



ASSOCIATION POINTERS

It's Not an "Us vs. Them" Situation Supporting the Board of Directors

Homeowner associations are non-profit corporations governed by an appointed or elected Board of Directors. The individuals that serve on this board are bound by certain fiduciary duties, including the Duty of Loyalty and the Duty of Care.

Specific duties and general powers given to the Board of Directors are defined in the governing documents. Duties represent responsibilities that the Board "must do" while powers represents authorities that the Board "can do."

"I think the board has too much power!"

The board is empowered by the provisions of the governing documents and state statute to be the decision-maker of the corporation. After all, the governing documents are quite specific about the duties of the board. When members understand that the individuals that serve on the board are responsible for making decisions that serve the best interest of the community *as a whole*, it puts their "power" of decision-making into clearer perspective.

"I don't agree with the board's decision. What can I do?"

The board tries to keep the general membership informed of the decisions made on their behalf through communication means such as newsletters, website notices, memos, or sometimes community "info" meetings. Will the members agree with every decision? Perhaps not, but then the general membership typically doesn't know all of the facts that went into the decision process. Does that mean the board should ask the membership their opinion on issues before making decisions for them? No, mainly because timely decisions cannot be made that way AND that would "tie their hands" from doing the job they have been tasked to do.

It is really important that the membership support the Board of Directors. It's not an easy job. The membership rarely knows the plethora of decisions that the board must make. It's not easy to balance the differing views and diversity of a neighborhood!

Here's some practical ways to support your board:

- ★ **Respect the purpose and value of the association;** don't try to disengage the entity because you failed to do your "homework" prior to purchasing your home, understanding the restrictions you accepted by purchasing in the community.
- ★ **Uphold the community's standards,** sending the message that you are partnering with the leadership to make your community a great place to live.
- ★ **Support the decisions of the board.** They probably know more details about why the decision was reached than the general membership. Trust their judgment and their accountability.
- ★ **Encourage the volunteers serving your community.** They are giving their personal time and energy for the benefit of the community. Acknowledge their sacrifice and contribution.
- ★ **Provide constructive feedback** when they ask for it. Accept the fact that they have asked for good reason. They are taking the time to inquire and listen; take the time to give the matter thoughtful consideration and then communicate with them.
- ★ **Allow them to live in the community as a neighbor!** Sometimes they must put their board member "hat" on and make those tough decisions that may not be popular with some residents but best serves the community. But when they are trying to enjoy time with their family and friends in the neighborhood, let them be just a neighbor for a day. Respect their time with their families.
- ★ **Speak with respect.** You are entitled to disagree with their logic, but stooping to personal attacks, swearing and name calling is never appropriate!
- ★ **Vote!** When it's your turn to elect your representatives, be active in the selection process. It matters!

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