

Questions for Board Candidates

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Question #1

Which of the following statements represents your view on the current state of the POA and why?

1. We have a good POA. We don't need to change anything.
2. We have a good POA. We should strive to make it better.
3. We have serious issues to fix in our POA

2. We have a good POA. We should strive to make it better.

TGR property owners as a community need to always remember that the people serving on the POA Board are volunteers. They are not paid professionals who make a career out of managing a neighborhood. Our current POA Board is comprised of a group of individuals that stepped up to take on a huge task that became even more difficult when Patton simply walked away from managing TGR. They have worked hard to get POA business in order, set standards and procedures. It has been a thankless task and for the most part, they have been left to "just handle it" by property owners. The current Board has done a great job. It's now time for others to step up and take the reins to continue their work and improve upon the basis the current board as set.

Question #2

The following is one definition of POA transparency with the community. What is your definition of transparency and do you believe POA transparency with the community is important?

Transparency, as it applies to a POA, is operating openly, visibly, and with integrity; being reliably honest and forthcoming about services, maintenance, decisions, and funding, and as such, it promotes a partnership with all property owners. All of a POA's actions should be scrupulous enough to bear public scrutiny. A transparent POA invites property owners to open meetings, welcomes their input and feedback, keeps community websites updated, and promotes public two-way communications.

POA transparency with the community is very important, especially in a situation like TGR where the POA just recently took over. All decisions are subject to public scrutiny and should be easily explained or justified by any Board member when asked. However, it is important that property owners also remember that they have elected Board members to handle the day to day operations without reporting every little detail on every single decision that gets made. I would define transparency very simply by saying that the POA must promote accountability and provide information to property owners on the activities/decisions of the board. Transparency with the community is a key element of the Board's service and can be achieved in many ways. These ways include but are not limited to:

1. Hold open meetings with community members at set intervals. (Could be quarterly or yearly, etc.)
2. Keep the website updated with current information on what the Board is working on, has achieved, or on tasks that are completed.
3. Set up an independent audit committee to audit the finances that the Board is responsible for managing.
4. Use the communications committee to implement an easy way for property owners to provide input and feedback on issues important to them.

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Question #3

How should a POA handle situations where a majority of board members are opposed to an action but the majority of property owners are in favor of that action? For example: The board is opposed to building a tennis court but a survey with 1200 respondents indicates 75% are in favor of a building a tennis court.

The POA Board is charged with making decisions on behalf the community that they serve. Typically, those elected to the Board have like minded views to a majority of the property owners. However, a situation such Question #3, although rare, is certainly possible. If there is an overwhelming majority of property owners who want an action that the board is against, I feel that the board is under an obligation to at least discuss it and entertain options. In a situation such as this, I feel a special committee of community members should be formed and tasked with putting together a fair representation of the "for" and "against" views. Benefits, community use and value should be weighed as well as liabilities and long term cost effects for both the POA and residents. Most times a compromise can be made. It might be as simple as tabling a current project and redirecting the money to a new one. Alternatively, the resolution could be to complete current agenda items and then reconsider the action once that is done. In short, the answer doesn't just have to be "No". It's a matter of finding a way to work with the community you serve to find acceptable solutions and compromises that benefit the community.

Question #4

Should a survey of property owners indicate a solid majority wants open public two-way communications between the board and the community, please describe the specific methods you would use to accomplish this task. What safeguards, if any, would you propose to ensure all communications are done in a respectful manner?

"Two-way communication" can be public or private with a one-on-one interaction with the board. Both public and private communication have advantages and disadvantages. Currently everyone has one-on-one private communication with the board such that any sensitive or personal information is not broadcast to everyone as in a public communication. Public one-on-one communication by definition will allow everyone to see your business and ask questions. Be aware that this public communication comes with a caveat.

Board members must always remember that any statements they make can be made public at any time. Therefore, Board members should communicate as if their conversation is public regardless of the situation. However, I personally prefer private one-on-one interaction with the board be allowed. This gives the property owner the option of privacy regarding matters they would not want to be disclosed to their neighbors. Should a survey of property owners indicate a solid majority wants open public two-way communications, then as a Board member, I would need to revisit my stance. I cannot say currently exactly how I would accomplish implementing open public two way communications. I honestly feel putting this process in place should be researched and a well thought out plan with input from the Board as a whole implemented. What I can say is that there are many resources to tap into to make sure the process is done in a respectful and legal manner. My first action would be to speak with the POA's legal counsel about the best ways to put this plan into action. I would also reach out to property owners who are employed in professions that deal with publicizing private information to get ideas on how they do things before making a permanent change to public two-way communications.

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Question #5

Please describe your approach in determining the appropriate level of community involvement in making board decisions. Give examples of when a “closed session board only” approach is appropriate and when a collaborative effort involving the community start to finish is appropriate.

It is important that property owners remember they elect a POA Board to handle the day to day operations of the POA on behalf of the members and in the best interest of the neighborhood as a whole. This means that the property owners should elect those that they trust to handle these tasks accordingly. The POA should be allowed to make necessary decisions without going to the membership as a whole for approval on every detail. That being said, there are times when the Board should involve the community in the process from start to finish. Some examples of closed session board vs open community involvement would be:

Closed session board: CCR violations, CCR variances, Legal actions against property owners Board

Collaborative effort involving the community start to finish: Addition of a major amenity such as a pool/pickleball court, Significant changes to the CCR's

Question #6

What guidelines would you recommend for determining the appropriate level of POA involvement? Please give examples of all three levels of involvement.

There are various levels of POA involvement on issues of concern to the community. Direct involvement where the POA is responsible for an outcome; indirect involvement where it is clear the POA is not responsible for an outcome, but the board supports/coordinates efforts when in the best interest of the community. No involvement where the POA/board takes no action.

I believe the POA's basic responsibility is to make decisions and take actions that either maintain or improve the neighborhood to preserve property values. This is a rather open ended concept and POA involvement can vary based on the situation. Given the fact that our POA is relatively new, most situations will need to be evaluated by the Board to determine the POA's level of involvement. However, as time goes by, certain standards can be set. Some examples for me would be:

Direct Involvement - Enforcement of the CCR's as filed with the county, mowing/maintenance of the common areas, maintaining and/or improving the two parks and any amenities associated with them

Indirect Involvement - Advocating for TGR with the county on road maintenance, communicating with the fire department, police and county commissioners regarding first responder services to the neighborhood, acting as a liason with the post office to attempt to coordinate or improve services

No Involvement - Purchase or sale of property within TGR that is not owned by the POA, resolving disputes between the builder and property owner, resolving disputes between neighbors that are outside the CCR guidelines