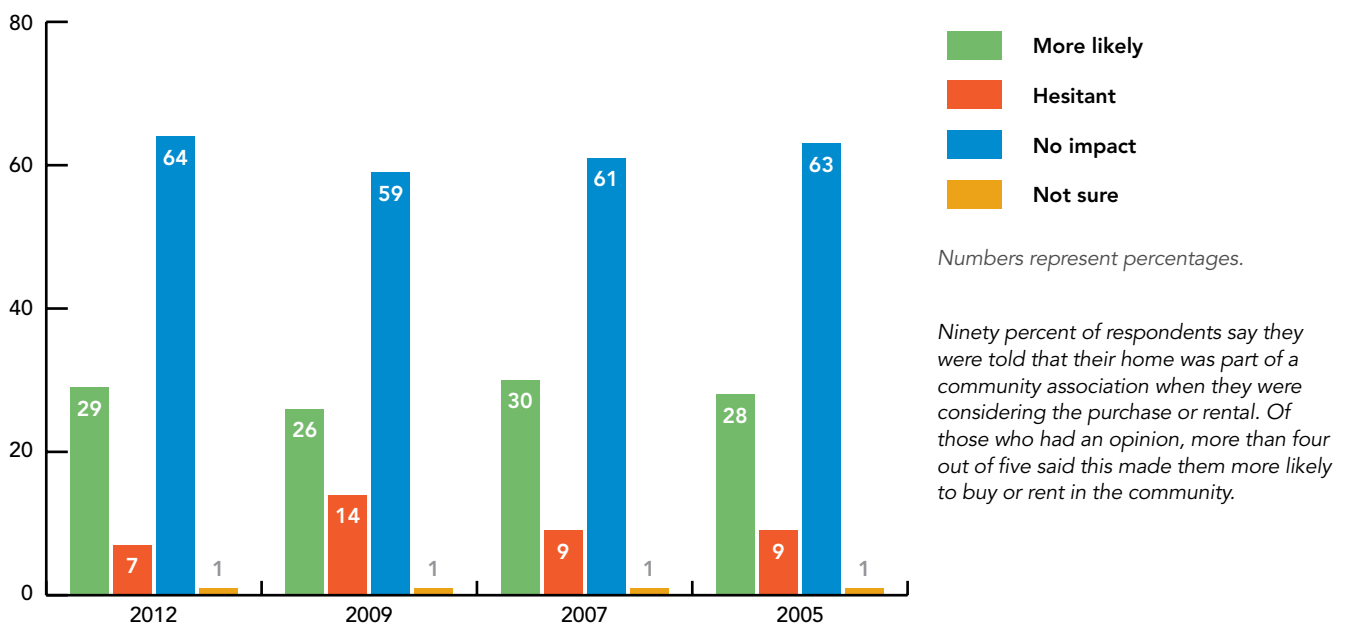
GOVERNMENT REGULATION

The governance of community associations is subject to differing state laws and regulations. Would you like to see more government control of associations?
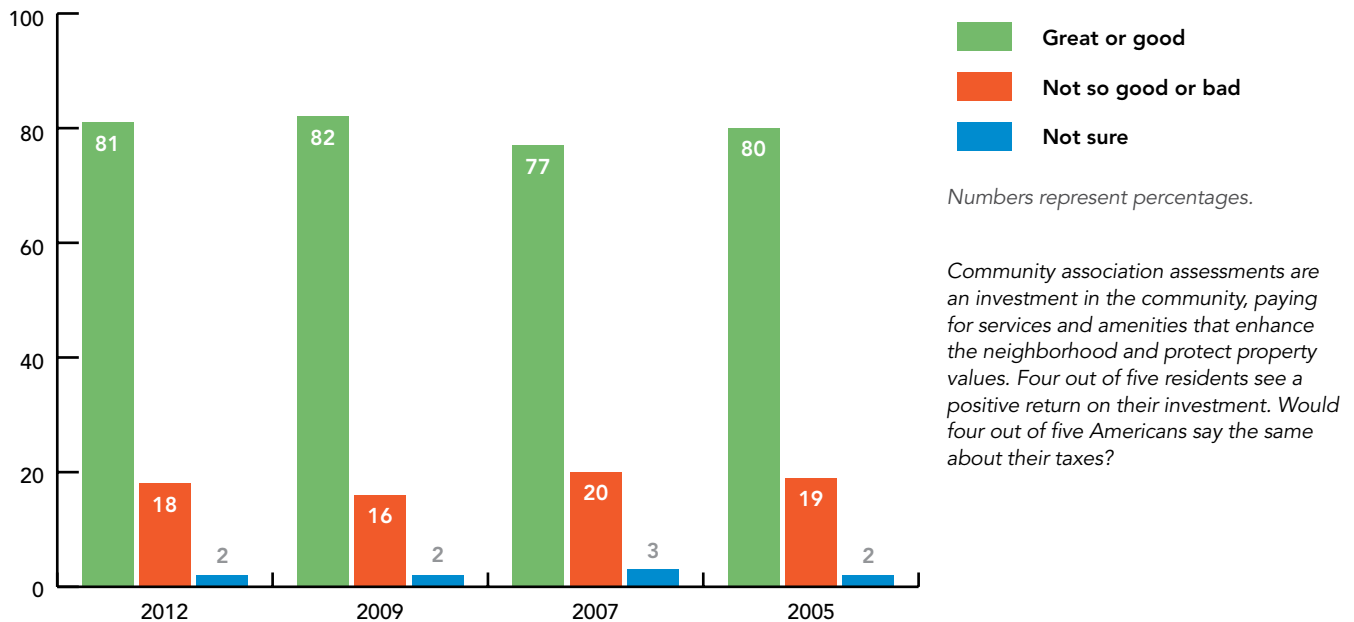

Legend:
- Yes (green)
- No (orange)
- Not sure (blue)

Year	Yes	No	Not sure
2012	11	86	4
2009	10	87	3
2007	17	80	4
2005	15	78	7

Numbers represent percentages.

Public policy officials should take note when 86 percent of community association residents oppose greater regulatory control of associations. This should give pause to those who use isolated anecdotal evidence to advocate for legislation that may be unnecessary at best and costly and counterproductive at worst.

PRE-PURCHASE AWARENESS

Did the fact that your current home is in a community association make you more likely to purchase or rent your home, make you hesitant about purchasing or renting your home or have no impact?

Legend:
- More likely (green)
- Hesitant (orange)
- No impact (blue)
- Not sure (yellow)

Year	More likely	Hesitant	No impact	Not sure
2012	29	7	64	1
2009	26	14	59	1
2007	30	9	61	1
2005	28	9	63	1

Numbers represent percentages.

Ninety percent of respondents say they were told that their home was part of a community association when they were considering the purchase or rental. Of those who had an opinion, more than four out of five said this made them more likely to buy or rent in the community.

ASSOCIATION ASSESSMENTS

Considering your overall assessments and the services provided by your association, how would you describe the return for what you pay in assessments?

Great or good

Not so good or bad

Not sure

Numbers represent percentages.

Community association assessments are an investment in the community, paying for services and amenities that enhance the neighborhood and protect property values. Four out of five residents see a positive return on their investment. Would four out of five Americans say the same about their taxes?

Average monthly association assessments

53% $100 or less
27% $101 to $300
8% $301 to $500
4% More than $500
4% No answer
4% Not required

Five percent of respondents reported being behind on their assessment payments to the association. Almost half of those said the association tried to work with them by offering special payment plans, deferred or partial payments or another options.

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research

The 2012 IBOPE Zogby research was sponsored by the Foundation for Community Association Research. The foundation is a nonprofit organization created in 1975 to keep CAI at the forefront of scholarship, knowledge and insight pertaining to community association management and governance. Visit www.cairf.org for information about research projects, publications, scholarships and more.

Visit www.cairf.org.

community
ASSOCIATIONS INSTITUTE

This document was developed and published by Community Associations Institute. CAI is an international membership association that works in partnership with 59 domestic chapters, a chapter in South Africa and housing leaders in a number of other countries. CAI provides three levels of professional education for community managers and an extensive array of resources and learning tools for community association board members and other homeowner leaders.

Visit www.caionline.org.

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Building Community

by Wendy Linow, CMCA, AMS, PCAM

"A community is a group of people united by the common objects of their love."
St. Augustine, The City of God

"Community is the relationship we build with one another in working to achieve America's historic ideals. Our communities, in turn, are where we test the abstract principles of liberty and justice against our own experience in our neighborhoods…"
Institute for the Study of Civic Values
www.iscv.org

Are you and your neighbors united by the love you share for your community? Does your community association evoke the principles of liberty and justice for all members? If you didn't answer "yes" to both of these questions, your association probably has a long way to go before it can feel and act like a community.

It appears that the Commission for Common Interest Communities (CIC) has received frequent "noes" when they asked these questions and others like them during their first year of service to the state. The CIC has formally recommended that managers be required to "build… a sense of community within an[y] association" they manage [Proposed Regulation for Common-Interest Communities, December 18, 2004, Sec. 16 (b) (6)].

It is true that managers can *assist* in building community among the members of the associations they manage. We can:

- ❖ Behave proactively, thereby avoiding problems and conflicts before they happen.
- ❖ Become an advocate for everyone in the Association, not just the Board of Directors or Board President (the person most managers deal with most often)
- ❖ Draw people out with open-ended questions ("what do you think we should do about this situation?").
- ❖ Inject humor into difficult situations; humor is one of the best ways of easing tension.
- ❖ Respect and listen to every member, no matter what the issue.
- ❖ Suggest options and identify areas of common ground when there are differences of opinion.
- ❖ Write informative and friendly newsletters when asked.
- ❖ Emphasize common sense and fairness when dealing with owners.
- ❖ Encourage board members to practice due process in addressing delinquencies and non-compliance issues.
- ❖ Remind members, volunteers, and board members that the community belongs to everyone, that compromise and consensus are two of the most important ingredients necessary to building a sense of community in their association.
- ❖ Remind members about the value and benefits of belonging to an association.
- ❖ Always encourage and educate; never preach or insist.

Even if a manager diligently undertakes all of these activities, building community will be far more than just another task managers are required to perform. It will be a daunting challenge because it is the ***members of the associations themselves***, led by their boards of directors, who are responsible for creating a sense of community. It is only association members who can make their communities a desirable place to live on a daily basis. It is only the board of directors, elected by the members, who set the tone and the style for their community.

So, how do caring and concerned association members build community? We can begin by slowing down our frantic pace just a little bit. As we go about our busy lives, we should remember to stop and smell those pro-

verbial roses. We should smile at our neighbors when we see them. We should wave as we drive by and see someone walking his dog. We should stop and chat for a moment or two when we see someone at the mailboxes or the pool or the fitness center. It doesn't matter if we know the person or not. We can talk about the weather or the blooming lantana at the community entrance. It doesn't matter what is said. It is important to just say **something friendly and smile**. It will make us feel a little more connected to each other and our community, even if only for the briefest of moments.

All of these small, friendly moments add up and are contagious. The natural outcome is that when something unpleasant does happen, people are less likely to get angry or yell at each other, more likely to work it out with the same smile they used in previous, pleasant encounters. Does all of this sound simplistic? Yes. But, is it also common sense advice that works? Also yes. We all know that smiles and pleasant words really do beget smiles and pleasant words.

Before you know it, owners will begin to think differently about their association and their community. People might make a new friend or two. Association members might actually start to **feel** happiness and pride in their neighborhood and begin thinking their community really is **the** greatest place to live. In other words, a sense of community is born.

Of course, interested owners can take many specific steps in addition to being a friendly neighbor. An interested owner can:

- ❖ Create a survey to find out what owners want to do and see in their community (do your community members want a "Volkswagen" community or a "Mercedes" community and what do they think it takes to create such a community?).
- ❖ Take educational seminars to learn about association governance.
- ❖ Attend meetings, stay informed, and pass the information to his neighbors.
- ❖ Volunteer for committee membership.
- ❖ Run for the Board of Directors.
- ❖ Plan a potluck or some other activity of interest to owners.
- ❖ Become an advocate for the many benefits of association living.

An owner's ability to positively affect his or her community is only limited by his creativity, passion, drive and energy level.

Despite the best efforts of actively involved association members, the following statistics reveal that most owners remain uninvolved in the life of their association:

- ➢ According to caionline.org, there are 260,000 common interest developments nationwide, comprised of single family, condominium and other planned communities. CAI estimates there are an estimated 9,000 to 11,000 new community associations created every year. In 2004, there were more than 50 million owners in these communities, representing 1 out of every 6 Americans. More than a million of these owners were board members.

- ➢ CAI has 16,000 members in fifty-five chapters nationwide.

- ➢ Currently, Nevada has more than 2000 common interest developments, according to Sonia Meriweather, Administrative Program Officer in the Ombudsman Office. These communities have a total of 300,000 owners in them, she said.

- According to its Membership Directory, The Nevada Chapter of CAI, covering the entire state, has less than five hundred members. Approximately half of the members are individual homeowners and community associations. The other half is comprised of managers, management companies and associates (those companies who service homeowner associations such as landscapers, etc.).

- CAI individual homeowner and association members represent less than ¼ of 1 percent of all homeowners who live in associations, both nationally and in Nevada

- CAI is unique and the only national organization of its type in the United States. Unfortunately, the membership numbers of CAI appear to be an accurate representation of how few owners are actively involved in the daily life of their associations.

There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence pointing to apathetic and uninvolved homeowners. They don't run for the Board of Directors. They don't join committees. They rarely, if ever, come to Board meetings. They don't vote in association elections or attend annual meetings. They throw away association newsletters and other printed materials without reading them. They don't attend community social events. Many homeowners begrudge their assessments, think they aren't important, and don't pay on time. Many owners think that their neighbors are noisy and rude creatures with badly behaved children and out of control pets.

It is within this negative environment that many well meaning and dedicated board members serve their communities. Most groups are comprised of individuals who want to be a member. These groups include parent/teach associations, churches, synagogues and mosques, recreational and social clubs, veteran's groups, charities, and other groups that attract people who share the same values and concerns. Their leaders can tap into these values and concerns as a way to build community among the members they lead.

Community associations are not one of these groups. Many association members have only a vague notion that they "belong" to a community. They did not seek out membership. Membership, they believe, is just an unwelcome and annoying side affect that is forced on them with homeownership.

Managers interact with these homeowners all the time. Most of us can clearly recall those times when an owner has asked to be "taken off the list" of association membership or when a homeowner says he wants to dissolve the association altogether. This owners is very unhappy when he is told he cannot revoke his membership and that dissolution is virtually impossible to attain. We take phone calls from hostile owners who loudly berate the manager personally for some perceived injustice or intrusion in their lives.

The disinterest and lack of involvement by thousands of Nevada homeowners is most likely exacerbated by the fact that Las Vegas is unique among American cities:

- Las Vegas receives 6000 new residents every month. These newcomers are strangers who need time to acclimate and adjust to their new surroundings.

- We are a true 24-hour town and people come and go at all hours of the day and night. It is not unheard for people to live next door to each other and yet never see each other due to different shifts and days on and off.

- Thousands of new owners in associations never heard of associations before they moved to Nevada or have a distorted or inaccurate view of associations.

- There are thousands of homeowners who have vacation homes in Nevada and "visit" the state, never becoming a part of the community they own a home in.

- Las Vegas is a still in its adolescence, without the imbedded traditions and roots of a Boston, New York City, or Los Angeles.

Given all of these statistics and facts, it should not be surprising to learn that many managers seriously question whether it is practical, reasonable, and achievable that they be held legally responsible for building community in the associations they manage.

I am a professional portfolio manager, a member of an association, and a board member. These are all very different roles with very different responsibilities. As a professional manager, I assist my boards in achieving the goals they have formulated for their communities. As a member of a community, I am friendly to my neighbors, sing my community's praises to all who will listen, and follow the rules and regulations in the governing documents. As a board member, I will attempt to do those things that will best nurture a sense of community among members of my community while carrying out the business of my association, a Nevada non-profit corporation, in a fair and evenhanded manner.

A manager can (and should) coach, educate, and motivate boards and community members. A manager can be caring, friendly, fair, honest, and morally and ethically honorable. Nevertheless, due to factors completely beyond his or her control, a manager can manage an association that will never find, feel or promote a sense of community. In fact, s/he may manage a community that is impervious to feeling any sense of community whatsoever.

Managers should always point out the benefits of a positive community spirit to their boards of directors but, as members of the board have the ultimate responsibility for their community, a manager should not be seen as having failed when a specific community does not see the value.

If the CIC's recommendation does become law, it is hoped the Commission members will take this all of these statistics, facts and anecdotes into consideration when rendering a judgment against a manager who comes before them because s/he allegedly failed to "build community".

Linow is the Executive Manager of Turnberry Towers Community Association in Las Vegas.

Ten Reasons to Volunteer for the Association

1. Protect your self-interests. Protect your property values and maintain the quality of life in your community.

2. Correct a problem. Has your car been towed, or do you think maybe maintenance has been neglected?

3. Be sociable. Meet your neighbors, make friends, and exchange opinions.

4. Give back. Repay a little of what's been done for you.

5. Advance your career. Build your personal resume by including your community volunteer service.

6. Have some fun. Association work isn't drudgery. It's fun accomplishing good things with your neighbors.

7. Get educated. Learn how it's done—we'll train you.

8. Express yourself. Help with creative projects like community beautification.

9. Earn recognition. If you would like a little attention or validation, your contributions will be recognized and celebrated.

10. Try some altruism. Improve society by helping others.

Avoiding Conflict with the Neighbors

We all can just get along. The key? Communication. It's often the best way to prevent and resolve conflict before it reaches the legal system. You don't have to be friends or spend time together to achieve a peaceful coexistence, but you should try to be a good neighbor and follow these tips:

- Say hello. At the mailbox, while walking the dog or when you see a moving van arrive, introduce yourself. Learn your neighbors' names and regularly offer a friendly greeting.

- Provide a heads up. If you're planning a construction project, altering your landscaping or hosting a big party, contact your neighbors beforehand.

- Do unto others. Treat neighbors as you would like to be treated. Be considerate about noise from vehicles, stereos, pets, etc.

- Know your differences. Make an effort to understand each other. Differences in age, ethnic background and years in the neighborhood can lead to different expectations or misunderstandings.

- Consider the view. Keep areas of your property that others can see presentable.

- Appreciate them. If the neighbors do something you like, let them know. They'll be pleased you noticed, and it'll be easier to talk later if they do something you don't like.

- Stay positive. Most people don't try to create problems. If a neighbor does something that irritates you, don't assume it was deliberate.

- Talk honestly. Tolerance is important, but don't let a real irritation go because it seems unimportant or hard to discuss. Let your neighbors know if something they do annoys.

- Be respectful. Talk directly to your neighbors if there's a problem. Gossiping with others can damage relationships and create trouble.

- Remain calm. If a neighbor mentions a problem they have with you, thank them for the input. You don't have to agree or justify any behavior. Wait for any anger to subside before responding.

- Listen carefully. When discussing a problem, try to understand your neighbor's position and why he or she feels that way.

- Take your time. Take a break to think about what you and your neighbor have discussed. Arrange to finish the conversation at another time.

The Nature of Community Associations

Delivering Services and Amenities

Homeowner and condominium associations deliver services that were once the exclusive province of local government, including trash pickup, street paving and lighting and snow removal, to name but a few. This transfer, or privatization, of services has become commonplace as the demand for housing has outpaced the ability of many local governments to provide services. Not only has privatization relieved local municipal budgets, but it has proven economically efficient for homeowners.

Many of today's homebuyers are second- and third-time buyers in community associations—people who understand and value the benefits and services provided in planned communities.

Associations plough the snow, pickup the garbage, operate the pool and maintain the common areas. Reserves are maintained for future repairs and replacement of common property.

Many communities maintain swimming pools, tennis courts, playgrounds and other amenities that most Americans cannot afford on their own. Many community associations also provide security, social activities, clubhouses, walking trails and more.

In the best communities, associations offer a real sense of community, an important contribution in an increasingly transient society.

Providing Value and Protecting Property Values

By delivering services at the direction of their members, community associations meet the expectations of residents by working to provide a safe, well-maintained living environment, preserving the nature of the community and protecting property values.

Cooperation and compliance are accomplished through governing documents that typically address architectural guidelines (dealing with items such as additions, decks and paint colors) and rules pertaining to issues such as noise, pets and parking. Enforced fairly and equitably by the members themselves, these documents guide the management and governance of the association and are generally consistent with zoning and other provisions of the larger civil community in which the association is located.

Offering Protection and Oversight

Community association rules and regulations are not really all that much different from their municipal counterparts. In practical terms, HOA regulations are another layer of protection against neighborhood degradation and another means of maintaining community standards and protecting property values.

Associations lessen the need for local government oversight of housing conditions, since design guidelines and covenant inspections are performed by the association—the functional equivalent of building and zoning inspectors. Associations have one big advantage: While most municipalities are not equipped—i.e., do not have the manpower—to monitor housing, community association homeowners have a vested interest in reporting problems, from architectural and building code violations to illegal parking and landscaping issues.

Inspiring Responsibility and Involvement

Community association homeowners like the responsibility that comes with homeowner control of their own neighborhoods. Importantly, community association leaders are elected by their neighbors to serve the best interests of the community as a whole. Because they live in their communities, these leaders better understand the needs of the community, from the delivery of core services and amenities to decisions affecting the future of the community.

Significantly, many associations enjoy a higher level of civic involvement than municipalities in terms of voting, meeting attendance and volunteerism. Voting by proxy helps associations meet quorum requirements, an option that is not available in municipal elections.

Optimizing Land Use and Affordability

Community associations provide one answer to the growing issue of sprawl, which is no longer confined to cities and the inner suburbs. By definition, planned communities offer a more efficient use of land than unplanned areas in which developments leapfrog over each other into any available space.

In addition, these land-use efficiencies can make homes more affordable, a benefit for first-time homebuyers, retirees and low- and moderate-income families.

Reprinted from the Community Associations Institute website: http://www.caionline.org/info/help/associations/Pages/Nature.aspx

BUILDING COMMUNITIES WHILE BUILDING PLANS:
A REVIEW OF TECHNIQUES FOR PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESSES

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ABSTRACT

There is no single recipe for a successful planning process. Instead, communities must take advantage of the ingredients at their disposal. A variety of techniques, both high- and low-tech, can be used. None is failsafe; each has pros and cons. Typically, their success will depend on both the community's resources and its resourcefulness. In this review, we briefly describe and assess techniques that can be used to aid five phases of a participatory planning process: those concerning goals, information, options, decisions, and monitoring. We conclude with recommendations for ways to build, not simply a plan, but a stronger social fabric. In particular, we argue that participants in a planning process should be treated, not primarily as representatives of vested interests, but as citizens with the responsibility and capability to plan for the common good.

INTRODUCTION

According to Greek mythology, Procrustes stretched or shortened his captives to fit an iron bed. Thus the adjective "Procrustean," a term which aptly describes conventional planning and regulation during much of the 20th century, where the emphasis was on imposing physical order (Meek, 1994).1 Zoning was the primary regulatory tool, and "planning efforts were largely carried out in a hierarchical manner by technical experts in government" (Ayres, 1996). Of late, however, "one-size-fits-all" has given way to flexibility, innovation, and community-based plans and regulations (see Ayres, 1996; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2000).

With an impetus arising primarily, although not exclusively, from federally-funded urban renewal, antipoverty, and Model Cities programs, public participation has become a centerpiece of local government planning (Sharp, 1989). Even if participatory opportunities are not specifically mandated, citizens have grown to expect that their voices will be heard in local planning processes (Rosenbaum, 1976). Moreover, by now it is more likely that citizen voices will be not only heard but heeded: We have moved beyond what Arnstein termed the "illusory form of 'participation'" seen in many urban renewal projects of the 1960s (Arnstein, p. 218, 1969; Mazmanian and Kraft, 1999); in other words, we have moved up the rungs of Arnstein's "ladder of participation" (Arnstein, 1969) toward a more significant degree of citizen influence.

The research presented here is grounded in the view, now held by many scholars and practitioners, that meaningful opportunities for public participation in all levels of government are essential. Public participation is fundamental to democratic values, it increases the accountability and responsiveness of public officials, and it encourages civic commitment (John, 1994; Nelson et al, 1998; Plein et al., 1998; Rosenbloom, 1998; Kettl, 2000). In addition, there is an empirical linkage between public participation and program achievements: Involving the public in a process can directly affect its outcomes (Meeks, 1985, Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987).

There is, of course, a continuing debate between those who espouse participatory democracy, in part because it allows individuals greater say over affairs that affect their lives, and those who espouse representative democracy, in part out of concern that interest groups will otherwise dominate (Pierce et al., 1992; Fischer, 1993; Overdevest, 2000). In this regard, we take a centrist position: We acknowledge the continuing importance of decisions by elected representatives, but we also believe that citizen participation is a vital

augmentation to representative democracy, because, if done properly, it both builds civic capacity and increases the likelihood of fairer, more broadly supported decisions. (For a discussion of various methods to improve public participation, see, e.g., Creighton, 1981; Gastil, 1993; Verba et al., 1995; Renn et al., 1995).

In addition to championing citizen participation, this paper is oriented toward local practitioners: for example, planners; public administrators such as mayors, county executives, and city managers; and public works managers who provide the physical infrastructure for cities and towns. Despite its practitioner orientation, the information discussed here is not irrelevant for academic audiences. Indeed, scholars and students in public administration and planning may be called upon to help develop participatory planning processes. As just one example, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington was asked to help build regional alliances for smart growth in the Cape Fear area (Earth, 2000).

As suggested above, the literature on citizen participation efforts in planning processes is voluminous.2 This article builds upon these contributions by discussing how they might apply specifically to planning for smart growth. "Growth management" ... "smart growth" ... "sustainable development" ... these terms have received enormous attention at the local, state, and federal levels over the past decade (DeGrove, 1991; Meek, 1994; Banovetz et al., 1994; Dobson, 1995; President's Council on Sustainable Development, 1999). Yet many communities are still struggling with how to achieve smart growth or sustainable development. (See, e.g., the case studies presented by Mazmanian and Kraft, 1999, for successes and shortcomings that must be overcome.)

A plethora of techniques are now available to aid participatory planning processes. Yet information on them is scattered, each book or article tends to have its own formula for success, and the "how to" aspects of techniques may not be described. For example, Alexander presents 15 ways to make growth management work, ranging from coordinating annexation to monitoring performance (Alexander, 1991); nevertheless, she does not offer ideas about how public officials might design an approach that fits their community. As another example, Creighton (1992) extensively discusses methods to involve citizens in community decision making but does not assess their advantages and disadvantages. Susskind and Cruikshank (1987) provide an excellent discussion of approaches for resolving public disputes but do not deal at length with other aspects of citizen participation and decision making. Case studies also abound - for example, those of Mazmanian and Kraft (1999) and Nelson, Robbins, and Simonsen (1998) - but the utility of case studies is limited by their lack of generalizability.

In this article, we present and briefly assess an array of process techniques, in order to enable community leaders to choose techniques most appropriate for their own situations. We succinctly describe low-tech and high-tech techniques that can be used in five phases of a participatory planning process: eliciting values and setting goals, assembling and forecasting information, developing and assessing options, making decisions, and monitoring change. As we proceed, we note key potential advantages and disadvantages of various techniques. (For a much more extended discussion of these techniques, see English et al., 1999. See also works such as U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1994; Daniels et al., 1995; and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1997.)

Many of the techniques discussed here are low-tech. We have emphasized low-tech techniques because they are more likely to be useful to communities - especially rural communities3 - with small staffs and low budgets. Academia tends to think in high-tech, computer-based terms such as the Internet or elaborate software programs. Yet in many communities, the use of such high-tech tools is still quite limited. For example, a survey of Tennessee city and county officials revealed that only 25 percent of the respondents use the Internet daily, and 39 percent do not use it at all (Lyons, 1999). Although this situation is changing, sophisticated computer-based techniques - especially those requiring extensive data and expertise - are still not viable for

many communities.

This article supports a perspective where citizen participation in the planning process is strongly encouraged. The article is premised on the belief that a planning process must be tailored to the place, the people, and the circumstances; there is no single recipe for success. An important starting point, however, is to have a basic understanding of the array of possible techniques - some alternative, some complementary. With this knowledge, one is better-equipped to craft a process to suit one's own needs and resources.

We conclude by turning briefly from the "how" to the "who": that is, to strategies for engaging citizens in the various tasks of a participatory planning process. Whatever the particular strategy adopted, we urge that participants in the process be treated, not as stakeholders with vested interests, but as community members with civic responsibilities and capabilities. Only then can a participatory planning process realize its full potential of building, not just a plan, but a stronger community.

A FIVE-PHASE PROCESS

Planning processes usually follow a basic five-phase iterative framework (see Figure 1). For each of the phases, new techniques are being explored. Some are still out of the reach of many communities: They require hard-to-obtain data, sophisticated computers and software, and highly trained staff or consultants. Other lower-cost, lower-tech techniques are also being explored, however. These typically require the dedication and creativity of a core group of staff and community members, who in turn reach out to others during the planning process.

1. Identifying Values and Setting Goals

Values are a person's internal conceptions of what is desirable or socially preferable (Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1973; Spates, 1983). Values are not static: While "core values" are fairly permanent, other values are context-specific (Brown, 1984; Dietz and Stern, 1995; Gregory et al., 1997). Values coalesce with beliefs to form preferences and attitudes (Stern and Dietz, 1994). Although individual values and preferences are important, community goals should be a product, not only of personal reflection, but also of collective dialogue.

Surveys are the traditional way to systematically gather public opinions, but they increasingly are being supplemented or replaced with collectively-developed vision statements. Surveys and vision statements thus are poles on a spectrum of possibilities. Each has variations.

Surveys. For a given population, the whole group may be surveyed. If not, the survey may be directed toward targeted or randomly selected people, or a stratified random sampling technique may be used. In addition to determining the sampling size and technique, decisions must be made about the survey questions, how they will be administered (typically by mail, phone, or face-to-face, but increasingly by electronic means), and how results will be recorded and analyzed. If a survey is to be repeated over time to capture changes in views, forethought will be needed to ensure consistency. (For an extended discussion of survey techniques, see Babbie, 1989; Frey, 1989; Miller and Miller, 1991; Alreck and Settle, 1995; FoIz, 1996).

In general, the more formal the procedures, the larger the sample size, and the higher the response rate, the more representative the survey results. Time and cost also go up, however. In contrast, informal surveys - e.g., one run in a local newspaper - can be done quickly and cheaply but may produce distorted results. Whether formal or informal, surveys typically use closed-ended questions to make it easier for people to respond and

for their responses to be recorded and analyzed. With content analysis software, the latter problem is less formidable, but surveys still tilt toward closed-ended questions. As such, they may not really get at what's on people's minds.

Surveys Using Visual Images. One variant of the traditional survey is the Visual Preference Survey(TM), a concept refined and popularized by A. C. Nelessen (1994) but rooted in the landscape preference surveys of the 1970s (see, e.g., Craik and Zube, 1976). A Visual Preference Survey(TM) uses images - typically, photographic slides - with evaluation forms. It usually is administered in a group setting such as a public meeting. As each image is shown, participants are asked to individually rate the image (e.g., from +10 to -10); mean scores for each image are then calculated; and the images are ranked from most to least desirable. With the digital image possibilities of computers, the Visual Preference Survey(TM) could be put on a Web site, where people could respond at their convenience from home or publicly accessible computers (although "ballot-stuffing" would then need to be controlled).

A Visual Preference Survey(TM) lets participants respond to images rather than words, and the results can be fairly readily translated by planners and architects into building codes, subdivision controls, and other design criteria. Selecting the images is difficult, however: Perspective and subject matter (e.g., a tree in glorious fall color, an especially repugnant billboard) may lead to distorted responses. Furthermore, the images must represent a range of features but must not be dauntingly numerous. Finally, a Visual Preference Survey(TM) is only a supplementary tool; it should be used to spark dialogue about the current and desired character of the community.

Vision Statements. Vision statements have been promoted by groups such as the National Civic League, which regards them as essential to collaborative planning processes:

A community vision is an expression of possibility, an ideal state that the community hopes to attain. ... The vision provides the basis from which the community determines priorities and establishes targets for performance. It sets the stage for what is desired in the broadest sense ... Okubo, 1997, p. 31

The National Civic League recommends that vision statements be reached by consensus, include strong visual descriptions, and look at least 10 years into the future. It suggests a weekend visioning retreat but notes that more typically vision statements are developed over two or more non-consecutive evenings.

Vision statements have hidden costs in staff and participant time. For example, Helling (1998) estimated that Atlanta's four-year Vision 2020 project cost $4.4 million in resources, although its direct, billed expenditures were $1.1 million. In addition, getting the right mix of people is difficult, as is finding the right balance between breadth and specificity in the vision statement. Both affect the credibility and utility of the statement. Looking for areas of agreement can be time-consuming, yet important differences should not be papered over, and the vision statement should clearly set the stage for action.

Scenarios. Scenarios tell stories about the future: what people think or hope will happen. The former are forecasting scenarios. The latter - "preferred future" scenarios - can be used to augment vision statements. They make the abstract concrete.

To generate "preferred future" scenarios, participants may be asked to put themselves into the future and then describe where they are and how they got there: in effect, a hypothetical reflection on the past. A similar tactic is to ask participants to project themselves into a scenario and describe their reactions. Scenarios also can be used as "thought experiments" to test alternative visions. As described in Shaping A Region's Future (Dodge and Montgomery, 1995), participants may, for example, discuss a "best case" vision, where everything goes

well; a "worst case" vision, where everything goes wrong; and a trended vision, where things go as they have to date.

In developing scenarios, specific examples and representative events should be used, and links among different factors should be described. Doing so takes time. Moreover, scenario-building requires a working understanding of the community's economy, social life, and physical environment, which may mean some people are less able to participate. Finally, scenarios for community goal-setting can't easily be generated by large groups: They must be developed by several small groups and then integrated by looking for broad themes or areas of agreement.

High-tech Aids. With new technologies, more people can participate in a community goal-setting process, and results can be integrated more easily. One aid was mentioned above - conducting a Visual Preference Survey (TM) via the Internet or a publicly accessible computer. A few other examples are: (1) With the advent of community channels^ television can be used to provide information and elicit opinions via a mail-in questionnaire distributed with notice of the program. (2) Through video conferencing, people at multiple satellite locations can view a program transmitted from the central location and relay questions to that location. (3) Using computer-based polling in meetings, participants can anonymously register their opinions, which can be instantly tallied. (4) Internet-based meetings allow people to receive information and exchange views in real time while sitting at their personal computers (McKenzie, 1999).

Techniques such as these can reach people who might be reluctant or unable to participate in conventional meetings, and they can expedite opinion-gathering. They may, however, intimidate people who are uncomfortable with new technologies, and they may be cumbersome and expensive. In addition, taken alone, many of them do little to encourage dialogue.

2. Gathering, Integrating, and Forecasting Information

Information grounds a planning process in reality, and differences in values can be lessened if people agree on facts. It has been argued that information should be thought of as embedded in communicative action (Innes, 1998). Without disputing the important role that informally-received information can play throughout a planning process, we would argue that there also is a role for more formal, conscious transmission of factual information early in the process.

Often, existing information can be used: for example, from secondary data sources (e.g., the U.S. Census), local or outside experts, and community members. The challenge is to collect and synthesize this information into useful, shared knowledge. The aim should not be endless detail; it should be meaningful patterns, displayed using techniques such as indicators and community profiles.

Forecasting is an essential follow-on: It enables people to compare what is likely to happen with a preferred future. Low-tech forecasting techniques - for example, scenarios, trends extrapolation, comparisons with similar communities, and intention surveys - can be supplemented with higher-tech tools such as geographic information systems and computer-based forecasting models.

Because information about the present and future may help to shape preferences, this phase should be concurrent with the "values and goals" phase, even though it is often listed sequentially.

Knowing the Present: Indicators and Community Profiles. Indicators can paint a picture of the community as it was and is today. They also can be used to predict where the community is headed, to evaluate options, and to monitor change in the coming years.

Indicators are, in effect, barometers of community well-being: They are measurable features that represent other important features as well. For example, a current or projected change in the local age composition may indicate a looming need for more schools or senior services. Indicators should show both vector and force - the direction and extent of change. Good indicators use reliable, readily-obtained information; attract attention; and inspire action (MacLaren, 1996; Redefining Progress, 1997; Hart, 1998).

Choosing indicators is difficult: They need to be selected not only for representativeness but also for data availability; they need to cover a variety of topics but not lose people in a maze of facts and figures; they need to be selected early in the planning process, but their later uses (e.g., for monitoring) need to be anticipated. Moreover, they can be misleading unless they are seen as signs, not as goals. The whole is greater than the sum of its measurable parts. As Albert Einstein said, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

Community profiles build on the concept of indicators. As described by the National Civic League (Aqaba, 1997), a community profile combines indicators with a survey asking community members about their perceptions of the community's assets and challenges. (These questions may be augmented with "visioning" questions about their values and goals concerning the community.) The community profile results in a single informational package identifying ways in which the community is doing well or poorly.

Ideally, the profile will integrate hard data with local perceptions. It may, however, reveal discrepancies between data and perceptions. While this will be revelatory (people may learn that their perceptions aren't right or that the data don't tell the whole story), it may make the information phase protracted and controversial.

Anticipating the Future: Constructing Scenarios, Extrapolating Trends, Making Comparisons, and Eliciting Intentions. As mentioned above, scenarios can be used for forecasting as well as for "wishful thinking." Peter Schwartz, a futurist, has prescribed steps for developing forecasting scenarios: Identify a focal situation, together with positive and negative internal (local) and external factors influencing the situation; rank the factors according to their importance and uncertainty; and then, mindful of the most important and uncertain factors, flesh out a few scenarios whose differences would dictate different actions (Schwartz, 1991).

Developing scenarios requires time, imagination, hard thinking, and basic knowledge about crucial factors and trends. Key decision makers should be involved in the group process of building scenarios, yet they may be difficult to engage. On the other hand, some people may be all too eager to participate: The process may be dominated by a few people who get captivated by "their" scenarios.

Below, three other relatively low-tech techniques for forecasting are mentioned. A good discussion of these and other forecasting techniques can be found in "Forecasting for Environmental Decision Making," by J. Scott Armstrong (1999).

Trends extrapolation - using past trends as the basis for projections - is perhaps the most common technique for anticipating the future. This technique, which usually uses quantitative data (e.g., population size, household income, number of acres in farming), commonly employs "straight line" projections, but other statistical methods can be used. Trends extrapolation can be biased by the data chosen and the statistical methods used. Disagreement also may arise over how far into the future the projection is accurate. This technique is best-suited to situations where no major new forces for change are expected.

In contrast, comparisons with other communities allow internal and external forces for change to be anecdotally observed. These comparisons - in effect, "anticipation by analogy" - can be done informally, by networking and reading newspaper articles and case studies. Or they can be done formally, by locating a few

places that are similar in most respects, except that they have already experienced changes that could occur in the community in question, and then systematically analyzing why the changes have occurred. Making comparisons can be risky, however: Neither the compared communities nor the forces for change will be exactly the same. Analogies should be used for insights, not for predictions.

The purpose of an intention survey is to anticipate how people will behave under certain conditions. For example, key decision makers in a community might be surveyed to help anticipate their actions (e.g., they might be asked what they would do if traffic on a major route through town increased 50%), or community members might be surveyed to get a sense of the many individual actions that could, in the aggregate, have major effects (e.g., they might be asked what they would do if the town's high school were closed and students were directed to a regional high school.) Intention surveys are difficult to construct, however: Questions must be plausible, and the time frame must not be set so far off as to seem irrelevant. In addition, the results shouldn't be taken as predictors of behavior: Instead, they're an indication of what people now think they might do.

High-tech Aids. It's easy to assert that a geographic information system (GIS) is not "high tech"; that it is standard planning equipment - easy, that is, unless you are a planner in a rural locale with a minimal budget and no staff. In Tennessee, for example, many small municipalities are not likely to have GIS's in the immediate future, due to fiscal and staff limitations (English et al, 1999). In fact, according to the Knoxville News-Sentinel (November 23, 1999, p. 1) some municipal libraries in Tennessee don't even have indoor plumbing!

Basically, a GIS is a computerized version of transparency overlay maps. The computer is much faster: It enables quick selection and display of data sets at different levels of detail. However, a GlS requires hardware and software, training to run it, and data sets that may be unavailable or time-consuming to enter. Furthermore, if a GIS is used interactively during a public workshop, the information will need to be displayed on a large screen (adding to the cost); extra personnel may be needed (also adding to the cost); and the GIS may be bewildering to people who have difficulty reading maps.

Even more out-of-reach or daunting for some communities are computer-based predictive models. Models use complex "if-then" theories and quantifiable data to predict system changes (e.g., changes in the local economy or local ecological systems). They can highlight key variables and relationships among variables. For example, INDEX, developed by Criterion, Inc., has modules for characterizing and analyzing physical and social aspects of an area (see http: www.crii.com). PEACE3S, created for the U.S. Department of Energy's Center of Excellence in Sustainable Development, uses energy as a measure for communities to understand how energy affects sustainability (see http ://www. sustainable. doe. gov/toolkit/TCDDM/PLACE3S .htm). As we have discussed in greater detail elsewhere (English et al., 1999), other decision support tools for planning are available or in the works in the private and public sectors.

Computerized models can surpass human brains in integrating many different factors and assessing how they will interact, but they are best at predicting large, not small, effects. Although simplified programs are becoming available, they typically are expensive and still require expertise. Moreover, they are only as good as their data inputs. If the data are not available at the right scale (e.g., at the municipal level), the model may not work. Similarly, if the system being modeled is open, not closed - that is, if it is subject to significant external influences - the model may produce misleading results.

3. Developing and Assessing Options

Generating options requires creativity and imagination; assessing them requires hard analytic thinking. The

information phase will help, but the choices still may be difficult. People often have competing goals and vested interests in certain options. Choosing among options also involves uncertainty about how an option will alter the community's future, for better or for worse.

In a community planning process, developing and assessing options should be done collectively as well as individually. To get community input on options, some of the techniques for identifying values and setting goals may be supplemented with one or more of the techniques mentioned below.

Charettes. Charettes are most often associated with architectural brainstorming and problem-solving, but they can be used to develop options for community projects or plans. For example, the Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) organized under the American Institute of Architects often conducts intense three -day efforts for this purpose (http://www.earchitect.com). Charettes usually have three parts: (1) specialists and others work together to come to an understanding of the goals, resources, and limitations at hand; (2) the group considers various proposals and then focuses on one or a few preferred options; and (3) the ideas are sketched and refined.

Charettes typically are quick and inexpensive, although if professional help is needed (and it may be), costs will increase unless it can be obtained on a pro bono basis. In a charette, the group should be large enough to spur an exchange of ideas but not so large that people can't talk and work with each other. The atmosphere should be creatively charged, and the results should be realistic and well-rounded.

Decision-Analytic Techniques. In contrast with the hot-blooded atmosphere of a charette, cool rationalism may be preferred, especially for options assessment. If so, various decision-analytic techniques that tilt toward the informal or formal, and toward an individual or a collective deliberative process, can be used (see English et al., 1993; Merkhofer, 1999). A few such techniques are:

(1) Pros and cons chart. "Pros and cons" can be thought of as "benefits and costs" but should be interpreted broadly, not just as dollar profit or loss. In addition, the difficulty of carrying out the option should be taken into account. Charting the pros and cons of various options can be done by small groups or individuals. The nature of the pros and cons will need to be identified and their magnitude then estimated. The estimates can be based on judgment, using descriptors such as "a great deal" or "very little" that are then converted to numerical scales (e.g., from 1 to 5). Or they can be based on formal analytic techniques and models (e.g., a regional economic impact model), in which case they probably will require professionals recognized for their expertise and neutrality. Even so, estimations of the magnitude of pros and cons may be fraught with controversy and uncertainty.

It may feel like comparing "apples and oranges" to weigh the pros and cons of different options. Sometimes it is. Options should be sorted, not only by the goals they are meant to achieve, but also by whether they are "low investment" or "high investment." Low-investment options with high payoffs are usually winners; high-investment options with low payoffs are usually losers. The others require more thought.

(2) Decision matrix. A decision matrix is a similar but somewhat more formal technique suitable for small groups or individuals. It has four basic elements: (1) the set of options under consideration; (2) a set of criteria to evaluate the options; (3) a numerical weight on each criterion, reflecting its relative importance; and (4) numerical assessments of how well each option satisfies each criterion. For a particular option, each numerical assessment is multiplied by the criterion's numerical weight to produce a score, and the scores for all the criteria are summed to produce a total score for the option. Total scores for the options may then be compared. Minimum "passing" scores for each criterion ensure that the option is a good all-round choice. (This is to account for the possibility that an option may "fail" some criteria but still receive a high total score if it does

very well on other criteria.)

Assigning the numbers to weight the criteria and to assess the options requires judgment and, if a group process is used, a means of reaching agreement. (For this purpose, the Delphi Technique might be used - see below.) To help ensure impartiality, the criteria should be weighted before the options are assessed, but conflict still may arise over the criteria weighting and the options assessment. A decision matrix should be treated simply as a tool to help structure option comparisons, with allowances made for other factors (e.g., political realities) that can't be included in the matrix. Nevertheless, it may be tempting to treat each option's score as the "bottom line."

(3) Delphi Technique. The Delphi Technique is a formal, iterative process for distilling opinions and identifying areas of agreement and disagreement. It can be used to clarify where differences lie or to arrive at a consensual or majority view. As with the two techniques above, it is better suited to assessing than developing options. Historically, it was used mainly for expert panels, but recently, it also has been employed with laypeople on policy and planning issues.

The Delphi Technique requires a facilitator, who prepares and pretests questions to be posed. The questionnaire is filled out by each participant, working solo. The facilitator then provides a feedback summary and a follow-up questionnaire. The summary allows the participants to reflect on the group's responses taken as a whole; the follow-up questionnaire allows them to modify their initial responses. The process may be repeated for several rounds. The final feedback summary represents the final points of agreement and disagreement.

The Delphi Technique is best suited to relatively small groups; otherwise, digesting open-ended responses can be overwhelming. Because the technique can be conducted by mail, it's especially useful when participants cannot find a convenient time or place to meet. It allows each participant to respond without feeling pressured, and, because responses are anonymous, the result may be greater frankness (but also less accountability). The technique requires good reading skills and, if the questionnaire is open-ended, good writing skills; it thus may be biased against some potential participants. Moreover, it does not allow the free exchange of ideas that can help to build innovative solutions as well as a sense of community.

High-tech Aids. Computer-based tools may be desirable at the options stage, especially for complex, multi-faceted issues. For example, the GIS-based tools mentioned above can be used to help visually represent and evaluate options such as a proposed new road or park. The option is sketched in and then can be seen in relation to factors such as population density and projected growth. A GIS-based tool also may allow adjusting various features of an option (e.g., park size, location, access points) to create the best alternative. GIS-based tools are better suited for assessing "on-the-ground" options such as a new shopping center than for assessing policy and program options such as a new development impact fee or farmland preservation program.

Expert systems and optimization techniques also may be used (English et al., 1993). When expert knowledge is available, a formal system with "if-then" rules can guide options assessment. Optimization techniques are appropriate when there is a clear objective, formally defined constraints, and many variables, resulting in many possible solutions. Search techniques that employ either linear or dynamic programming are then used to systematically identify an optimal solution. These systems and techniques are likely to rely on a sophisticated computer program. They may require extensive data inputs, and - even though simplified, user-friendly computer programs are being developed - running the program typically requires training. Moreover, how the system reaches its conclusions can be difficult to understand or communicate. Finally, as with lower-tech techniques, these should be treated as evaluation aids, not as black boxes grinding out the final preferred option. Factors that cannot be incorporated into the program often need to be taken into consideration.

4. Making Decisions

For the plan to be translated into action, decisions will be required from private-sector individuals and organizations as well as from local government. Key potential decision makers of various stripes should be engaged early on, together with other community members. At the "making decisions" stage, however, the recommended plan is turned over to the appropriate local governmental body - typically, the planning commission, the city council, or the county commissioners. The plan may be informally or formally considered and adopted, usually following set procedures.

Nevertheless, the decision-making stage is not always written in stone. The council or commission may, for example, choose to consult directly with voters through techniques such as a binding or non-binding referendum. Local laws vary in their specific requirements concerning these direct democracy techniques; basically, the goal is determine whether a proposal is widely supported.

On the plus side, referenda allow voters an equal opportunity to express their opinion. However, people such as youths are left out unless special techniques such as inschool polling are used. Furthermore, if the turnout is low or the vote is close, the "will of the people" may still be in doubt. If a referendum is undertaken, the ballot questions must be carefully phrased to avoid bias. Even so, responses are limited to a "yes" or "no"; moreover, without supporting information about the proposed plan, voters may make uninformed choices. Especially if the outcome of a referendum is to be non-binding, other, more informative and interactive techniques such as those discussed under "Identifying Values and Setting Goals" might be used in lieu of or in addition to a formal, ballot-box technique.

5. Monitoring Change

No vision or plan lasts forever - Chattanooga, for example, had a revision process in 1992 as a sequel to its 1984 process. Until a plan is replaced, however, it should chart a course and help the community to stay on it, rather than being buffeted aimlessly by the winds of change. Developing a plan is not enough. Not only should it lead to actions; change must be monitored and, when appropriate, responded to.

The concept of monitoring change is simple: Are we staying on course? If not, are the unanticipated changes good? But the practice of monitoring change is difficult. It requires foresight, to know which symptoms of change should be tracked. While monitoring change is a follow-on to the planning process, it should be anticipated early in the process, when information is first being gathered. It also requires dedication, to bring continued attention to symptoms of change long after the excitement of the planning process has passed. And it requires judgment, to distinguish large, long-lasting changes from small, fleeting changes.

In monitoring change, it's important to track both positive and negative change, both big events (e.g., a prospective regional shopping center) and incremental change (e.g., a gradual decline in wildlife habitat), and both internal and external forces for change. Tracking external forces for change can be especially important. Given today's increased mobility and global economy, even deeply rural towns and counties are subject to outside influences. Those influences cannot be stopped, but they can be anticipated and guided.

Techniques such as surveys, indicators, and benchmarks can be used:

(1) Community surveys, which were discussed under "Identifying Values and Setting Goals," are best suited to either assessing changes in people's opinions or gathering factual information about their household and neighborhood circumstances (e.g., annual household income, number of miles driven, recreational activities, neighborhood meeting places).

Reflective Listening

Reflective listening is a way to communicate empathy, an important element of psychotherapeutic interaction. Carl Rogers wrote that

being empathic has several facets. It means entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever, that he/she is experiencing. It means temporarily living in his/her life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments, sensing meanings of which he/she is scarcely aware, but not trying to uncover feelings, since this would be too threatening. It includes communicating your sensings of his/her world as you look with fresh and unfrightened eyes at elements of which the individual is fearful. It means frequently checking as to the accuracy of your sensings, and being guided by the responses you receive. You are a confident companion. By pointing to the possible meanings in the flow of his/her experiencing you help the person to focus on this useful type of referent, to experience the meanings more fully, and to move forward in the experiencing. To be with another in this way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter another's world without prejudice. In some sense it means that you lay aside your self and this can only be done by a person who is secure enough [to] not get lost in what may turn out to be the strange or bizarre world of the other, and [to] comfortably return to his own world when he wishes. (Rogers, 1975)

The importance of empathic listening has been written about in many approaches to psychotherapy including client-centered, self psychology, psychoanalysis, Gestalt, existential, focusing-oriented, pretherapy, child therapy, marital and couple therapy, disaster-recovery therapy, and clinical supervision. Some emphasize the importance of nonverbal components of empathy. Empathy shares aspects of mental discipline with meditation. Empathic ability is not strongly associated with academic or diagnostic proficiency.

Reflective listening involves holding a distinct set of attitudes toward the person being listened to. There is an acceptance of the content of the person's awareness. The listener trusts the resources of the speaker to evaluate, analyze, and decide and therefore does not give advice and suggestions about what to do or how to perceive. When listening, one is nondiagnostic and nonevaluative.

Communicating one's empathy is often best accomplished by using much the same language as the person in order to avoid possible connotations of different language that would not be correct for the speaker. This does not mean limiting oneself to literally what was said. The listener senses for and reflects meanings not yet clear, some not yet mentioned in words, that have been expressed nonverbally. Frequently communicating one's empathy, as often as a couple of times per minute to stay in close contact, gives the speaker ample opportunities to correct misunderstandings or to revise what he or she says to articulate experiencing as it evolves.

Listening has useful effects: In the process of being accurately and caringly understood, feelings and ideas change in problem-solving, insight-producing, tension-releasing, responsibility-building, and conflict-reducing ways. In addition, the person gets the message that his or her experience makes sense and that he or she is worthy of being taken seriously.

Paradoxically, this powerful way to foster change involves the listener's studiously not pushing for change.

The listener accepts what the speaker says on the speaker's terms, without dispute.

Eugene Gendlin (1981, 1996) clarified the object to which the listener listens. The bodily felt sense is more inclusive than what one is clearly aware of consciously, including everything felt at the moment, even if only vaguely and subliminally. It often has opposing impulses in it. It is not a static object but changes from moment to moment as events proceed. It is this fluid object that the listener reflects.

Through research, Gendlin, Rogers, and others came to believe that certain attitudes, when directed toward the bodily felt sense, resulted in more positive personality change than did other attitudes. These attitudes include patience, gentleness, warmth, interest, respect, curiosity, and an expectation that something new can be discovered. This is in contrast to attitudes of criticism, control, evaluation, or neglect.

Listening creates an interactional opportunity for the speaker to experience and have supported his or her own capacities for solving problems, for identifying the part he or she contributes to interpersonal difficulties, for building self-esteem, and for sorting out complicated personal concerns and motives. The common helper attitudes of evaluation, diagnosis, analysis, and advice seem to have the opposite effect: that of stopping this kind of process in favor of an attitude of dependence on (or resistance to) the guidance of external authority.

Reflecting is a limited metaphor for empathic listening. It does not adequately convey the change produced by good listening, nor the way in which it is an intimate relationship event. The speaker experiences the calming, enlightening embrace of an affectionately indifferent, accepting attitude democratically encompassing all presently experienced emotions, thoughts, sensations, and images. This embrace, provided by the listener, enables the speaker to move toward unconditional acceptance and understanding of his or her subtle and complex experiencing. Ann Cornell (1994) refers to this intrapersonal attitude as the "radical acceptance of everything." It has a remarkable power to release one's energy to move forward in constructive ways.

Reflective listening is valued beyond psychotherapy. Thomas Gordon recommends it to parents as a means of maintaining open and trusting relationships with their children and to health care professionals for improving relations with patients. Teachers who are rated more empathic have been shown to achieve greater student involvement in educational settings. Empathic listening has also been found helpful for school administrations in dealing with parents. It plays a role in improving intimacy in spousal relationships. Clinical and vocational supervision situations also benefit from this skill. Many conflict management and mediation approaches use reflective listening as a core technique. Writings about building community emphasize the value of empathic listening techniques. Some philosophical writings also cite this form of communication as a beneficial dialectical method.

Kenneth Clark (1980) believed that empathy utilizes the most recently evolved part of the brain and that it counterbalances egocentric power drives. Thus, reflective listening may have great social significance toward collective solutions to resource allocation and peaceful human relations.

That Certain Something

By Drew R. Mulhare, CMCA, AMS, LSM, PCAM

Common Ground™, July/August 2002

Community spirit is hard to define—but you know it when you see it. And everyone can help make it happen.

Why do people choose to live in your community? Because it's neat and orderly? Because you have a great swimming pool and beautiful parks? Because your association's fiduciary vigilance guarantees that property values will only go up?

Or is it something more than that? Is it something intangible, or indefinable? Of course it is. It's a shared vision, a common experience, a sense of connection. It's what makes a house a home and a subdivision a neighborhood. It bonds residents to their neighbors and to the world beyond.

You can't describe it, but you know it when you see it. And you know what to call it: community spirit.

SOCIAL GRACES

The three roles of a community association are social, business, and governance. These functions are interdependent, each one relying on the success of the others for balance in resident satisfaction, effective management, and efficient operations. Thus, a successful social program makes your residents happy, and encourages them both to pay their assessments (thereby fulfilling the business mission) and to comply with your rules (ensuring smooth governance).

Believe it or not, of the three functions, business and governance are the easy ones--or, if not easy, at least relatively straightforward. The social role, on the other hand, is elusive and difficult to define. Think about how people experience your community. Potential buyers and other visitors are probably first struck by its curb appeal--its landscaping, home designs, visible amenities, and other aesthetic indicators.

But how everything looks is only one byproduct of a more important issue: how your community *lives*. What evidence is there that residents enjoy living in your community and are involved in its daily rhythm? Are people smiling? Do they volunteer on committees and give something back to their neighbors? Is the social calendar full of activities and reflective of widespread interests? Are there programs to welcome new residents and make them part of the community as quickly as possible? Does a positive vibe permeate everything you do?

The key to these successful practices is not the size or wealth of your association. Rather, it's the energy of the people who live there. Community spirit begins and ends with enthusiastic people--people who are interested in making their community the best it can be; who can make a sense of fun contagious; who thrive on new ideas and realize that there is always more than one way to get something done; and who make the social mission a priority, in funding and all other ways. Remember, it's the social that drives the business and the governance roles, because without an attractive and engaging lifestyle, there soon would be little business to conduct and few people to govern.

Pearls of Wisdom

130 Cultured Gems for Community Association Living—and Leading

PUBLISHED BY

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS INSTITUTE

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H. Jackson Brown, Jr., wrote Life's *Little Instruction Book to provide his son with wisdom he could refer to as he lived his life. In that same spirit, CAI leaders throughout the years have shared their advice and pearls of wisdom for better community association life. Here then are 130 tips to guide you and to ensure that your community association experience enhances your life and your community.*

BE A GOOD HOMEOWNER

1. Review the covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) and other association documents before you buy a home.
2. Read them again when you move in.
3. Pay your assessments—on time.
4. Attend the annual meeting.
5. Read the newsletter and the minutes of association meetings.
6. Follow the rules.
7. Serve on a committee.
8. Serve on the board or, at a minimum, attend board meetings.
9. Don't expect someone else to do it for you.
10. Help organize a community event—a food drive, holiday gift drive, or social event.
11. Vote in community-wide referendums.
12. Volunteer to serve your community.
13. Consider how your particular knowledge, skills, and experience can help the community.
14. Remember that you are a member of the community association. What is good for the association is good for you.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

15. Curb thy dog.
16. Keep televisions and music at reasonable volumes.
17. Park in your own space(s).
18. Don't be a six-car family.
19. Take care of your property.
20. Help form a neighborhood watch.
21. Walk softly.
22. Share a smile with a neighbor.
23. Offer to lend a hand.
24. Welcome new neighbors into the community.
25. Nurture relationships.
26. Talk about problems. Direct conversation is more effective than sending a letter or banging on a wall.

BE A GOOD BOARD MEMBER

27. Serve because you care about your neighborhood, not because you have a hidden agenda.
28. Use CAI courses and information to learn how to run a community association and work most effectively with others in your community.
29. Study the documents before you enforce them.

30. Conduct a reserve study and update it on a regular basis.
31. Let the manager manage.
32. Focus on policies, plans, and objectives.
33. Communicate, communicate and communicate some more.
34. Seek the advice of qualified professionals.
35. Make decisions with the common good in mind, not self-interest.
36. Educate residents.
37. Stay on top of association management trends.
38. Build alignment and consensus within communities.
39. Anticipate and prevent conflicts.
40. Remember your fiduciary duty to protect, preserve, and enhance the value of the property.

BE A GOOD LEADER

41. Provide community leadership.
42. Establish and articulate goals.
43. Define clear expectations.
44. Don't put things off.
45. Set high standards.
46. Make thoughtful and timely decisions.
47. Do what is right, not necessarily what is popular.
48. Ask others for help and input.
49. Plan and save for the future.
50. Say thank you—send a note, make a call.
51. Say please.
52. Build consensus.
53. Be an advocate.
54. Encourage strategic planning.
55. Execute with excellence.

HAVE PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

56. Distribute materials—financial reports, agenda, etc.—to board members at least a few days before board meetings.

57. Review this material.
58. Prepare a timed agenda and follow it.
59. Use the rules of parliamentary procedure.
60. Don't let meetings turn into non-productive social events.
61. Listen.
62. Be polite.
63. Hold open meetings, where all owners can attend.
64. Include an open forum on your agenda.
65. Make sure a quorum is present.

WORK WITH COMMITTEES

66. Define the committee's purpose.
67. Support and encourage committee members—remember they are your future leaders.
68. Keep in touch with them.
69. Seek their opinions.
70. Ensure that they follow the rules of parliamentary procedure.
71. Work with committees to establish realistic objectives and deadlines.
72. Remember, committees typically offer recommendations, not solutions.
73. Offer them praise and acceptance. Cheer, thank, and recognize them.

DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL BUDGET

74. Obtain input from owners, board members, committees, and management.
75. Conduct research to ensure the budget is based on accurate information and projections.
76. Develop a month-by-month evaluation—don't just divide by 12.

77. Talk with service providers and professional suppliers to estimate costs.
78. Be realistic.
79. Raise assessments when necessary, and explain clearly why this is necessary.
80. Communicate the budget to members in advance of the new fiscal year.
81. Look for ways to control expenses, but don't reduce the level or quality of services without seeking input and advising the owners.

SEEK COMPLIANCE WITH RULES AND DEED RESTRICTIONS

82. Give residents a voice when creating a rule.
83. Communicate the rules to residents.
84. Make rules specific and reasonable.
85. Review the rules—new ones may be needed, old ones may need to be discarded.
86. Make the first contact with violators informal and in person if possible.
87. Never "look the other way."
88. Offer compromises.
89. Hold a hearing.
90. Try arbitration or mediation.
91. Hold public meetings on controversial rules.
92. Be consistent.
93. Be reasonable.
94. Give clear and proper notice.
95. Practice due process.

TENANTS AND KIDS, PARKING AND PETS

96. Tenants are not outcasts. Involve them in the community.
97. Publish a tenant's handbook.
98. Invite children to help organize events.
99. Give children a place to play.
100. Tow cars only as a last resort, and after you have given notice.
101. Place parking signs where they can be seen.
102. Give pets a place to walk.

WORK WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITIES

103. Remember, constructive criticism provides impetus to positive change.
104. Be diplomatic.
105. Listen.
106. Be interested.
107. Remain calm.
108. Work together – two people cooperating are more effective than one person telling another to change.
109. Never complain about complainers—your words will get back to you.
110. Invite them to volunteer.

FOSTER COMMUNITY SPIRIT

111. Recruit new residents to volunteer.
112. Promote volunteerism as a positive experience—and make it a positive experience.

113. Be enthusiastic.
114. Publicize the association's accomplishments.
115. Recognize volunteers.
116. Give awards.
117. Meet people.
118. Hold social events and "meet your neighbors" nights.
119. Offer motivation for serving.
120. Invite people to volunteer via the newsletter, in-house bulletins, and through face-to-face contacts.
121. Print a community t-shirt.
122. Recognize children in the community who are on honor role, in sports, or for other special achievements.
123. Conduct surveys to gauge community opinion and solicit input.
124. Use e-mail and a Web site.

KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO GO

125. Check your blood pressure.
126. If you're burned out, get out. New volunteers can offer new energy and ideas.

127. Make yourself available to new board members.
128. Continue to read the newsletter.
129. Pat yourself on the back.
130. Share the positive rewards of volunteering.

Pearls
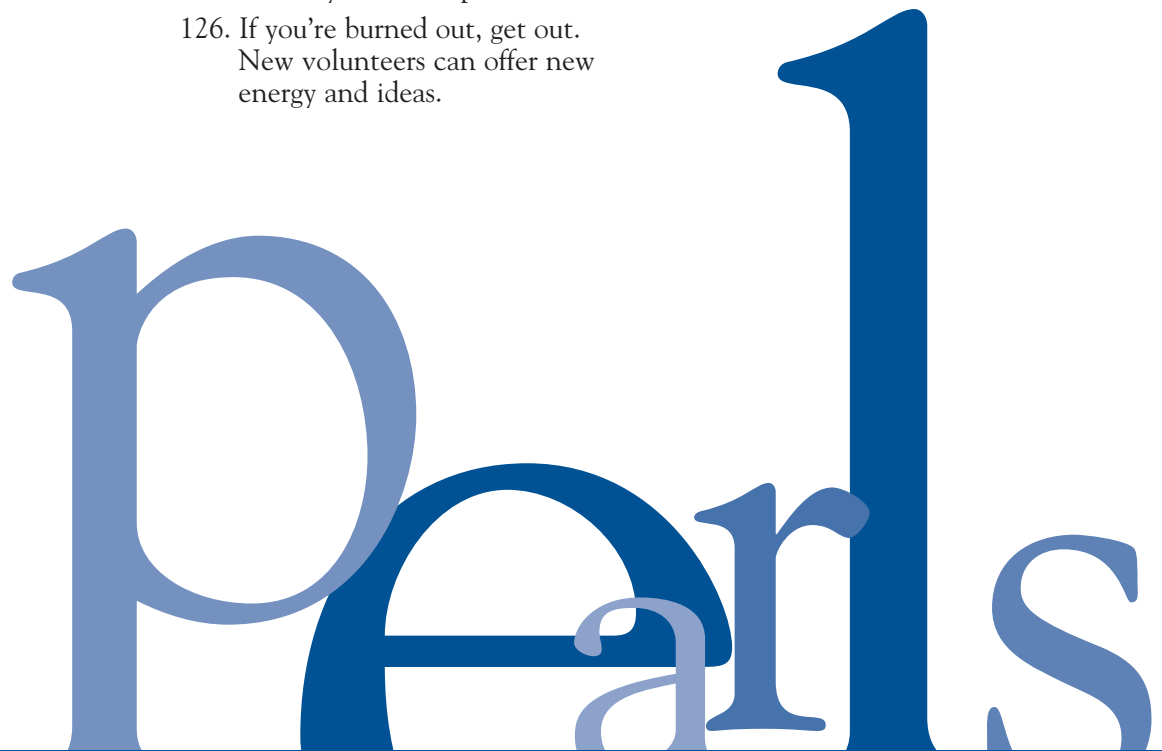
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CAI is regarded as the national expert in educational programs and publications about community association governance, operations, and management. CAI's members look to us for information about educational opportunities, technologies, and better ways to run their communities.

CAI has more than 15,000 members in 55 chapters throughout the United States and in several foreign countries.

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We thank all members and staff, past and present, who offered pearls of wisdom reflected here.

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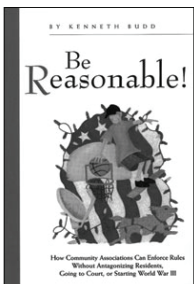
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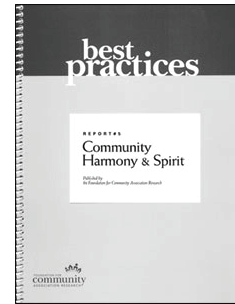http://www.caionline.org/info/publications/Pages/default.aspx

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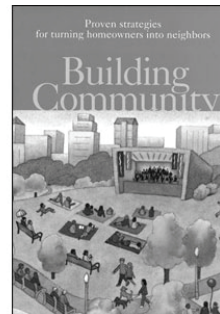
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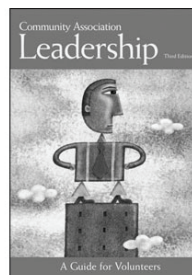## Communications
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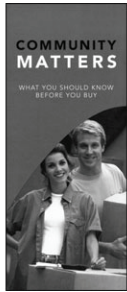## Community Association Leadership
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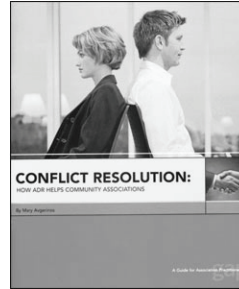
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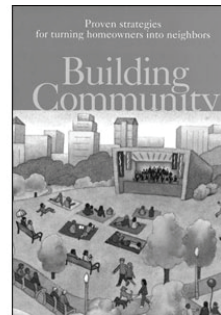
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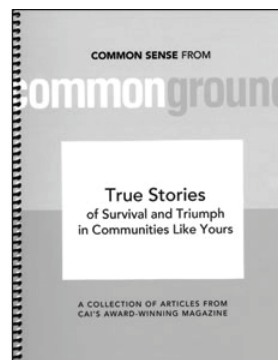Non-Members: USD $19.99

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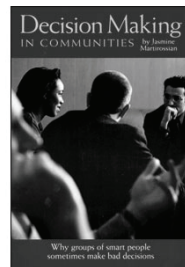
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