Attend the Annual Association Meeting - Even If You Are Happy

While serving on my association’s board for seven years, I came to realize that happy owners generally do not attend their association’s meetings, even if there is only one a year. In soliciting proxies for an annual election meeting, I often asked my fellow owners why they did not plan to attend. An almost universal response was that they did not like the negative attitude, rambling, or complaining from owners that are present at far too many meetings. One owner told me she had only lived in our association for six months, loved the property, and thought the monthly fee was a bargain. Then, after attending the annual meeting and hearing nothing but complaints about the board, management, and monthly fees, she began to think her new home was not so sweet after all. It was only after a non-attending owner pointed out to her that our association consisted of one-hundred sixty homes with only about thirty homes attending the annual meeting, (with some of those being husbands and wives) did the new owner realize her positive attitude was being skewed by a minority of owners with complaints to register or a personal agenda to put forth.

Over the last several years, boards have come to realize the negative impact of failing to control the annual meeting agenda. As a result, many association boards have altered their annual meeting format from being “bottom heavy” with owner comments to being “top heavy” with informative reports and speakers. Now, it is not unusual to hear from the association’s accountant, insurance agent, manager, and lawyer at the annual meeting. Some associations have even further improved their meeting format by inviting the local police or fire chief, city council person, or even the mayor to briefly address the owners.

Even if you are happy, your association needs you to attend the annual association meeting. The primary purpose of most association meetings is to elect the new board members. If only the negative and/or complaining owners attend, the likelihood of electing only negative and/or complaining board members increases. If you are happy, vote to re-elect current board members. If you are unhappy, vote to elect new board members. Regardless of your attitude, your vote is needed. More significantly, important community information is now being disseminated at the association meetings and you don’t want to miss out on hearing this information.

See you at the annual meeting – even if you are happy!

*(The law firm of Kaman & Cusimano represents our Association)*