

Why Committees Are Essential to the Success of HOA/COA Boards

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What Is a Committee?

com·mit·tee (kə'midē) - a group of people appointed for a specific function, typically consisting of members of a larger group.

- Appointed by the Board of Directors, often to work on specific issues and assist the Board in HOA/Condo Governance
- Ad Hoc or Long-Standing (Elections Committee vs. Architectural Control Committee)
- Sometimes required by the governing documents (e.g., Architectural Control Committee)
- Can be comprised of experts helpful in fulfilling the mission of the committee (e.g., landscape architect on a landscaping committee)



What Types of Issues Can Committees Assist With?

-The world is your oyster!

-Examples:

- Finance/Budget
- Communications
- Landscaping
- Swimming Pools
- Elections
- Covenants Violations
- Attorney Liaison
- Social



Why Are Committees Essential?

- Committees help share the workload.
 - Boards can give limited authority to a small group, and save time by delegating.
- Committees help involve the disgruntled.
 - If a homeowner shows up over and over to meetings, angry about an issue, maybe that person needs to head a committee!



Why Are Committees Essential?

- Committees are a great training ground for incoming board members.
 - Not ready to be on board but want to be involved? Committee is a great place to start
 - Can see the inner workings without being on the board.
 - Often great to nominate to the board from active committee members.
 - Shows who cares and who is committed.
- Individuals with expertise in areas essential to Association governance can assist without the responsibility of Board membership



Committee Creation and Governance

- Authority:
 - Committee is authorized or chartered by the Board of Directors.
- Committee Charter: a written document that defines the committee's responsibilities and the responsibilities of its members; defines the relationship between the Board and the committee and defines the extent of the committee's authority



Committee Creation

1. Board can make a simple motion to nominate
2. Can last as long or as short as you need
3. Can have standing committees forever
4. Can have limited committees for a single issue



What can committees do?

- (1) Discuss issues – spend time at length discussing options and brainstorming
- (2) Research issues – really dig into the weeds
- (3) Take the temperature of the neighborhood – polling neighbors, discussing in community.
- (4) Vet Board member candidates during elections. Oversee and assist election process/annual meetings.
- (5) Assist in creating social events to bring the HOA community together
- (6) Watch and observe things happening and report back.
- (7) Anything else the board needs done that it cannot do itself, relative to some specific issue!



Committees and the Law

Committee Meetings Must Meet Open Meeting Requirements:

§ 55-510.1. Meetings of the board of directors.

A. All meetings of the board of directors, including any subcommittee or other committee thereof, shall be open to all members of record. The board of directors shall not use work sessions or other informal gatherings of the board of directors to circumvent the open meeting requirements of this section. Minutes of the meetings of the board of directors shall be recorded and shall be available as provided in subsection B of § 55-510.

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B. Notice of the time, date and place of each meeting of the board of directors or of any subcommittee or other committee thereof shall be published where it is reasonably calculated to be available to a majority of the lot owners. A lot owner may make a request to be notified on a continual basis of any such meetings which request shall be made at least once a year in writing and include the lot owners' name, address, zip code, and any e-mail address as appropriate. Notice of the time, date, and place shall be sent to any lot owner requesting notice (i) by first-class mail or e-mail in the case of meetings of the board of directors or (ii) by e-mail in the case of meetings of any subcommittee or other committee of the board of directors. Notice, reasonable under the circumstances, of special or emergency meetings shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided members of the association's board of directors or any subcommittee or other committee thereof conducting the meeting.

Also: Also § 55-79.75(B) – Virginia Condominium Act



Committees and Robert's Rules

Robert's Rules

1. Not required, but helpful
2. History: Henry Martyn Robert; asked to preside over meeting in a community church regarding the abolitionist movement. The meeting was chaotic so Robert formulated a set of rules based on Parliamentary Procedure. Mid 1800s.
3. Definition of Committee under Robert's Rules:
A body of one or more persons, elected or appointed by an assembly or society, to consider, investigate, or take action on certain matters or subjects, or to do all of these things. – Robert's Rules, §50
4. Types of committees:
 - Executive Committee: the officers of a larger board
 - Standing committees: remain in existence permanently to perform a continuing function
 - Special committee: appointed for a specific task and automatically ceases to exist at the end of the task



Committees and Robert's Rules

Robert's Rules:

5. Appointment of committees:

- Election by ballot
- Nomination from the floor
- Nomination by the chair (or president/executive committee)
- Appointment by the chair
- Motion by the presiding officer

6. Committee Reports

- Usually worded in third person (“the committee finds that...”)
- Identify the committee (“the committee on swimming pool maintenance reports that...”)
- Can both report *and* recommend
- if the report is deemed of enough importance, all committee members can sign the report
- Board can then act on the report by motion
 - Motion to adopt findings
 - Motion to act on recommendations
 - Motion to postpone for definite or indefinite time frame



In Summary

Committees are a flexible way to organize and effectuate the offer of volunteers to assist without requiring the full measure of board participation.

- Great way to look at issues that might require extra time and research.
- Great way to offer smaller roles to individuals.
- Great way to keep your membership participating and engaged.
- Great way to delegate!



QUESTIONS?

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