



How To Prepare For Your Annual Meeting

How to Get People There

First, set a date far in advance and inform the Association membership so that they can write it in their calendars, put it in their smartphones, tie a string around their finger, whatever it is that they do to remember something important. Giving them advance notice leaves no room for excuses not to be there.

Social function

Consider spending some money to get people there. Food is always an incentive! Keep in mind who the majority of your membership is. For example, if you're a part of an Association with younger families or members who traditionally work 9 to 5, you could have a luncheon. This would allow them to attend on their lunch hour, instead of taking up an evening often already reserved for family time or sports practices.

Advertise

Highlighting the annual meeting in the Association newsletter and why members should attend, as well as sending out postcards a month or so before the meeting, are good ways to keep reminding members that it's approaching and they should be there. HOA board members can be extra diligent by communicating with neighbors to attend and encouraging them to share their thoughts. Installing signs at the entrance of your community a week ahead of time would also help with attendance and reminders.

Incentives

Give members small teasers for why they should attend the annual meeting. These might be letting them know a big announcement will be made; having a drawing for prizes, like a weekend getaway for two (must be present to win!); or bringing in a speaker to address a hot button issue the Association is facing.

What to Discuss

The annual HOA board meeting generally discusses how the Association survived or thrived in the previous year and what to expect in the upcoming year. Try to make the meeting as positive as possible. Celebrate milestones, such as a common area project being fully funded and the fact there will be no foreseen special assessments in the upcoming year.

On the flipside, the annual meeting is also a good time to prepare members *if there is* going to be a special assessment in the coming year. Let them know when it will start, how it can be paid, and why there is one in the first place.

Why the Annual Meeting is Important

Along with communicating about the previous year and what's ahead in the coming year, the annual meeting is a great time to hold elections for HOA board members, or vote on other issues that require it. Elections are important, so maximize on the opportunity while everyone is together. It's also an important opportunity to foster community relationships and receive input from members. Although, remind them that they can give input anytime during the open forums of regular board meetings.

How to Prepare

Preparations for the annual HOA board meeting can be time consuming. There's the agenda to prepare, notifications that need to be sent, and ballots and candidate statements that need to be organized if there will be elections. This is where an HOA manager can help. Their job is to be aware of what's going on around the community, field questions from members prior to and after the meeting, and support the board members throughout the process.

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