



The Elite Insider

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7 Tips for Shorter, Better Meetings

Too many meetings may become a waste of time. People drone on and on and little is accomplished, other than the avoidance of actual, productive work. Here are a set of simple rules to keep your meetings brief and to the point.

1. All meetings must have a concrete, measurable goal.

The only reason to have a meeting is to discuss an issue and come to a decision or lay out plan for the next steps towards resolution.

2. All meetings must have a "focusing agenda."

The agenda should consist of the topics for discussion. Members should be prepared to ask and answer questions to move action towards the next step.

3. No meetings are pro-

ductive after three hours.

After an hour or so, most people can't focus on a single subject, which is why most college classes are only an hour long. (This rule is easy if you follow the other rules.)

4. All background is to be available a few days prior.

Everyone should review materials at least a day ahead of the meeting. There's no reason to go over material that can be quickly skimmed and absorbed.

5. Latecomers will not be briefed on what's been said.

It's rude to force meeting-goers to backtrack over material that's already been covered. If the latecomer absolutely *must* be present, postpone the meeting.

6. There will be no formal presentations.

If the purpose of the meeting is to discuss information that's in a presentation, the presentation (with notes) should be distributed and read beforehand.

7. Meeting results will be documented and distributed.

The reason here is to become accountable for achieving (or failing to achieve) that meeting's concrete, measurable goals.

If you think the rules above are impractical, try them for a few meetings. Break your addiction to pointless discussion and you'll be surprised how quickly action items are resolved and how much work gets done.

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The Maggy Awards— Best of Western Wake 2013

We are excited to announce that **Heritage Pines** was named best active adult community honorable mention and **Cary Park** was named best neighborhood honorable mention in the

Cary Magazine best of Western Wake awards. The Maggy awards are a readers' choice award. Readers nominate their favorites and then thousands of readers of the Cary magazine voted in October and selected the

winners for the annual awards.

These communities are obviously a great place to live!

Congratulations!

Safety and Security in Associations

By Jim Slaughter



Several of our attorneys have just returned from Tucson, AZ, and the annual community association Law Seminar. This program, presented by the College of Community Association Lawyers and the Community Associations Institute, gets better every year. There were many excellent sessions, including discussions of condominium water/leak issues, changes to the FDCPA (Fair Debt Collection Practices Act), adequate reserves and reserve studies, smoking bans, and more. One of our attorneys' goals each year is to return with several "nuggets" of useful information to benefit clients.

One especially intriguing session was on "Safety and Security Issues" in community associations, particularly in the aftermath of the Trayvon Martin case. The presenters were Jason Fisher from Maryland and George Nowak from Georgia, both highly respected attorneys in private practice, and Jennifer Wojciechowski (also an attorney) with Community Association Underwriters of America. The session examined issues of safety, security, and surveillance in homeowner and condominium associations. Like any good community association presentation, the session raised as many questions as it answered, including:

Is your "security" camera really securing the prem-

ises? (That is, is someone watching the live camera feed?)

Do "safety committees" or a "community watch" ensure that owners are safe from crime?

Can denial of architectural requests to install window bars, exterior locks, or better lighting lead to association liability if the owner is a victim of crime?

What are the association's liabilities if an owner or guest is attacked by a third party on common property?

The answers to these questions can vary by state and by the status of the person injured. Without getting too legal, different states treat individuals differently depending on whether the person is considered an "invitee" (a person on the land of another for a lawful purpose of mutual benefit), a "licensee" (a person on the land of another with permission, such as a guest), or a "trespasser" (a person on the land of another without permission).

A major takeaway, however, is that community associations generally aren't in the business of providing round-the-clock security for members. Most associations have neither the time, money, nor authority in governing documents to take on such a responsibility. However, certain practices, such as the use

of lobby attendants or "security" cameras, may give the appearance that the association is a security provider. In other words, voluntary acts by the association may create an assumption that it provides security, which could create liability that otherwise would not exist.

Because the relationship between an owner and the association is contractual (because of the Declaration), one suggestion was that associations consider amending their Declaration to include a "no security" provision. Such language, which I'll call a "Nowack amendment," basically provides that the association may provide security, but has no duty to provide security and is not a provider of security, and that the obligation for security for an owner lies with the owner. (The language is a bit more legal than that, but you get the picture.) While no specific language will work for all situations, such Declaration wording has been held valid in another state to shield the association from liability due to harm inflicted on an owner by a third party.

If your association or circumstances make such language of interest, feel free to give us a call to discuss.

Most associations have neither the time, money, nor authority in governing documents to take on providing around-the-clock security.

Raleigh Rental Dwelling Registration Info



Renewal Period for Raleigh Rental Dwelling Registration Begins March 1.

All owners of residential rental properties in Raleigh are required to renew registration of their properties with the City during the period from March 1 to April 30. All registered owners of rental property will receive an invoice detailing the amount of their rental dwelling renewal fee during the first week of March.

The registration fee is:

- \$15 a year for properties/tax parcels with three or fewer residential units;
- \$25 per year for properties/tax parcels with fewer than 20 but more than three residential units; and,
- \$50 a year for properties/tax parcels with 20 or more residential units.

First-time registration of rental properties by an owner requires

a non-refundable application fee of \$30, in addition to the property registration fee.

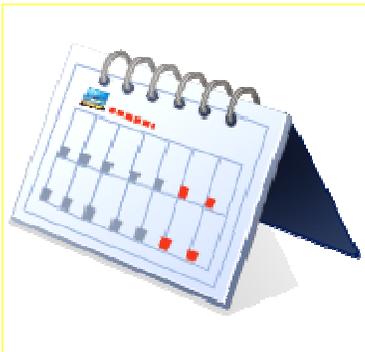
The City of Raleigh’s Rental Dwelling Registration Ordinance was adopted by the City Council in 2008 and deemed necessary to promote public health, welfare, good order and safety of the City and its residents who rent residential properties. The rental dwelling registration fee is due every year during the renewal period of March 1 to April 30.

This registration creates a database of the location and ownership of Raleigh’s residential rental properties. The City uses this database as an effective resource to promote responsible management, provide a safe habitat for residents, safeguard property values and expedite housing repairs. This database also is used to contact

owners in the event of emergencies.

Any property owner who has recently purchased rental property that has not been registered can complete and/or print the registration form online at the City of Raleigh’s website at www.raleighnc.gov. Search for “Rental Dwelling Registration.” Registration forms also are available at the City’s Inspections Department located on the fifth floor at One Exchange Plaza in the 200 block of Fayetteville Street. Residential rental property owners can also call the Inspections Department at 919-996-2444 to obtain the forms.

You may request further assistance with the renewal of your rental property registration by calling 919-996-2444 or emailing Rental.RegistSupport@raleighnc.gov.



2013 Calendar of Events and Office Closings

MARCH

March 29th- Good Friday All Offices Closed

APRIL

April 9 from 5:30-8:00pm
2013 Spring Fling

MAY

May 27th- Memorial Day All Offices Closed

JUNE

June 25- Board Member Education Seminar 6:00-8:00pm

JULY

Board Appreciation Month
July 4th- Fourth of July All Offices Closed

SEPTEMBER

September 2nd- Labor Day All offices Closed

OCTOBER

October 1st- 2013 Fall Festival—5:30-8:00 pm
October 29th- Board Member Education Seminar 6:00-8:00pm

NOVEMBER

November 28th and 29th- Thanksgiving All offices Closed

DECEMBER

December 10th- 2013 Holiday Open House 5:30-7:30pm
December 24th and 25th- Christmas All offices Closed

JANUARY 2014

January 1 2014- New Year’s Day All Offices Closed

FACTS ABOUT FEBRUARY

According to the Georgian calendar, February is the second month of the year, and also the shortest month. February has 28 days until Julius Caesar gave it 29, and 30 days every four years. According to tradition, Augustus, the Roman emperor, took one day off to add one day to August, the month named after him. We now have February with 28 days, and 29 on leap years.

In the northern half of the world, February is a very cold month. There are usually sunny days that show Spring is not too far off. The Southern hemisphere usually enjoy midsummer weather during February.

February is also black history month. This month is used to honor and important people and events.

The second day of February is often referred to as [GROUND HOG'S DAY](#). The old stories told are that the ground hog comes out of it's burrow on February 2, to look for it's shadow. If there is sunshine and he sees his shadow, then he goes back to sleep and there will be more winter time. If he doesn't, then the spring time will begin. This is a superstition.



[VALENTINE'S DAY](#) is celebrated on February 14 in most western countries. Children give valentines and have a party in school. Young and old exchange cards with loved ones. This custom is hundreds of years old, valetine greetings having been found that date back into the 1400's.

The third Monday in February is [PRESIDENT'S DAY](#). Both Washington and Lincoln's birth-days were in February. It is considered a Federal holiday for celebration of Washington's birthday, but most states also honor all president's on this day.

The Roman Catholic Church celebrates February 2 as [Candlemas Day](#). The candles used in the church during the rest of the year are blessed on February 2.

- The **amethyst** is the birthstone for February.
- The **primrose** is the flower for the month of February.