FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Vote - Vote - Vote

Our by-laws allow two tries at a quorum. If we do not get a quorum, then the current Board remains and the three new candidates lose their chance to be elected (or not) this year. Please vote so that your ballot will arrive before December 14, 2013. You can also go into the on-site office. If you have lost your ballot, either Gabby or Carol can give you one and you will put it into the inner envelope, seal it and then put it in the outer envelope and write your name, property address, and sign it on the upper left hand corner. The on-site office will date stamp the outer envelope.

The annual election is scheduled to be held on Saturday, December 14, 2013, at the annual meeting providing there is a quorum. There are 3 additional candidates besides the 5 incumbents running. In the October, 2013, newsletter we published statements from many of the candidates including the 3 additional ones. Please review these and vote. The new Board will have significant responsibility for maintenance of the improvements that we have made, making payments on our 7.5 M\$ loan and budgeting and planning for the future. So, **please mail in your ballots** in the addressed postage paid envelopes and be sure to **sign them** by the property address. They should be received by the inspector of election before the December 14th meeting so that we know we have a quorum. You may also drop them off at the on-site office if you are late or even put up a replacement ballot.

2014 Budget

There will be a \$23 per unit per month dues increase for 2014. This will increase the dues to \$493 per month.

\$12,000 was added for tree trimming, \$24,000 for termite prevention and maintenance, and \$30,000 for plumbing repairs. Capital reserves will be increased by \$30,000. The additional funds for reserves will be used for projects in 2014 and then will be shifted to roof reserves so we have adequate funds for roof replacement in 10-12 years.

Capital reserves, insurance, water/sewer comprise 71.3% of the budget. When utilities are added, like natural gas, lighting, common area electric, the obligatory expenses represent 75% of the budget.

CC&Rs Changes

The new proposed CC&Rs represent a strategic approach to reducing budget growth and limiting liability. One of the changes was to apportion our dues based on unit size. This would raise dues for larger units and reduce them for smaller units. This has a significant impact on the larger townhouses. Further analysis revealed that this approach is not equitable and will be dropped.

While the townhouses are larger and cost more for capital replacement on a per unit basis, the condos cost more on an operational basis.

For example, the condos require elevator service and maintenance, sewer line cleaning and repairs, and the walkways require washing. The townhouses do not have these operational expenses. For fairness, the condo dues would have to increase because of these operational expenses and the townhouse dues would decrease. The townhouse dues would increase for the additional capital replacements costs due to their larger size and exterior exposures. When a comparison was made between the operational and capital costs for the townhouses and condos, the monthly dues would be nearly equal.

FROM THE ON-SITE OFFICE

REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

Frequently, the on-site office receives calls on plumbing, electrical and repair and maintenance issues. Some of these repairs can be handled directly by the homeowner/property manager rather than the office.

Plumbing – if you are experiencing a leaking faucet, flex line (under sink and behind toilet), a running toilet, leak in drain pipe under the sink, leaking shower/tub handles, shower head ... anything visible can be handled by the homeowner. If you hear gurgling or abnormal sounds, a stop-up – these should be reported to the on-site office.

Any repairs involving the shower/tub valves are the responsibility of the homeowner, but should be reported to the on-site office in advance to insure that water does not leak downstairs, and the plumber needs to be made aware that the supply lines have been recoated

Several plumbers to contact – Donlon Plumbing: 805-985-8885; Victors Plumbing: 805-432-1432

Electrical – If you experience that the breaker in unit is not working or a receptacle is worn, these are homeowner issues. Anything inside the wall is the Association's responsibility, outside is the homeowner. When in doubt, contact the on-site office.

Several electricians to contact - Straight Line Electric: 805-639-0995; J&L Electric: 805-431-2399.

Repair & Maintenance – If you are installing flooring, cabinetry, carpeting you can contact: All Concepts: <u>818-540-5164</u> or Monreal: <u>805-</u>217-2964.

Always contact the on-site office in advance of Repairs and upgrades to insure that any paperwork required is filled out in advance for the Architectural Committee and Board of Directors.

UPS/FED EX DELIVERIES

With the holidays coming up, several homeowners/tenants have contacted the on-site office asking if their deliveries can be dropped off at the on-site office. Unfortunately, the on-site office cannot take personal deliveries. Most importantly, do not have deliveries made unless you plan on being home. HAVE YOUR DELIVERIES SENT TO YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS, FAMILY OR FRIENDS, BUT NOT AT THE DOOR WHEN YOU AREN'T HOME. Call UPS or any other carrier that you may be using and make the appropriate arrangements.

PETS

Because of the time change, many residents are finding that when the pet owner is taking their pet for a walk, they are not cleaning up. All pet owners are personally responsible for immediate clean-up after their pets. Likewise they are responsible for keeping their patios or balconies free of urine and feces. Anyone violating this rule will be subject to the initial fine "without the benefit of a warning for special circumstances" of an initial \$100. And as important, all pets MUST be on a leash and accompanied at all times when outside the confines of the individual units, patios and balconies. - \$25 initial fine.

CONDO HEATERS

It's that time of the year and homeowners are contacting the on-site office requesting vendor information for inspections of their heaters. In all of the cases, the heaters are the original ones installed when the complex was built. It's been reported that the heaters either had a slow leak, burned wires, or other work which needed to be done. After some <u>investigation</u> it was recommended by a vendor that if the heaters are 30 years or older they most likely would need to be replaced. We request that homeowners pay particular attention to this matter and consider an inspection of their heaters before the cooler weather sets in. It is inevitable that the older the heaters are, the more dangerous they become. Please consider a "Safety Inspection." The Gas Company will come out for a one-time free of charge inspection to determine if there is a potential problem. If the heater needs to be replaced, we can provide you with names of vendors that some homeowners have used. Feel free to contact the on-site office.

DRANO AND GARBAGE DISPOSALS

Using any chemical product in the plumbing is a 'NO-NO'. *NEVER...NEVER* use Drano or Liquid Plumber to clear a slow draining sink or clogged sink. First, try your plunger...if that fails then call a plumber (see above). Caustic substances can destroy our drain lines.

Garbage Disposals: This equipment is a convenience; limit your use and do not attempt to grind up excess food. *DO NOT* dispose of peels, pasta, rice, coffee grounds, grease of any kind, egg shells, lettuce, fruit cores, cereal, cheese or any solid food item in the garbage disposal.

"ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE"

If you have furniture or other household items you no longer want or need, contact the local thrift stores in the area to see if they will take them. Please, please, do not put them at the Maintenance Shed, RV Parking Area or the dumpsters. Here are a few names to call: Pete's Recycle 909-647-6778 (and they may pick up mattresses)

Mar's Major Appliance Recycling Service – 800-960-2125 or 805-986-6500 – Appliances

Goodwill Industries – 805-981-0130 (for drop off locations) Household Goods, Small Major Appliances, Furniture, Misc.

Salvation Army – 800-958-7825 (for pick-ups) Household Goods, Major Appliances, Misc.

ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATIONS

If you plan on making any changes/renovations/repairs to your unit/townhome, please contact the on-site office in advance. There have

been several changes without notification to the on-site office which required the homeowner to tear up the hardwood/laminate flooring only to relay it with the appropriate underlayment. Some work requires permits from the City of Port Hueneme and we can advise you. Windows/Doors always require an Architectural Application. Always contact the on-site office in advance of any change.

DECKS

It you drop or spill something while carrying groceries to your home, we ask that you clean it up. Although you cannot hose the decks, just take some vinegar and water and wipe it down. The decks were power washed and there is a great improvement in the appearance and we hope to maintain that look as long we can. We will reschedule deck cleaning as needed, but with your help we can minimize complete power washing. Thank you in advance.

COMMITTEE BRIEFS

For more information visit: http://www.surfsideiii.com/docs/committee/committee.htm
Please contact the chair to volunteer.

Neighborhood Watch Committee: Val Lameka; 805-986-2855; v.lameka@yahoo.com

Sr. Officer Bates attended our meeting and gave us the crime stats for both Surfside III and Port Hueneme as a whole. For some reason both Surfside III and the city were quiet in October. We are certainly not complaining. Quiet is good. Hopefully it is the start of a trend. Happy Turkey Day to all! Our next meeting will be Thursday, December 5, at 7 pm in the Clubhouse. Questions or reports can go to Valerie Lameka.

FROM THE EDITOR

Ventura County Transportation Commission Workshops

Dulce Setterfield has provided the following information about two recent public workshops. The first was in September, the second just a few days ago (unfortunately, the information did not arrive in time for last month's newsletter). Please watch for news of future workshops. Contact information is given at the end.

The Ventura County Transportation Commission recently held the second public workshop for the Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) on Thursday, November 21, 2013.

This workshop presented the compatibility issues that have been identified through input from the public, the Policy and Technical / Advisory Committees, and interviews with key agencies and organizations. Additional information can be found on the project website (www.nbvcilus.org).

If you have any questions or comments on this project, please contact Steve DeGeorge at the Ventura County Transportation Commission at sdegeorge@goventura.org or via phone at (805) 642- 1591 ext. 103.

Please send all newsletter submissions to me at dkessner@csun.edu. Please avoid any special formatting and use Arial 10-point font if you have it. The deadline is the 20th of each month for the following month's issue. Owners and renters should be aware that the Newsletter is always available on the website: www.surfsideiii.com. This includes back issues.

The **Owners' Corner** is a forum for all of you to voice your opinions on anything that might be of interest to everyone else. Please feel free to take advantage of this.

The City of Port Hueneme has a free electronic newsletter with information on various city-related matters and events. To sign up to receive it, visit the city website: http://www.ci.port-hueneme.ca.us, then in the column at the far left, click on "Sign Up for E-News."

OWNERS' CORNER

The Owners' Corner is a place in the newsletter for owners to voice their observations and suggestions about the association operations or make announcements about any Surfside III social event or activity. While the newsletter Editor and the Board do review these submissions, the opinions and content only represent the author and not the association. We will refuse and return to the author for rewriting any material that is not factual or is in bad taste or denigrates any individual. We are not perfect and apologize in advance if you find the content of anything in this section offensive.

The Surfside III Condominium Association ("association") is not responsible for the content and accuracy of any information provided by owners or third parties. The association and its Board of Directors will not accept any liability for any direct, incidental, special or consequential damages that result from or are related to material submitted by the owners or other third parties. By submitting any material for publication in this newsletter, all individuals agree to indemnify, defend and hold the association, its officers, directors, members, representatives, managers and agents harmless to the fullest extent permitted by California Law, from any and all claims, actions, and/or lawsuits, arising out of or related in any way to their material published in this newsletter.

CONTACT INFORMATION

MAINTENANCE/RESIDENT SUPPORT (PHONE NUMBERS AND E-MAILS BELOW):

Contact Lordon Management, Jennifer Critchfield; for e-mails always copy Donalea Bauer

Include your phone number(s) and/or e-mail for response before end of next business day. If you get her voice mail, but would like to speak with her directly, hit zero and talk to the operator.

If more urgent, call Donalea Bauer.

Surfside III On-site Property Manager's Office: 600 Sunfish Way, Port Hueneme, CA 93041

Phone: 805-488-8484

OFFICE OPEN: Mondays & Fridays – 8 am-12 noon Wednesdays – 1-5 pm

THERE WILL BE NO ON-SITE TELEPHONE SERVICE WHEN THE OFFICE IS CLOSED.

Please note that calls regarding maintenance or billing should be directed to Lordon Management.

Surfside III Direct Contact:

Surfside III COA 600 Sunfish Way Port Hueneme, CA 93041 http://www.surfsideiii.com manager@surfsideiii.com Phone: 805-488-8484

Carol Short, On-site Property Manager

Management Company:

Lordon Property Management 1275 Center Court Drive Covina, CA 91724 Phone: 800-729-5673

For after-hours emergencies, dial 5 or

626-771-1075

Donalea Bauer, Vice President, community manager

Email: donalea@lordonmanagement.com

Phone: 800-729-5673 x 3342

Jennifer M. Critchfield, assistant community manager

Email: jcritchfield@lordonmanagement.com

Phone: 800-729-5673 x 3380

Our Board:

Bill Betts - President bill.betts@surfsideiii.com
Ira Green - Vice-president ira.green@surfsideiii.com
Alexander Urmersbach - Treasurer alex.urmersbach@surfsideiii.com
Anthony Truex - Secretary tony.truex@surfsideiii.com
Michael Madrigal - Director michael.madrigal@surfsideiii.com

LORDON MANAGEMENT: OTHER DEPARTMENT EXTENSIONS

All escrow matters: Christina Willey, ext. 3339; escrow@lordonmanagement.com
All insurance and collections: Emily Polchow, ext. 3337; epolchow@lordonmanagement.com
Your account, billing address, etc: Liz Lopez, ext. 3319; lopez@lordonmanagement.com
Liens, legal issues: Donalea Bauer (see above)



Serving California's Community Associations

November 03, 10 17, 24, 2013

MULTIPURPOSE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

QUESTION: A board member and I have conflicting beliefs as to the number of projects a special assessment can cover. I believe it is one; the board member believes it can be more than one. Who is right?

ANSWER: Your board member is right. For special assessments approved by the board (up to 5% of the current year's budgeted gross expenses) there are no limitations on the number of items for which the assessment can be used. (<u>Civ. Code §1366(b</u>).) The same is true for member-approved special assessments. There are, however, limitations imposed by the ballot measure when the assessment is approved.

Ballot Limitations. For example, if the membership approves a special assessment of \$100,000 for two items, roof and boiler repairs, the board cannot use the funds to asphalt the parking lot. They must use the funds for the roof and boiler. The limitation also applies to left-over funds. If at the conclusion of the work, \$8,000 is left over, the board cannot use the surplus funds for new artwork in the lobby. The board must either (i) transfer the funds to reserves for future roof and boiler repairs, (ii) obtain membership approval to buy new artwork for the lobby, or (iii) return the money to the membership.

CANCELING A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

QUESTION: Can a new board rescind a special assessment?

ANSWER: It depends on who passed the assessment and what it was for.

Board-Approved Assessment. A special assessment levied by a prior board (up to 5% of the budget) can be rescinded by a successor board but they need a good reason for the cancellation.

Boards have a statutory duty to "levy regular and special assessments sufficient to perform its obligations under the governing documents and this title [Davis-Stirling Act]." (Civ. Code §1366(a).) If the prior board levied a special assessment to repair deferred maintenance or build stronger reserves, a successor board could be in breach of its fiduciary and statutory duties if it cancels the assessment. If, on the other hand, the prior board's special assessment was to buy a full-sized reproduction of Michelangelo's David to install at the front gate, the assessment can (and should) be rescinded.

Member-Approved Assessment. If the special assessment was approved by the membership, in my opinion the board does not have the authority to rescind it. For example, if the membership voted to assess \$50,000 to repaint the buildings, a successor board cannot refuse to collect the money and refuse to paint the buildings.

FHA CERTIFICATION WARNING

There has been a debate for years about the wisdom of certifying a development for <u>FHA loan guarantees</u>. Following are the pros and cons of certification:

<u>Argument For Certification</u>. FHA insured loans have become a significant percentage of all condo loans in California. In 2007, they accounted for only 3% of the market. By 2012 they accounted for more than 50% of all new home loans and 80% of first time home buyers. Moreover, loan limits now go to \$729,750. As a result, failing to certify would eliminate a significant percentage of potential buyers.

Argument Against Certification. The cost to become FHA compliant may be significant or unachievable. In addition, FHA buyers may be financially unstable. An FHA-insured buyer has a low down payment (3.5% of the purchase price vs. 20% for conventional loans), low closing costs, and easy credit qualifications, which is why the loan must be insured by the federal government. Because FHA buyers are financially weaker, they are less able to handle special assessments and dues increases. As a result, they are more likely to become delinquent and slide into foreclosure. This would have a negative affect on property values and the association's budget.

Lawsuit Over Refusal. Last week David Byrne of Herrick Feinstein LLP reported that an Ohio condominium association was sued when it chose not to seek FHA recertification. A single mother with a child wanted to purchase a unit using FHA insured financing. When the board declined her request for recertification, she filed a complaint with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. The Commission, in turn, sued the association. The case is pending.

RECOMMENDATION: Although no decision has been handed down in the case, the fact that the Civil Rights Commission sued the association is troubling. As a defensive measure, boards should review their status as an FHA certified development. If their condominium development is not certified, boards should weigh the pros and cons and make a decision whether certification is beneficial or even achievable. The matter should be put on the board's meeting agenda and discussed in open session. Any decision not to seek certification must be based on non-discriminatory reasons. The board's decision and the rationale behind it should then be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Thank you to James C. Harkins, IV, Esq. of Cane, Walker & Harkins LLP for bringing this case to my attention.

CC&R-BYLAW UPDATE REQUIRED?

QUESTION: Will my homeowners association have to update its documents to conform to the 2014 Civil Code changes including references to past Civil Code numbers?

ANSWER: No, you don't need to update your documents. You may need to update them for other reasons--because they are badly written, contain Declarant language, are ambiguous about maintenance duties, etc. but changing Civil Code numbers is not one of them.

Renumbering. The most noticeable change in the Davis-Stirling Act is the renumbering. The current Act is found in sections 1350 to 1378 of the Civil Code. The rewrite moves everything to sections 4000 to 6150 of the Civil Code. For example, Civil Code §1350 becomes §4000 starting January 1, 2014. If your CC&Rs and bylaws refer to the old numbering system, there is no legal requirement that you switch to the new numbering system. Since the existing Civil Code numbers roll over to new numbers on January 1, references in your documents automatically flow to the new Code. In other words, your documents don't become obsolete and unenforceable on January 1 because they refer to old Civil Code numbers.

Conversion Chart. All you need is a conversion chart to find the new numbers. Charts can be found on many law firm websites, including my own (see <u>Conversion Chart</u>). You can download and distribute our chart to the membership and include it in escrows for new owners. That should allay any angst about the new numbering system.

Substantive Changes. Also, the handful of substantive changes in the Rewrite are not sufficient to trigger a restatement of your association's governing documents.

RECOMMENDATION: If your governing documents need amending for other reasons then it makes sense to restate them and convert the Civil Code numbers. Talk to your association's attorney about the merits of restating your documents. If you don't have legal counsel, <u>contact us</u> for a proposal.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION

QUESTION: I want to install an electric charger for my car. What does the Civil Code consider an "unreasonable"

expense? Since my car is over 100 feet from the meter, it will cost me \$4,000 to run electricity & install the charger. Isn't that an unreasonable amount?

ANSWER: The reasonableness of the expense is a matter between you and your electrician. By statute, the association must allow you to install a charging station but the cost is yours not theirs. Following is the relevant portion of the EV statute dealing with reasonableness:

(a) ...any provision of a governing document... that either effectively prohibits or unreasonably restricts the installation or use of an electric vehicle charging station in an owner's designated parking space... is void and unenforceable. (b)(2) For purposes of this section, "reasonable restrictions" are restrictions that do not significantly increase the cost of the station... (Civ. Code §1353.9.)

The association is not imposing any unreasonable restriction on you nor did it move the meter so as to drive up your costs. You're simply the victim of sticker shock and you cannot expect your neighbors (the association) to subsidize your costs.

RECOMMENDATION: Before buying that shiny new electric vehicle, owners should investigate the cost of installing the equipment to keep it running.

GROWING POT

QUESTION: We have a resident who is growing a LOT of marijuana in her back yard. Our CC&Rs say no to this but if the state says it's legal who is right?

ANSWER: Following is a response prepared by one of the rising stars in my office, attorney Matt Deenihan:

Illegal Conduct. Under the federal Controlled Substances Act, the cultivation of marijuana is prohibited. Most governing documents include a restriction that restricts an owner from using his property to engage in illegal or criminal conduct. If your CC&Rs include such a provision, growing marijuana is a violation and would subject the owner to disciplinary action by the association.

Medical Marijuana. What if the person has a prescription (also known as a "card" or "license") for medical marijuana? Although federal law does not recognize a distinction between medical and recreational use of marijuana, California does. In 1996, marijuana was legalized for limited medical use. Under California's Health & Safety Code §11362.77, qualified patients are allowed to cultivate up to 6 mature or 12 immature marijuana plants. Thus, if your resident has a prescription her pot farm is authorized under state law (provided she does not exceed the allowed number of plants).

Conflict of Laws. Obviously there is a conflict between state and federal laws. However, just because the state allows the growing of marijuana does not mean an HOA must allow it. It is still illegal under federal law, which makes it a violation of the governing documents if they contain a provision against illegal conduct.

Nuisance. If your documents do not prohibit illegal conduct, all CC&Rs have a provision against creating a nuisance. Regardless of the legality of the marijuana plants under state law, their presence may still be deemed a nuisance. Marijuana plants have a strong odor that some find extremely unpleasant, and several plants grouped together can produce an overwhelming odor for neighbors or passers-by. Also, they may attract criminal activity, a legitimate concern of the person's neighbors. The strong smell as well as safety and security issues fall under the nuisance provisions of the CC&Rs.

RECOMMENDATION. The first step for an association is to send a warning letter to the owner detailing the nature of the violation.

If the resident can't produce a valid prescription for medical marijuana, the association can call the police. If the person has a license to grow marijuana, the association can still proceed under the criminal activity and nuisance provisions of its CC&Rs. The grower could "cure" the violation by moving her plants inside where they can't be seen or smelled.

Growing Pot RESPONSE:

The city of San Rafael passed a smoking ban that took effect last week (Nov. 14) that is one of the toughest in the nation. Because secondhand smoke is harmful regardless of the source and because it seeps through walls, floors and

ventilation ducts, the ordinance prohibits smoking in any residence with shared walls, <u>including condominiums</u>. It will be interesting to see how they handle marijuana since the <u>ordinance</u> does not exempt it. The ordinance defines smoke as "gases and particles released into the air by combustion when the apparent or usual purpose of the combustion is human inhalation of the resulting combustion products, including, but not limited to, tobacco smoke." I think it is clear that pot smokers cannot harm the health of others even if their smoking is for medicinal purposes.

DEATH AND DELINQUENT ASSESSMENTS

QUESTION: A delinquent resident passed away. We sent a letter requesting the executor of the estates' information but have not received anything in return. What action can we take, if any, on this property?

ANSWER: Collecting delinquent assessments from a deceased owner with no executor or administrator is challenging but not insurmountable. First, a <u>pre-lien letter</u> must be sent to the deceased owner at his/her address of record. Next, an <u>assessment lien</u> must be recorded against the property in the name of the deceased owner.

Foreclosure. If payment is not forthcoming, the board can authorize foreclosure of the lien by non-judicial or judicial foreclosure. In your case, <u>judicial foreclosure</u> may be preferable because the court can authorize service of certain required documents by publication in a newspaper in lieu of personal service.

Thank you to Richard Witkin, Esq. of Witkin & Neal for his assistance with this question.

PLEASE MOVE!

QUESTION: A board member suggested I sell my unit and move to a different HOA. Is this an abuse of power by the director?

ANSWER: It is not an abuse of power for a director to express an opinion. In your case, there are two distinct possibilities. Either (i) your director is thin-skinned and doesn't know how to interact with your or (ii) you're a toxic homeowner who should move to another association. I will leave it to the two of you to sort out.

INSURANCE FOR BOARD MEMBERS

QUESTION: Is Public Officials and Management Liability insurance the same as Director and Officers (D&O) Liability?

ANSWER: They are similar but not the same. Both are errors and omissions policies, i.e., they protect the insured in their decision-making. The difference between the policies is who gets insured.

In the Public Officials policy, elected/appointed officials of state and local governments are the insured. A D&O policy, on the other hand, covers directors and officers of corporations. However, common interest developments need broader coverage than a straight corporate D&O policy.

Management Liability. <u>D&O policies</u> for community associations are designed like a management liability policy. That is to say, they typically include coverage for errors and omissions and <u>fiduciary liability</u>. Many also include <u>employment practices liability</u>, with others offering coverage on endorsement. In addition, they cover volunteers on committees and the onsite manager (if any). In other words, they are specifically tailored to the HOA industry.

RECOMMENDATION: It goes without saying that boards should talk to insurance brokers with expertise with homeowner associations. The last thing a board wants is to have a claim denied because they bought inadequate insurance.

Thank you to Michael Berg of Berg Insurance for his assistance with this question.