

MANAGEMENT TRENDS

School's Here: VOLUNTEER!

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While children and grandchildren are heading back to school, some community members may find extra time to get involved in their community's governance. That could include a multitude of things that don't involve running for the board! Getting involved in your community is a selfless way of helping foster an environment that you and your family are proud to be part of and could inspire others to get involved.

What are the benefits?

When most people see the words benefit and community involvement, they might not be quick to volunteer; however, there are real benefits from joining different groups and committees within your association. Everyone is familiar with the board of directors/trustees, but some communities offer committees to help guide the board into different ideas or help facilitate the rules and regulations. Not only does involvement offer members an outlet to voice their opinions, but it also gives residents more insight on how the community works behind the scenes. People have different backgrounds and careers that offer niche insight to cultivate an environment of collaboration. It also provides an opportunity to meet others and create new relationships with neighbors you may not meet otherwise.

Where do I find out what committees are offered?

Committees are usually found within the governing documents for your community; however, you can send emails to the appropriate contact (such as your community's property manager) to volunteer your time and see if there is a space that is right for you.

Some examples of committees, and some of their general responsibilities, include:

- **Grounds Committee:** Planning the fall flowers and arrangements located at the entrance sign.



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"...it also gives residents more insight on how the community works behind the scenes."

- **Finance Committee:** Helping to review the financials to prepare a statement for the open meetings.
- **Architectural Review Committee:** Reviewing modification requests to help assure that changes match the aesthetics of the community along with following regulations located within the governing documents.
- **Social Committee:** Planning the year end party and other social events for community members.

How do I propose a new committee?

If you are looking to get involved but don't see a current role for your interests, attend an open meeting and bring up the topic during an open discussion. Most likely, there will be other like-minded people that are willing to offer their time for the benefit of the community. The board may have to review the options with their legal representative, but putting out the feelers is half the battle to get involved and make an impact.

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Your requests are welcome...

Readers of *Community Trends*® can ask the Editorial Committee of the magazine for their feedback about any issue facing the community association industry.

The committee is made up of legal, insurance, engineering and property management professionals with a wealth of information and experience specific to community associations.

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Why are committees important?

While committees don't necessarily have voting rights at the board level, a committee can help to gauge, from the community, what is important in that moment and give the board information that can be used to move forward. Committees can form the bridge that connects the community to the board with different topics that are important to groups within the community.

Committees can provide insight to community members into how association governance works. That can help members of the association understand the procedures. Having a group of people who can explain the processes outside of the board can ease tensions within the community.

Getting involved is a great way to promote an environment to be proud of. Even if you don't have the time to join a committee, regularly attending open meetings to make suggestions or sharing concerns can still make a significant impact. There is no wrong way to volunteer your time to make the place you're living that much better! ■



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