



Community Newsletter

The Voice of Condominium, Civic, & Homeowner Associations of Pasco County

Volume 4 - Issue 1

Council of Neighborhood Associations, Inc. since 1985

January 2006



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Government Committee

C.O.N.A. MEETING

**Wednesday,
January 18, 2006**

**New Port Richey
City Hall
in Chambers at
5919 Main Street**

9:30 a.m.

***SPEAKER FOR THIS MEETING IS
PASCO COUNTY COMMISSIONER***

JACK MARIANO

You can contact Commissioner

Jack Mariano by email

at: jmariano@pascocountyfl.net

*Our meetings are open to the public.
Bring a friend. We need to make our
speakers feel appreciated and we can
do that by having high attendance.*

➔ Status of 2006 Board of Directors

Voted to office by members at
the November Annual Meeting

- Previous Director Dominick Scannavino, is now President
- Previous Vice-President Pat Gorecki, is now a director
- Previous director Ron Hubbs, is now Vice-President
- Previous Treasurer, Reynolds Smith, Sr. is now a director
- ***New on the board, Sally Schlender, is now Treasurer***

What C.O.N.A. is

Editor ***ALL ABOUT !***

C.O.N.A. is beginning its twenty-first year of existence, nineteen years as a corporation. Associations and Boards of Directors have changed in challenging ways. Our members are the heart of a long and strong legacy of dedicated volunteers and outstanding volunteer leadership, and you deserve credit for meeting these challenges.

For years, the actions of C.O.N.A. have clearly demonstrated that C.O.N.A. is an active and caring part of the communities it serves. 2006 will be no different. Through projects such as the Mowing Ordinance; Unlicensed Cars and Truck Ordinance; Short-Term Rental Policy; Bench Ordinance; Uniforms/Badges for Code Enforcement; Change to State Law 689.26, (Real Estat.,) Billboard Ordinance; Sign Ordinance; Landscape Ordinance; and Tree Ordinance. C.O.N.A., and our members will continue to improve the way of life in Pasco County.

C.O.N.A.'s Board of Directors worked with dignitaries and C.O.N.A. members, on all levels of commitment and selflessness. Because you have raised the bar of social responsibility, it is C.O.N.A.'s Board of Directors privilege to thank you personally for what you have done to enhance the lives of people in our county. Due to their efforts, C.O.N.A. is able to maintain and grow strong relationships with our local communities

C.O.N.A.'s Board of Directors respects the pioneers that helped start C.O.N.A. and we're proud of the Spirit of Service they helped build. Participation in the concept of C.O.N.A. is one aspect of fulfilling our broader responsibilities in our communities. C.O.N.A.'s commitment to address the critical social issues facing our communities today continues to inspire members to volunteer. It is your personal time that makes an impact.

See ABOUT - page 2

ABOUT - from page 1

There is no better commitment than to invest in the future of Pasco County and its residents.

Thank you members...you make a difference in your own community! Your generosity of your time, your energy, your caring spirit, and your financial support, helps fulfill our mission. As long as there is a need...no matter how large or how small...C.O.N.A. is there to help in every way.

OUR MISSION

C.O.N.A. is a bi-partisan, non-profit, issue oriented Florida Corporation whose purpose is to promote the welfare and unity of Pasco County homeowners, civic, condominium, cooperatives, and special districts.

C.O.N.A. disseminates information and education to these associations, promotes the common good, and collectively, represents the quality of these groups before local and state governmental bodies, and to collect funds to be used exclusively for these purposes.

To promote communication and cooperation between organizations, to foster a sense of community, and to assist each other by providing a forum where member organizations can bring specific concerns for discussion, receive reliable information and receive support for legitimate causes.

To provide a forum for discussion of issues of public concern with emphasis on providing the most accurate information available and addressing all sides of a question equally.

Editors Note:

C.O.N.A. cannot interpret, nor can we represent you *legally* on any matter.■



Identity Theft!!

At the Annual Meeting in November, member Paul McClintock

suggested that members check their house deed in the county records, and any other paperwork, to see if your Social Security number is listed. It would be prudent to removed it as soon as possible.

Making The Most of the Annual Meeting

Annual meetings are important events in the life of an association, and making the most of these events takes careful planning. Required by the association's governing documents, annual homeowners meetings have legal and functional purposes: to elect new board members, vote on assessment issues, etc. But less explicit is the opportunity at image building, the chance to show the association's value to the homeowners - an often-overlooked objective which is critical to an association's future success. There are a number of steps an association can take to ensure the success of the annual meeting.

Notice

Many boards see the annual meeting as a chore. However, the annual meeting is a homeowner's main contact with the association and should be viewed as an opportunity by the board to leave a positive imprint on those in attendance. The first step in achieving this objective is in the meeting announcement itself. Most documents prescribe the required notice period and general content of the meeting announcement. It is important to comply with the requirements of the governing documents in order to prevent the possibility of future challenges as to the validity of the meeting. In addition to the "official" meeting notice, it is a good idea to provide reminders of the meeting as well. These can be in the form of follow up postcards sent out shortly before the meeting, bulletins posted at the community clubhouse, and announcements in the association newsletter.

Quorum

Oftentimes, communities, especially older associations, have difficulty obtaining a quorum for their annual meetings. Clearly, this poses a serious problem for the association in that the business of the community - especially, the election of board members - depends upon the participation of the members. In order to improve the chances of obtaining a quorum, request that owners complete and return

their written proxy to the board secretary, or management company even if they plan to attend the meeting. Proxies can always be rescinded if the member attends the meeting, but in the event he doesn't make it in person, his proxy can be used to establish a quorum and conduct business. Another incentive in encouraging actual meeting attendance is the awarding of "door prizes" to attendees. A number of associations offer prizes such as nursery gift certificates, movie passes.

Board Manners

In conducting the meeting itself, the board should consider how it can kindle in owners a sense of value and interest in the association. Personally encourage members to attend. Welcome them. Arrive early and mingle with residents over coffee. Avoid entering at the last minute or hovering together with other board members. If the board needs to caucus, try to do it early. Once the business meeting has been called to order,

Another incentive in encouraging actual meeting attendance is the awarding of "door prizes" to attendees, i.e. gift certificates or movie passes.

conduct it like a shareholders meeting.

Include a declaration that the meeting has begun, a

welcome to the members, an introduction of the board members and/or manager and a brief explanation of the meeting's goals. Declare each item on the agenda and what it means. Introduce reports and speakers formally; clearly state motions and their results. Maintain control of the meeting. Don't allow the discussion of an issue to stray from the stated agenda. And keep the meeting as brief as possible. These actions show that the board is in charge. And the members receive a guided tour through the actions on the agenda. Conducting the annual meeting in a professional manner does not turn it into a tedious rehash of Robert's Rules of Order. The goal is to present information in an orderly way, one that allows the information to flow.

The Order of things.

In addition to conducting the meeting in an orderly fashion, be sure that information is presented clearly. The audience at

See Annual page 3

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Annual - from page 2

an annual meeting doesn't always understand community associations. Use the meeting to teach members about the association and its operations. Even the old-time regulars will benefit from the information. Keep in mind the phrase, "Tell them what you are going to do, why you are doing it, and what you did." Use this practice in conducting new business, such as electing board members, and when acting on specific issues. Share background on why the board took a specific action and explain the results. When presenting information, such as committee reports, state the purpose of the committee, its goals and purposes, and the resulting information. Don't take shortcuts or speak in jargon - either of which reduces the usefulness of the information.

Give Credit

Finally, use the annual meeting to inform homeowners of association activities, in a manner that is loud, clear, and celebratory. Take charge by giving a "State of the Association" report. You don't need to rehash every thought and action from the past year, just highlight the most significant activities and actions. Recognize the efforts of volunteers by mentioning their names. Discuss how a particular decision will benefit the association. When you share this type of information, it also makes it easier to field questions from the members. Many of their questions will already be answered, and they'll know that the board is in control.

An Opportunity

Annual meetings are important to associations and to homeowners. While there is business to be conducted, boards and management should not miss the opportunity to educate and inform this unique gathering of members. Use the annual meeting to discuss specific actions taken by the board, and issues facing the association in the future. And, of course, use the annual meeting to celebrate the association's success.

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<http://www.associationtimes.com>

Electronic Meeting Guidelines

APPROVED by the
National Association of Parliamentarians



The Cutting Edge...

Seeking to meet the challenge of electronic meetings, delegates at the biennial convention of the National Association of Parliamentarians approved guidelines for electronic meetings while meeting in Seattle in September.

The concept of electronic meetings is fast evolving and many organizations are now holding meetings by telephone, with video equipment, through Web-based companies, and in some cases by e-mail and chat rooms.

The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th edition, 2000) states electronic meetings may be held (where members can either see and/or hear each other,) but such meetings must be authorized in the organization's bylaws and supported by special rules of order and standing rules.

Two Types of Meetings

The guidelines adopted by the NAP parliamentarians deal with synchronous e-meetings where members are able to simultaneously hear and/or see each other and asynchronous e-meetings where members are able to simultaneously hear and/or see each other and asynchronous e-meetings where members meet via e-mail, chat rooms, fax, postal mail, etc. and cannot see and/or hear each other.

The four-pages of guidelines are designed to help organizations that hold e-meetings or plan to hold such meetings. Some of the details covered in the guidelines include: access to the necessary equipment, how notices of meetings are delivered, quorum, use of the agenda, presiding over meetings, how recognition is sought and the floor obtained, the processing of motions, debate on motions, voting, and minutes.

The National Association of Parliamentarians, founded in 1930, is the largest non-profit organization of professional parliamentarians in the world. Headquartered in Independence, Missouri, the association helps organizations of all sizes conduct business efficiently through education and advocacy of effective meeting procedures and the accreditation of meeting professionals.

A copy of the guidelines may be purchased by calling 1 NAP Headquarters, 213 South Main Street, Independence, MO 64050 - 816.833.3892

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Plagiarism!

Editor

It has come to my attention that an article in a previous Newsletter has been reprinted without proper credit - that's plagiarism! Most people understand that one cannot copy text without giving credit to the source. When in doubt...cite the work. When you repeat another's work you must cite the source. "If you quote just a sentence, put it in quotes, but still cite the source.

There is some information on the Internet that is public domain, but you must still cite the source. If you don't know if it's public domain—it is always safe to call and get permission.

I telephone the writer and request an e-mail confirmation giving me permission to reprint an article, exactly or in part. I keep a file on all e-mails received.



GUIDE FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING WHERE MEMBERS GET CONNECTED

The agenda usually follows a format similar to that shown below.

1. *Call to Order* (by the President)
2. *Introduction of Board of Directors and/or Managing Agent*
3. *Proof of Notice and Quorum* (Give date notice was mailed and proof that a quorum is present at the meeting.
* **Editor's Note:** If needed, the U.S. Post Office will stamp your form.)
4. *Approval of the minutes of the previous annual meeting.*
5. *Association Activities* given by Vice-President or other Board Member or President if management runs the meeting. List of all important issues decided by the Board over the past year. (peruse past minutes over the past year)
6. *Financial Report* (Given by the Treasurer)
7. *Election of Board of Directors* (Begin by opening the floor for nominations; if any, add to the ballot. When all nominations have been made, the nominations should be officially closed, with a motion, seconded and a vote taken to assure that all members have had an opportunity to be nominated. Each candidate should then give a brief statement regarding his/her interest in serving on the Board. Refer to your bylaws on cumulative voting.)
8. *Inspectors of Election or ballot counters* - you should have a clear and organized process for tabulating votes. Counting of ballots should be done by members who are not running for the Board or related to anyone running for the Board.
9. *Counting of ballots and any new business to be brought before the members.* While ballots are being counted, the floor is opened for business, member questions, suggestions, etc. Have a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in being appointed to serve on a committee.
10. *Announcement of election results* (the president should announce the election and all results. Unless it is really important that the homeowners know how many votes each candidate received, it is probably best not to state the actual number of votes received.)
11. *Announcement of Organizational Board Meeting.* If the organizational meeting will be held immediately following the annual meeting, it must be announced so that all members present are aware of the Board Meeting, since all Board Meetings are open meetings.
12. *Adjournment* (The adjournment should be made with a motion, seconded and a vote taken, to assure that everyone has had the opportunity to bring up any business prior to adjournment.)
An Annual Meeting is as much a celebration of the Association and its accomplishments as it is a time to handle the necessary business of the Association. When the meeting is over, everyone should feel good about their Association and the people who have been elected to run it.

The Mechanics

START EARLY! It's prudent to know the rules according to your By-laws, Corporate Statutes, as to what they say about Annual Meeting notices. If you have homeowners who have volunteered to serve on a nominating committee, they should get active about six months prior to the meeting. Solicit interest in serving on the Board and on committees in your newsletter before you mail out notices and proxies.

The corporate code requires that any item you know will be up for a vote at the Annual Meeting must be included on the proxy. Naming candidates on the proxy often eliminates the possibility of anyone other than those listed on the proxy from being elected. A homeowner who arrives at the meeting and expresses his or her interest in running probably won't be elected unless he or she enters the meeting with a handful of proxies assigned to him or her.

If other decisions are to be made at the meeting, such as amendments to the governing documents or a vote, be sure those items are fully explained in your notice and proxy so that homeowners may mark their proxies intelligently.

Keep in mind that a proxy is NOT a document on which a homeowner casts a vote, but is a document on which a homeowner "may authorize another person or persons to act by proxy" A proxy must "afford an opportunity...to specify a choice between approval and disapproval of each matter of group related matters intended...to be acted upon at the meeting for which the proxy is solicited...and shall provide...that where the (homeowner) specifies a choice...the vote shall be cast in accordance therewith"

Printing the agenda and ballots in different colors helps to identify the correct ballot when you are discussing it at the meeting. This avoids a lot of confusion, especially if there are a number of items that will be decided.

***Editor's Note:** Your corporate stamp should be on every ballot and/or proxy that is sent to homeowners. Have extra stamped proxies and agendas on hand.

Set up your sign in sheets, agendas and ballots near the entry to the facility.

Once a quorum is established at the meeting, the President calls the meeting to order and the business is handled. The President should not deviate from the printed agenda. When members bring up items not on the agenda, they should be tabled until an open discussion following the scheduled business (usually while ballots are being tallied.)

***Editor's Note:** New Florida Statutes require a homeowner petition the Board of Directors if they wish to add an item to the agenda of any meeting. The above is only a guide.

Aside from the Editor's Notes...the information was taken, in part, from an article written by Charlene C. Marquez, A.M.S., President DJM Association, in Pleasanton, California. Permission was granted by Charlene.