

# Euclid Management Company

June, 2003

TO ALL BOARD MEMBERS:

One of the most difficult items to deal with at a Board meeting is an agitated homeowner or group of homeowners. We are often asked what is the best way to handle these situations. Below is a list that we have found helpful when dealing with these difficult situations.

Step #1: Any homeowner that would like to address the Board should be asked to stand up. A person is less likely to act in an irrational manner if everyone present can clearly see them. It also avoids what I call "sniper" attacks. That is the person that make derogatory comments under their breath or behind someone. In addition, on a positive note, standing up also identifies who has the floor and who should be speaking.

Step #2: Prior to speaking, the homeowner should state their name and address. This helps calm the person down because the Board and other homeowners can now identify the homeowner. This step also assists us if we have to correct a problem at or near the homeowner's home.

Step #3: Only one homeowner should be allowed to speak at a time. For starters, this is a common courtesy, but it also eliminates a group of homeowners from ganging up on the Board or another homeowner.

Step #4: Several of our associations are using speaker cards. A speaker card must be filled out and handed to the Board if an owner wishes to speak. There are several advantages. First, we know who has the floor. Second, it creates a record of name, address, and concern. Third, this limits the conversation to the specific concern and states it in a monotone professional manner. Fourth, it creates a natural order of; hear the concern (read the card), the homeowner speaks, and the Board responds. The final positive is that the card limits the overall owner input section to the owners with real concerns,

Step #5: The Board should listen to the homeowner. The primary purpose of an angry homeowner is to be heard. Unfortunately, the Board often knows the history of the homeowner and this slants the listening process or cuts the homeowner off prematurely.

Step #6: The Board President or a designated Board Member should be assigned to make sure all conversation remains focused. In other words, if a homeowner is present at the meeting to discuss their violation letter, that is what should be discussed. To often the conversation will go from the violation letter to other homeowner violations, to how the landscaper does not do his job, to why are the assessments so high. In order to solve the concern, we must focus on it.

Step #7: The Board President or designated Board Member should restate the concern. Often when the concern is restated in normal tones, without the shouting and theatrics, the concern appears much smaller. This also assures everyone that we are working toward a solution, and on the correct problem.

Step #8: The Board should consider the concern. The Board has two options. The first option is for the Board to discuss the concern at the current meeting. The second option is that the Board can take it under consideration to discuss at a future date. The Board should not place themselves in a position to discuss any and every concern upon a moment's notice. The Board can inform the homeowner that the issue will be discussed at the next meeting or communicated in writing. In addition, the Board should be careful about automatically voting. Automatically voting gives the appearance that the decision was predisposed.

These procedures must be set in place prior to dealing with a difficult homeowner. The Board cannot have casual conversations with some homeowners then expect others to follow different procedures. The Board should realize that how they handle homeowners is being watched by other homeowners. If a new homeowner observes a conversation between the Board and a complaining homeowner and does not know the history of the complaining homeowner, the new homeowner may assume he will receive the same treatment when he presents a concern.

The above mentioned steps not only assist in dealing with a difficult homeowner, but also present the Board meeting as professional.

Sincerely,

  
Glennon J. Gray  
President