

DISCOVER
SAFER WAYS TO MANAGE
DECISION-MAKING IN A
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



When it comes to management and decision-making within a community association, it all comes down to prevention and foresight. As a board member, you are the decision-maker for the community and may not have the tools to manage the process. Therefore, it is essential for you to know your rights, risks and responsibilities when making choices on behalf of the association.



In an ideal situation, solving or addressing issues within a community association should be done precisely as the name implies — as a “community.” The truth of this is not always the case though. Even the most well-intentioned managerial decisions can sometimes run the risk of leaving other members of the association feeling marginalized or overlooked.

In these cases, it is important that the members of the association know they have options to help protect themselves in case another member of the community becomes disgruntled and decides to take personal legal action.

A common example of this type of claim falls under the description of “discrimination,” and while mostly subjective and hard to prove or disprove, any legal action issued can lead to both financial and emotional distress for the community.

While every situation is different — and the “human factor” makes it difficult to protect against potential disputes — we have compiled a list of preventative tips that can help you mitigate the risk of your decisions.

TIPS FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION DECISION-MAKING



Four preventative tips to mitigate the risk of board's decisions leading to potential conflict.

1 MAKE INFORMATION READILY AVAILABLE

As the board member of your community association, make sure that every member of the association has all of the available information needed to make an informed decision. Share the details or figures involved in decisions that may be disputed or go to a vote. The more details available to the members, the more likely they will understand and accept the decision ultimately made. Sending out a brief stating facts, findings and objectives prior to the board meeting, creates transparency and enables members to feel informed of the decision-making process. Follow up by providing the board's meeting minutes to create transparency.

2 SOLICIT FEEDBACK

Create an open and consistent line of communication through email, association meetings, and Q&A sessions allowing the community to provide feedback on any proposed ideas or previously made decisions. This promotes the idea that people's opinions and concerns are being heard and addresses and reduces the risk of members feeling overlooked.

3 COMMUNITY VOTING

To avoid members of the community claiming exclusion in the decision-making process, it is a good idea to facilitate a vote on proposals. Voting creates a feeling of cooperative decision-making which promotes conversation throughout the community and may eliminate or reduce any perception of personal discrimination. It's important to document votes, feedback, and additional information you may have collected, to show you've taken into consideration association members' opinions and to dispel suspicion of board members acting in an authoritative way.

4 TAKE EXTRA CARE WHEN MONEY IS INVOLVED

One of the most important tips is taking caution when making decisions regarding financial investments or spending. Make sure to enact all the tips mentioned above in the process. Ensure all members understand the final decision was a fair one. Compulsion to blame is mitigated when you are careful to consider feedback from multiple sources.