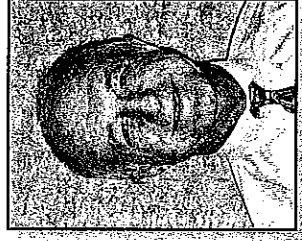


## Manager's Column...



Jim Banno

# Communications and Good Government

By Jim Banno

**I**t is often stated that one of the most challenging aspects in the governance of common interest communities is the management of expectations. I disagree.

Common interest communities in this state are required by statute to govern by the principles of democratic rule. Leaders are elected by the people to promote the interests *of the people*. Promoting such interests must be balanced with the resources made available to do the job – the economic rule. Unfortunately, simple economic logic gives credence to the old adage “some of the people all of the time but not all of the people all of the time.”

There will always be disgruntled individuals but they have the democratic process to resolve their dilemmas. They have the option to get the requisite votes (as set forth in the condominium’s by-laws) to remove/elect leaders who more closely support their cause.

In the meantime, if elected leaders govern with transparency and in accordance with the governing documents, encourage productive community input through, for example, a structured committee process and **COMMUNICATE** the “plan,” the task of managing expectations will manage itself.

Consider just a very few of the communication tools utilized by communities with which I am familiar:

- The Community Handbook: There is no substitute.
  - The Snow Removal Plan: I’ve seen communities actually publish excerpts from their snow removal contracts to the community. Such excerpts directly impact travel plans for residents such as what time(s) mid-storm plowings of roads are completed, at what point snow shoveling commences and how long the contract allows for such work to be done.
  - Insurance agent, carrier, deductible levels and limits of responsibility for homeowners.
  - The Painting (building washing, deck staining, hallway painting etc) Plan: Many communities use phased or cycle plans for recurring maintenance work such as painting and periodically publish the schedule.
  - Website access for homeowners to review budgets, meeting minutes and schedules, and many other items all included to enhance communication within the community.
  - The Events Calendar: Some communities hold annual recreational/social events and/or provide special services such as bulk trash dumpsters. These are published in the annual calendar.
- Since the “plan” has many components which evolve over time, developing an effective communications strategy is essential. Communications is a tenet of good government and the key to managing expectations. ■

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