

THE COMMUNITY BUILDER

Regrouping, Planning and Communicating

Today's financial situation, while somewhat better than in the past few years, has caused many associations to feel the pinch of not having as much money as they once may have been accustomed to having. But the obligations of the Association still have to be met. Stepping back and reflecting on what the priorities are: making sure the buildings are structurally sound and in good repair, infrastructure such as roads, drainage and irrigation are maintained and operating properly, and the safety of the owners is met. Making sure this happens may take a little more time by choosing to prioritize major expenditures for these items. It may take one, two or even a three year plan to realign the obligations to the income. We've all lived on less, not that we like it, but it is doable. Making sure that your plan is communicated to the members will serve to let them know that you're putting them as your priority, that the investment their home represents will be taken care of, that you are not ignoring what needs to be done. That it will be done in a studied, economical, but proper way.

Certainly everyone would like to see annuals changed out routinely, dead plant material replaced immediately and the trees trimmed or new furniture at the pool, but these are things that can be done less frequently and still maintain the appearance and integrity of the community. Certainly the basic maintenance should be kept up, the irrigation maintained, but do the roads really need to be resealed this year? Can the pool furniture be re-strapped to last another year while the roofs are replaced or major building maintenance is performed? Probably!

Doesn't it make sense to create a proposed maintenance schedule that could be posted on the community calendar in the CommunityPortal or sent in a newsletter to let owners know when certain major maintenance items will be done? It doesn't have to be specific as to day, date and time because obviously items like pressure washing or painting will take a lot of coordination and detail, but at least they can be told that it will be done in the third quarter of the year or that an evaluation of all of the gutters and downspouts will be made and completed in the second quarter, or that the sidewalks will be evaluated for cracks that require repair in the first quarter. Creation of the budget requires the Board to make certain evaluations of what is necessary and the budget will then



THE COMMUNITY BUILDER

provide the outline for Association's ability to adhere to a proposed maintenance schedule.

By creating and communicating a maintenance schedule residents can be assured that their request will be addressed. It makes economic sense to group large maintenance items together so only a single mobilization is needed rather than trying to comply with individual requests for these types of services.

Communicating the plan and the schedule will provide the owners with the knowledge their Board is aware of the economic strain on everyone and they are taking care of the issues. Yes, it may take a little longer than everyone would like, but it is a fiscally responsible answer to the current situation. With a little planning, we can still do what is necessary and needed and keep your community solvent, in good repair and looking good!