

Rights and Responsibilities for Better Communities

Principles for Homeowners and Community Leaders

Homeowners Have the Rights To:

1. A responsive and competent community association.
2. Honest, fair and respectful treatment by community leaders and managers.
3. Participate in governing the community association by attending meetings, serving on committees and standing for election.
4. Access appropriate association books and records.
5. Prudent expenditure of fees and other assessments.
6. Live in a community where the property is maintained according to established standards.
7. Fair treatment regarding financial and other association obligations, including the opportunity to discuss payment plans and options with the association before fines; liens; or foreclosure actions are initiated.
8. Receive all documents that address rules and regulations governing the community association – if not prior to purchase and settlement by a real estate or attorney, then upon joining the community.
9. Appeal to appropriate community leaders those decisions affecting non-routine financial responsibilities or property rights.

Homeowners Have the Responsibility To:

1. Read and comply with the governing documents of the community.
2. Maintain their property according to established standards.
3. Treat association leaders honestly and with respect.
4. Vote in community elections and on other issues.
5. Pay association assessments and charges on time.
6. Contact Association leaders or managers, if necessary, to discuss financial obligations and alternative payment arrangements.
7. Request reconsideration of material decisions (a hearing) that personally affect them.
8. Provide current contact information to Association leaders or managers to help ensure they receive information from the community.
9. Ensure that those who reside on their property (e.g., tenants, relatives, friends)

- adhere to all rules and regulations.
10. Abide by the Chesterfield County “pets-on-leash” laws at all times and the HOA By-Laws of “picking up the Poop” behind your pets.

Community Leaders Have the Rights To:

1. Expect the owners and non-owner’s (renters) of the residents to meet their financial obligations to the community.
2. Expect residents to know and comply with the rules and regulations of the community and to stay informed by reading materials provided by the Association.
3. Be respectful and receive honest treatment from residents.
4. Conduct meetings in a positive and constructive atmosphere.
5. Receive support and constructive input from owners and renters of the residents.
6. Personal privacy at home and during leisure time in the community.
7. Take advantage of educational opportunities (e.g. publications, training workshops) that are related to their responsibilities, and as approved by the association.

Community Leaders Have the Responsibility To:

1. Fulfill their fiduciary duties to the community and exercise discretion in a manner they reasonably believe to be in the best interests of the Association and community.
2. Exercise sound business judgment and follow established management practices.
3. Balance the needs and obligations of the community as a whole with those of individual homeowners and residents.
4. Understand the association’s governing documents and the applicable state and local laws and finally, to manage the Association’s affairs accordingly.
5. Establish committees or use other methods to obtain input from resident owners and renters.
6. Conduct open, fair and well-publicized elections.
7. Welcome and educate new members of the community – resident owners and renters alike.
8. Encourage input from residents on issues affecting them personally and the community as a whole.
9. Encourage events that foster neighborliness and a sense of community pride.
10. Conduct business in a transparent manner when feasible when appropriate.
11. Allow homeowners access to appropriate community records, when requested.
12. Collect all monies due from owners and non-owner residents.
13. Devise appropriate and reasonable arrangements, as necessary, to facilitate the ability of individual homeowners to meet their financial obligations to the community before legal actions are taken.
14. Provide a process (hearings) that residents can use to appeal decisions concerning their non-routine financial responsibilities or property rights – where permitted by law and the Association’s By-Laws and other governing documents.
15. Initiate foreclosures proceedings only as a measure of last resort.

16. Make covenants, conditions and restrictions as understandable as possible, adding clarifying “lay” language or supplementary materials when drafting or revising the documents.
17. Provide complete and timely disclosure of personal and financial conflicts of interest related to the actions of community leaders, e.g., officers, the board and committees.

Community Associations Institute (CAI) is a national organization dedicated to fostering vibrant, responsive, competent community associations. Founded in 1973, CAI represents association-governed communities, such as condominium and homeowner associations, cooperatives, and planned communities. To learn more about CAI and its local, regional and state chapters, visit www.caionline.org or call CAI Direct 703-548-8600.

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