

Building A Better "Community"

According to the Community Associations Institute (CAI), community associations are arguably the most representative and responsive form of democracy found in America today. Residents of a community freely elect neighbors to serve on a board of directors of that community. Other owners or residents may serve on committees specifically tasked with overseeing association matters such as finances, security, architectural review and landscaping.

In addition to the primary responsibilities of the board, a responsive community association board must go beyond prudent business management to foster harmony and enjoyment of the community association life-style among residents. It is suggested that community associations have numerous committees devoted to social events, charitable activities, public service initiatives, safety issues, environmental responsibility and special member services. Effective community associations build community spirit through activities such as dances, fund raising drives, holiday parties with contests such as an award to the best decorated unit, etc., voter registration drives, enhanced accommodations for elderly or disabled residents, neighborhood watch programs, Earth Day celebrations and neighborhood beautification projects.

Effective communication through newsletters and, increasingly, association web sites ensure that members are informed of community events in addition to financial decisions and rules.