

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION?

Source: Community Associations Institute

Some residents think homeowners associations exist just to tell them what to do—or not do.

Actually, the association is more like a housing management or service-delivery organization that provides three types of services to all residents—owners and renters alike.


Community services: these include securing trash collection, publishing newsletters, holding community meetings, and scheduling recreational and social functions.

Governance services: these include ensuring that the associa-

tion is adhering to local, state, and federal statutes (like fair housing laws), enforcing community rules and policies, administering design review policies, and recruiting new volunteer leaders.

Business services: these include operating the common property efficiently, bidding maintenance work competitively, investing reserve funds wisely, developing long-range plans, and equitably and efficiently collecting assessments.

Providing these services requires good management, strong planning and organization, and carefully monitoring the association's

affairs. It isn't easy, but by fairly and effectively delivering these services, community associations protect and enhance the value of individual homes and lenders' interests in those homes. 




WELCOME: 5 NEW COMMUNITIES

Over the past few months, several new communities joined us at Client Preference. We look forward to many years of working together to serve their homeowners. Welcome to:

- Ashley Court II Condominium Association, Inc. (Denver)
- Daniels Gate Recreation Association, Inc. (Castle Pines)
- Greens at Lowry Homeowners Association (Denver)

- Sunflower Condominium Association, Inc. (Aurora)
- Victorian Village Community Association (Parker)

We always enjoy talking to Associations looking for property management that embraces 21st century technology without losing sight of their customers' need for personal service. 

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We're here for you because we give a darn!



WELCOME: NEW MANAGER

RUNNING FOR THE BOARD: DO I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

We're happy to welcome Joanne True, CMCA®, to our staff. She comes to Client Preference with a background that includes not only community management, but also twenty-plus years of construction and residential builder warranty experience. Joanne's belief in doing things right the first time makes her a perfect fit at Client Preference! ©

WHY SCOOP THE POOP?

Besides being a nuisance, uncollected dog waste is a serious problem. Next time you're tempted to leave your dog's "gifts" on the lawn, we hope you'll think twice.

The Environmental Protection Agency is becoming aggressive about enforcing the Clean Water Act, and the Association could be fined if dog waste is found on the property. If fined by the EPA, the Association could face a potential special assessment that would be levied against all members—not just dog owners.

The appearance and quality of the common areas affect home sales—not just whether and for how much they sell, but how quickly. The droppings also carry disease and attract rodents.

So not taking care of your pup's droppings really does "stink" - in many ways! ©

If you're considering running for the board, we ask that you take a few moments to ask yourself the following three questions:

Do I have the time? As a board member, you will need to devote at least several hours of your time each month to association business. In addition to regular monthly board meetings, you will need to be active in email discussions and occasional special meetings. During special projects, you may need to spend a little extra time on association business. Some board members may also spend a little more time than others if they work with a committee

Can I make tough decisions when it's required? The primary role of the board is to conduct the business of the association. This does not mean just approving the budget, but also developing and enforcing policies. Board members are required to step outside

their immediate circle of family and neighbors and make decisions based on the greater good of the community.

Can I do all this and have fun, too? It isn't all about policies and tough decisions. Our community is only as good as we make it, and establishing and maintaining a sense of community is a part of a board member's responsibility. Planning and attending functions such as our picnics and being a presence in the community are as important as any policy decisions you may make.

Being a board member can be frustrating at times, but it may also be one of the most rewarding ways you'll find to volunteer your time. If you're interested in running for the board or would like more details about board's responsibilities, please contact your manager or a current board member. ©



CLIENT PREFERENCE AT CAI SPRING SHOWCASE

Garry Schaffer, our Managing Broker, will be joining Wes Wollenweber of Hopkins, Tschetter, Sulzer, P.C. in presenting a seminar for CAI (Community Association Institute) members on April 29, 2011.

The topic of their session will be "Close Encounters of the Dangerous Kind: Advanced Fair Hous-

ing - How to Handle Accommodation Requests."

We're very proud of Garry, and are all looking forward to attending the educational conference.

Note: Client Preference offices will be closed on April 29, 2011 for this event - but we're always available via email and/or cell. ©

CLARIFICATION OF YOUR MANAGER'S ROLE

What are the responsibilities of your Association Manager?

The Manager has two primary responsibilities:

- 1) Carry out policies set by the board
- 2) Manage the Association's daily operations.

Some residents expect Managers to do things that just aren't part of the job. When those expectations aren't met, residents become unhappy. Hopefully this clarification will help you better understand what a Manager does.

While the Manager deals with conflict, they won't get involved in quarrels you might be having with your neighbor. However, if Association rules are being violated or you have a concern, your Manager is the right person to call.

Managers work closely with the Board as advisors, but are not

members of the Board. Also, the Manager is not your advocate with the Board.

Although Managers are available to residents, that doesn't mean they'll drop everything to take your call. If you need to see the Manager, arrange a meeting. If a matter is so urgent you need an immediate response, call 911 or the after-hours number.

Your Manager is happy to answer questions, but is not the information officer. For routine inquiries, like the date of the next meeting, please check the Association website.

The Manager monitors contractor performance, but contractors are responsible for supervising their own personnel. If you have a problem with a contractor, notify the Manager; they will review contract terms with the Board, and the Board will decide how to proceed.

Even with regular community inspections, the Manager won't catch everything: your help is essential. If you know about a potential issue, let the Manager know.

If you disagree with a policy or rule, send a letter or email to the Manager to present to the Board. The Manager doesn't set policy, they are tasked with enforcing it.

The Manager has a broad range of expertise, but is not a consultant to the residents, engineer, architect, attorney or accountant. Don't expect technical advice in areas where they are not qualified.

Although the Manager is a great resource to the Association, they are not available 24 hours a day, except for Association emergencies. An association emergency is defined as a threat to life or property.



GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH CONTRACTORS

Thinking of starting a project that will require the services of a contractor? (First: Don't forget to get Association approval if needed!)

Once you're ready to get started, keep your project nailed down with five simple guidelines:

1. Reconcile your contractors' objectives with your own. You want your project done on time and on budget; contractors want to maximize profit. Design a plan

that maximizes their profit when they achieve your objectives at each stage of the project.

2. Nothing drives down prices like competition. Any price you obtain without competition will be higher than the one you obtain with it.

3. Write down everything you expect. Be thorough and accurate so you and your contractor have the same expectations.

4. Use standard contract forms. The American Institute of Archi-

ects offers a variety of samples at www.aia.org/docs_default. But remember: there's no such thing as a standard project; customize your contracts to fit.

5. There is no substitute for professionalism. Anyone involved in your project with a track record of character and professionalism will likely demonstrate those qualities on your project. Someone who is unprofessional and dishonest will probably show those qualities as well.




TIPS TO REDUCE CONFLICT WITH NEIGHBORS

Communication is often the best way to prevent or resolve conflict before it escalates. To achieve a peaceful coexistence, try these “good neighbor” tips:

- **Say Hello.** Introduce yourself at the mailbox, while walking the dog, etc.— offer a friendly greeting when you see them.
- **Provide a Heads Up.** If you’re planning a construction project or hosting a big party, let your neighbors know beforehand.
- **Do Unto Others.** Be considerate about noise from vehicles, stereos, pets, etc.
- **Know Your Differences.** Make an effort to understand each other to avoid differing expectations or misunderstandings.
- **Consider the View.** Make sure the parts of your property others can see are presentable.
- **Appreciate Them.** Let your neighbors know if they do something you like. 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. Calmly tell your neighbors if something is an issue.
- **Be Respectful.** Talk directly to your neighbors if there’s a problem. Gossiping can dam-

age relationships and create trouble.

- **Remain calm.** If a neighbor mentions a problem they have with you, thank them for the input. 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. 



CARE AND FEEDING OF YOUR GARBAGE DISPOSAL

Garbage disposals are designed to grind small bits of biodegradable food waste to help prevent clogged drains. Proper use and maintenance will not only extend the life of your appliance, but also spare you unnecessary and costly service calls.

Always okay in the disposal:

- Small amounts of skinless, boneless, pit-less and non-fibrous foods are safe to grind.
- Run *cold* water when operating the disposal. Keep the water running for at least 30 seconds after you turn off the unit.

Never okay in the disposal:


- Use *hot* water when operating the disposal.
- Seafood or nut shells, potato

skins, husks, peels, rinds etc.


- Large amounts of noodles or rice. They expand in water and can clog drains.
- Non-food materials (glass, metal, plastic, etc.)
- Harsh chemicals (in the disposal or down the drain).

Occasionally:

- Small pieces of citrus peel help clean and freshen the disposal.
- Grinding a little ice once a month helps scrape away deposits and remove odors.

Sometimes running a few egg shells or a few coffee grounds through the disposal have been suggested to sharpen the blades; but check with your user’s manual for your model. 

CP STAFF & BOARDS GO TO EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

On Tuesday, March 15, 2011 Client Preference invited its Board members to an educational seminar presented by Pete Muccio of Hopkins, Tschetter, Sulzer, P.C. Garry and Joanne were pleased to have six Board members from three Associations join them. The seminar was about the teamwork required between a Board, their management company, and the legal firm they choose to work with. At the end of the evening, everyone agreed it was well worth the time. Barbara and the Board she was meeting with that night look forward to participating in the offering. 

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: ARE YOU READY?

With the recent events in Japan, and the onset of severe weather season in Colorado, it's good to remember that after a disaster you could be on your own for several days until help reaches you. Basic services may be cut off, or you may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. When something happens is not the time to shop for supplies!

Build a Disaster Supply Kit

A disaster supply kit holds basic items you may need in the event of a disaster. Keep items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers, such as an unused trashcan, camping backpack, or duffel bag.

Use your vacuum sealing system to secure dry goods, clothing, matches, etc. in vacuum-sealed bags to protect them from moisture and extend the shelf life of foodstuffs.

Water:

A minimum of one gallon of water per person per day (that's eight 16-oz bottles per person) is recommended. Pay attention to "use by" dates.

Food:

Here's a big one, and a tough one! What types of things should you stock for that 3-7 days when you're waiting for services to be restored? Don't forget the manual can opener!

- Avoid foods that increase thirst. Low-sodium crackers, whole grain cereals, peanut

butter, canned meats and fish, canned vegetables, canned beans, and other staples that do not require refrigeration or special preparation.

- If you're going to have a heat source, oatmeal, grits, rice and beans are good items to keep on hand. Powdered milk and eggs are good sources of calcium and protein.
- By all means put a small amount of sweets in your survival kit. While you're generally better off with a half dozen peanut-butter crackers than a candy bar, a small piece of chocolate or hard candy is a great morale-booster.

If you want to go the "freeze dried" route, there are a number of companies that offer these items, which will stay good on your shelves for decades.

Other items to stock:

- Whistle
- Portable radio or television (crank or solar powered)
- Flashlight and extra batteries (replace every 6 months)
- First aid kit and manual
- Sanitation and hygiene items (moist towelettes, toilet paper).
- Matches or lighters in a water-proof container
- Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils
- Heat source and cooking system (be aware of possible gas leaks!)
- *Photocopies* of credit and identification cards
- Cash and coins
- Prescription medications, eye

glasses, contact lens solutions, and hearing aid batteries

- Items for infants (formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers)

Think about having no heat, even in the summer. Every person should have a jacket or coat, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, sturdy shoes, an emergency "space" blanket, a regular blanket, extra clothing, etc.

Make a Disaster Plan

Sit down with your family and make a plan so everyone knows what to do.

- Identify who will be responsible for which duties
- Select special places to meet: right outside the home in case of fire or other sudden emergency, another place if you can't return to your home
- Who will be your "out of area" contact person in case local lines are overloaded? Make sure everyone has this programmed into their cell phones!
- What if you have to evacuate? Drive your evacuation route twice a year, and plot alternate routes if the main road is impassable. Keep a list of pet-friendly hotels/motels/animal shelters along your evacuation route(s).

There are great checklists available at www.fema.gov and www.redcross.org. Just search for emergency checklists or "Be Red Cross Ready".

