

## Evaluating the Effectiveness of Your Board

As board roles and priorities change over time, it's important to check in and evaluate your effectiveness as a group. Evaluation of your board's effectiveness needs to be based on both your understanding of legal regulations and on the specific roles of each board member. Your evaluation should focus on the specific needs of your neighborhood board, not in comparison with other neighborhood associations.

Time devoted to board cultivation, support and evaluation can build the strong roots your neighborhood association needs to achieve its purpose and sustain its efforts.

Board members should be encouraged and provided with opportunities to provide feedback on how the board is working during the course of the year. Members should feel free to express both pride in accomplishment and frustration with process. An open dialogue where questions can be asked honestly is of the utmost importance.

In addition to the creation of a supportive, open board atmosphere, it's important to set aside time for a board retreat each year. This is an opportunity for the board to get to know one another and focus on successes and challenges. Use the retreat as an opportunity to reach new agreements about board roles and develop realistic plans about how goals will be achieved this year.

### Assessing Your Board's Health

This questionnaire was developed to help you analyze how your board operates and potentially find areas for improvement. Answer the questions below, truthfully.

- 1. Who attends your neighborhood association meetings?**  
New people each month                      The same group of people each month
- 2. Do you feel comfortable offering ideas to the board for discussion and consideration?**  
Yes                      No
- 3. When an event or project is suggested, do people:**  
Volunteer enthusiastically                      Only agree to help out of a sense of obligation
- 4. Do you think people would describe your neighborhood association as:**  
Open and friendly                      Cliquish and cold
- 5. Your board has defined:**  
Shared values                      goals and strategies                      both                      neither
- 6. Is there a forum for dialogue outside of meetings to engage community members?**  
Yes                      No
- 7. Do members get together and celebrate accomplishments outside of meetings?**  
Yes                      No

8. Do board members work well together and communicate in a respectful manner?

Yes                      No

9. Remember your first experiences with the neighborhood association, did you feel welcomed by the group?

Yes                      No

10. During your initial interactions with the board, were you given information about the neighborhood association's purpose, core values and goals?

Yes                      No

11. Did someone engage you at the meeting or follow up to see if you had any questions or concerns?

Yes                      No

12. Did you feel comfortable sharing ideas and input with the group?

Yes                      No

### Ways to Improve Board Dynamics

#### Celebrate Successes and Recognize Accomplishments

When you get a victory – be thankful and give thanks where they are due. And if you don't win – still acknowledge that the work was done with the best intentions and that no effort is without honor.

It's important that board members support one another on a regular basis. Mix it up! People like to be recognized in different ways. Vary your efforts to ensure that recognition is meaningful for your members.

#### Social Time Outside of Meetings

Coffee, cocktails or snacks after a board meeting is a great way to get to know one another and build camaraderie. A better understanding of one another is what usually comes out of the social time spent away from meetings. Bottom line – just because you are working for the neighborhood does not mean you can't have fun!

#### Different Ways to Recognize Members

- Personal recognition: verbal thank you's or personal notes.
- Formal or organizational recognition: a card signed by each board member, an article in the neighborhood newsletter or certificates or awards presented at an association meeting.
- Mementos: key chains, hats, shirts, etc with neighborhood logo.
- Multi-volunteer recognition: annual volunteer recognition event to celebrate the accomplishments of several individuals as well as the neighborhood association as a whole.