

DESERT CITIES HOA COUNCIL

Recap of Meeting August 20, 2015

HOA Members Represented

Canyon Sands	La Pasada
Canyon Vista Estates #7	Mira Vista
Cathedral Canyon #1	Montage at Mission Hills
Cathedral Canyon #8	Sun City Palm Desert
Cathedral Canyon #17	Terra Lago
Cathedral Springs	Versailles
Desert Falls Master Assn.	Versailles Condominiums
Desert Falls Villas Assn.	

Welcome: Mike Traidman, Chair

Treasurer's Report – Current treasury balance \$157.00

Guest Speakers – Tracie Blankenship, Regional Director – First Service Residential
Palm Desert
Gary Hamblin, Business Development Manager – First Service
Residential
“Establishing a Vision and Long Term Goals for Your Community”

Mike Traidman welcomed Tracie and Gary

Tracie handed out a syllabus outlining their presentation. She started with the First Service Mission Statement: “Deliver exceptional service and solutions that enhance the value of every property and the lifestyle of every resident in the communities we manage.” And she added: “Every Day”. The Mission Statement is used to guide their performance and is fundamental to their success as an organization.

She believes it is very worthwhile for every HOA to develop a Mission Statement for their community and to put it on the coversheet of every Board Packet and Board meeting agenda.

The first step in the process is the Board's decision to take your community to the next level by planning strategically and setting short and long term goals.

In order to be successful in this effort, the Board of Directors must agree to accept the outcome and fulfill the plan that is established. This requires commitment of each of the current and future Board Members to move the objectives forward.

Typical Board meetings are normally reactionary – the Board is reacting to situations that arise in the functioning of the community: contracts and expenditures for maintenance and improvements, satisfying the needs of homeowners, etc.

Every community should have an annual calendar – it lays out the “housekeeping” activities necessary: hire auditor/reserve consultant, develop budget and reserve study update, etc.

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A separate dedicated meeting should take place for the development of the Mission Statement and Vision for the community. This would then precede to the development of short term and long term plans.

- Engage everyone the Board, Committee members, homeowners, all who are willing to contribute to the task.
- Appoint a moderator – best if they are a disinterested party: your lawyer, auditor, property management company representative, etc.
 - Keeps the group focused – ONE meeting
 - Timekeeping/commitment – potentially schedule additional times/dates
 - Ensure the session remains productive
 - Keep focus on a cohesive process – everyone invited to express their opinion, vote their mind and don't hold a grudge.
- Delegate someone to take notes and do record keeping
- Delegation of duties as needed for future sessions

Vision and Mission

- Vision – How do you wish to be perceived?
 - What is your reputation and brand?
 - What can be done to enhance your footprint in the area?
 - What do your residents say about your community?
 - What do realtors say about your community?
 - How is your marketability? What is the one thing you have identified to improve it?
 - Do you have a global thought process that involves the big picture?
 - Does your Board of Directors want to be known as a community of choice?
- Mission – Primary roles which will satisfy the vision

Development of strategic plan(s)

- Define what do we want to achieve – 1, 5, 10 year plan?
- Set objectives and establish parameters.
- Brainstorming sessions
 - Get ideas on the table
 - No judgements, safe place to get all the ideas out
 - Record ideas on flip charts
 - Group the ideas and prioritize them
- Review the governing documents
 - Are there limits on contracts, expenses, or projects and capital expenditures?
 - Does the Board have the authority to act?
 - Does the Board understand what they are required to maintain?
- Review current financial statements and the reserve study
 - How much can the HOA afford to spend and in what time frames

Know your members and what they would like to see happen

- What are the current demographics of your members?

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- What is the climate of the membership? Are they happy with the way the Association operates?
- What issues are arising on a constant basis, what trends are observed

To better understand your members, the use of a survey can be helpful in gaining feedback. To optimize the return of the feedback:

- Keep it simple and meaningful
- Less words/text
- 7 questions or less make it easy for your members to respond
- A follow up summary should be provided in an oral report at the Board meetings and/or published so the members feel their input is valued

Understand civil code restrictions

- The law has limits
- Consult with your attorney
- What is missing in your governance model?

Identify roadblocks

- Residents who are resistant to change
- Board Members who are resistant to change

Identify risks

- Financial
 - Postponing projects could result in gain or loss in some cases
- Safety
 - Is there an exposure or threat?
- Legal
 - Ensure that the association is in compliance
 - Always avoid lawsuits when you can!

Strategic Planning Working Session

1. Assign tasks – For example, if water conservation is important, lean on local resident experts, such as the water district, or your landscape service provider for feedback.
2. Possibly breakout duties and delegate to committees for more involvement by volunteers and to reduce the burden and “job” to the Board of Directors.
3. For large scale projects or planning, a consultant can be hired to assist the Board with fulfilling the objective.

Creating an action plan

- Establish priorities
- Assign duties as needed
- Track progress
- Plan for setbacks and know how to get back on track
- Measure success
- Report to members
- Celebrate the outcome

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- FOLLOW THE PLAN

Forum: None

Handouts: Other than those mentioned above, none

Next Meeting – Thursday, September 17, 2015 at the Cathedral City – City Hall

Tom Tousignant, Recorder