

“I Pay My Assessment...Don't Bother Me!”

Many of you can probably relate to the following statement: “I pay my assessment each month, which is all I am required to do by our association, so don't bother me with newsletter articles about getting involved or lecture me about my obligation to participate in committees, serve on the board or attend meetings. If there is something wrong, I will make my opinion known. Until then, leave me alone!”

Fortunately not all owners feel that way, but it is a sentiment that is shared by many owners who, if they would just open their mind and transcend that limited way of thinking, could contribute much to the betterment of our community.

Let's suppose you invest \$300,000 with a financial brokerage firm whose responsibility to you is to do everything possible to preserve, maintain and enhance that investment. The only responsibility you have to them is to pay their transaction commissions. However, during the course of your relationship with this firm, they continually plead with you to attend investment workshops to learn what your money is doing, read your transaction summary in order to understand where your money is and take an active role in the choices that will guide the placement of your investments. Would your attitude be the same towards your brokerage firm as it is towards your association? Probably not. The successful investor wants to know everything about their investments and their investment opportunities, business practices of the firm they have their money invested with and will gladly read everything sent to them about the status of their investment in hopes of learning something that will help make them more successful investors.

In reality, the attitudes about your community association should be no different than your attitudes about your investment brokerage firm. Both are charged with preserving, maintaining and enhancing your investment. The only difference is that the investment that your community association is protecting is your home and our attitudes about our home can be much more emotional and our attachments much different than our attitudes and attachments about our money (although, ultimately they are one and the same). Our home is our castle and the owner is King of the castle. Anyone who dares to tell the King what to do, how to behave and why they should venture outside of the castle and get involved is perceived of as a threat to the quality of their life. Our money, on the other hand, is a tool to be used in order to make more money and when anyone suggests what to do, how to invest and encourages you to get involved in investment decisions, the smart investor would be foolish not to explore every opportunity to get involved because your investments will, hopefully, someday improve your quality of life.

Let's challenge the thinking that rationalizes our non-participation by remembering that involvement is not solicited in order to intrude upon our lives and lay siege to our castle. Participation is needed in order to contribute to the betterment of our community and improve the quality of life for everyone in it. Every member of our community has knowledge, skills and experience that our association would love to have access to. Consider the desire to be a successful community member with the same passion that you would desire to be a successful investor. Transcending the “I” “me” and “mine” thinking that keeps us from sharing our time and energy with our association, and moving towards a consciousness of our entire community's needs and opportunities, results in “We” “Us”, and “Our” thinking, which, because it leads to involvement, support and cooperation, guarantees an improvement in everyone's life!