**ABCPOA Member Query February - March 2020**

**Respondent Communities:** Arbor Creek (300 homes/lots), Cades Cove (101 homes/lots), Lakes of Lockwood (125 homes/lots), Rivermist (330 homes/lots), St James (3200+ homes/lots), SeaScape (500 homes/lots)

**Topic 1: Open Board Meeting Attendance**

1a. Are you satisfied with the level of property owner attendance at your POA open board meetings?

What approaches have you used to increase property owner attendance? What has worked? What has not worked?

1b. How do you engage property owners beforehand and during open board meetings?

1c. How do you inform the property owners of the agenda and do you ask for questions or topics prior to the open board meeting?

**Response Summary:**

**Factors effecting open board meeting attendance include; time of day of meeting, agenda with controversial issue(s), guest speakers and communication regarding the upcoming meeting, and meeting content, e.g., open communication session verses board meeting. Some communities share the agenda in advance and invite questions or statements before or during open board meeting. Lots of communication, agenda sharing, opportunity to ask questions and transparency can improve attendance at open board meetings.**

**Topic 2: Candidates for the Board**

2a. How many candidates do you generally have for each open board member position?

2b. What do you do to recruit candidates for open board member positions?

2c. What have you done to groom or develop potential Board members?

**Response Summary:**

**Board member candidate recruitment is a common challenge among respondents. Reasons given for reluctant candidates include the time commitment and not wanting to deal with disgruntled property owners. Recruitment ideas include targeting community committee and social group volunteers, leveraging neighborhood relationships, advertising openings within the community, and using a strong and personable president to set the tone for recruitment and desire to participate or have incumbent board members recruit board candidates.**

**Topic 1 Responses**

| **Respondent** | **1a. Open Board Meeting Attendance** | **1b. Engagement** | **1c. Agenda and Questions for Meeting** | **Notes** |
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| **Arbor Creek**  Marie Maher  President  Arbor Creek POA  Maheracboard @gmail.com  910.477.6369 | Our open board meetings are sporadically attended - time of meetings is a big factor in our attendances. Afternoon meetings generally get the best response because a high percentage of our homeowners are retired.  Agendas most often dictate the size of attendance; if it's controversial, expect a bigger crowd! If there's unrest in the community, also expect a bigger crowd. When all's well, you may find yourself with an intimate attendance. So, sending out agendas should be considered a forerunner to the type of meeting you intend to hold. | Our regular monthly meetings are formatted with an open session for 30 mins before a meeting is called to order. During that time, spirited debate can ensue, which needs to be mediated carefully by the presiding officer. Often times, we can direct queries in this session to the general session, when they can be answered from agenda items. | We issue a call for 'Community Voice' questions from the community about 10 days before regular meetings, where questions are posed to the board for discussion before or during meetings, sometimes as an agenda item, if warranted. Once the board has given their responses to those questions, the responses are delivered by email with the meeting's agenda. This gives the community an opportunity to weigh the responses given and opt for further discussion in the open forum session held before each regular meeting. |  |
| **Cades Cove**  Lynn Baker | We have maybe 20% of our homeowners attend. However, we do have much better attendance at our annual meeting- about 70% of homeowners. We have not used any specific approach to increase attendance. | We communicate regularly between meetings with a monthly newsletter and emails. We send an agenda for the open meetings a few days before each meeting. | We used to ask for questions to be given to us before the meetings; however, we never received any, so we stopped asking. Residents do ask questions at the meeting. |  |
| **Lakes of Lockwood**  MaryK McGinley, President  Lakes of Lockwood POA |  | We have made it our commitment to be very transparent. We post all minutes, and agendas on our password protected website area. We also email this information to all members post each meeting. Due to some problematic scenarios with some residents, we hold only four open board meetings per year plus the annual meeting. And of course, if a Special Meeting needs to be called for a specific purpose - that too!  We send out monthly communications; sometimes several email communications pending what is going on at any given time. | We send the board meeting agendas out in advance, invite people to add agenda items for us to consider; encourage residents to submit their questions and concerns pre- meeting that we can address and hold time post our scheduled open quarterly board meeting for questions and concerns. We do document this Q and A period post our minutes so that the community is informed. | We are a small POA community with 125 properties and over 20 of which are vacant lots owned by people living out of area for the most part.  We have a great website which is managed by a resident volunteer and we try to post things going on in the community, update our photo carousel often, have newsy news, etc. |
| **Rivermist**  Tom Lombardi  President | At our Rivermist meetings we usually have 8-10 residents including committee chairs that report. If there is an issue we have more. These residents that attend represent 330 units. | I have made it a practice to send out emails thru our website to keep people informed and a reminder about these events, but I find it difficult to get residents involved unless it affects them personally. |  | I must say that we have dedicated people on all of our committees that do a great job. |
| **St James**  John McGorry | We have an Open Board meeting at St. James once a quarter and also have an open information meeting once a quarter (different month). We have much better attendance at the open information meeting, especially when we have a guest speaker, such as the Brunswick County Sheriff and staff or reps. from the NCDOT. |  |  |  |
| **SeaScape**  John Cardwell, ABCPOA Rep;  Gary Coleman, Board President | Reasonably well satisfied. The POA advertises the annual open meeting well in advance, and further spreads the word through informal contacts within the community. So far, this seems to work reasonably well. | The POA provides an agenda for the meeting in advance and provides opportunities at the meeting for questions and statements by homeowners. | The POA annual meeting agenda is sent out to all property owners in advance in an email. Property Owners are requested to submit any agenda suggestions and questions to the POA in advance of the meeting. |  |

**Topic 2 Responses**

| **Respondent** | **2a. Candidates for Open Board Positions** | **2b. Candidate Recruitment** | **2c. Development of Potential Board Members** | **Notes** |
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| **Arbor Creek** | We struggle a great deal to find enough candidates to fill our open board positions. Our recent elections have not even produced enough candidates for a run-off; we simply had to take what we got and be grateful. | If your community is broken down into neighborhoods, you should use this to your advantage. Neighbor-hoods by their very nature promote friendships and trust, out of which it's far easier to encourage good people to step up and run for your board. We are fortunate to have eight neighborhoods in our small community, out of which, intimacies are born: people know each other better; neighborhood pride presides over common behaviors and it becomes easier to detect leadership qualities in the people you know best. You might try recruiting from the individual neighborhoods first. That way you might get more candidates. | Most people don't realize that board participation is about leadership: this is NOT a skill given to many. Choosing your board for success, therefore, is difficult; how much do you really know about the person running for office? A good idea is decerning previous volunteerism in the community prior to running for the board. If a board candidate has never opted for any kind of volunteerism, but suddenly steps up with a desire to lead, I would suggest this might not be your best candidate. Encouraging your regular community volunteers to run for the board, when the time comes, is a good start. | Electing a strong and personable president is vital; he/she will set the tone for recruitment and desire to participate. Transparency is of the utmost importance. Combine this with honest and open communication skills and the battle is yours to win. Trust in your neighbor, who may live just next door, is the one aspect most often over-looked. If members detect any visible signs of shady/ self-dealing on the part of their board, it's never going to have positive outcomes, even if nothing nefarious is afoot. Just the perception of squishy behaviors is enough - so perception is reality when it comes to leadership. |
| **Cades Cove** | We only had 1 this past year and he only joined because no one else stepped up. | We encourage participation thru regular communication to the community. | We are just thankful if anyone shows an interest in being on the Board. We will have at least 2 seats open at the end of this year and I don't know if anyone will run for those. |  |
| **Lakes of Lockwood** | We have had difficulty over the years in recruiting board members. Presently, our board is in its second year of a two year term and we answered the call to step to the plate as no one else would run and we did not want the community to be leaderless. I consider us a great team of people. Our terms of office are two years, there is no staggering of officer positions, so it is a clean slate every two years which makes it difficult to get things done and operate smoothly without transitioning gradually. Takes the first year to get up to speed and in the second year, truly get started before a full board re-election. Burn out is a problem. | We have begun to work on some Covenants and Bylaws changes with regard to board officer terms of office and other areas.  We are working hard to promote our ARB and hope to possibly interest and recruit people to start there and then move to a board position. We just sent out an email from the ARB chair inviting any interested members to submit their interest to become a member.  In November we will begin to recruit for a new slate of officers for 2021-2023. We are hopeful some of our present board will consider running for a second term.  Our only standing committee is the ARB but we do have a very active Social Crew which are not part of the Board and they host great holiday gatherings as well as send out a monthly newsletter of a social, fun nature. Every Friday evening in the summers, we have a call out for gazebo night down by the pond and we get a good # of residents who come, wine and whatever in hand and snacks to share and that is also a good opportunity to encourage future board prospects.  We have a volunteer Garden Club which in more recent years has not been as active but which we are trying to revitalize. We are doing a variety of such groupings to try to get more residents involved and perhaps be sources of future board prospects. |  | Because the Covenants have not been enforced to any great degree in recent years, we are challenged by residents who feel they can do their own thing which can make it difficult for board members and certainly recruitment of a new slate.  We are an all-volunteer board, who handle everything. No management company as we have a modest dues and budget.  What we have discovered since we are all volunteer without any employees is that an important component of being a board member is having computer skills and availability for meetings and pressing issues. This can be limiting for some board prospects.  Lakes of Lockwood is truly fortunate to have a great group of residents for the most part. It is an engaging, caring community, just not many people interested in being on the board. We also have several new members who are younger, starting families or with young children, working professionals and we are encouraging them to become more active and hopefully willing to take on board officer-ship at some point. |
| **Rivermist** | We have three openings for the Board and two are already on and running again and we received one candidate for the vacant position, and she had to be convinced. |  |  |  |
| **St James** | Lately we've had pretty good response for openings on Committees, upwards of 8 to 10 resumes for each opening; better than it's been in a while. Haven't been so lucky with Board openings, which usually only attract two or three resumes. | We have an information email newsletter, " What's up St. James " which comes out once a week and advertises upcoming events, as well as upcoming Board member openings and also Committee Member Openings. [We] believe it [low interest in Board positions] has a lot to do with time commitment as well as not wanting to deal with the "disgruntled" property owners. |  |  |
| **SeaScape** | The POA is not blessed with an abundance of candidates seeking positions on the Board. Candidates are mostly recruited through personal contact by incumbent Board members. | Vacant POA board vacancies are advertised through the monthly newsletter and through community wide emails. The incumbent POA members personally contact and follow up with any interested individuals. | Potential Board members are most often identified through their prior interest in and participation in the many volunteer activities in the community. Individuals who have exhibited leadership, good judgment, and commitment qualities are then contacted to determine interest in serving on the POA board. This process has been successful in vetting potential candidates, and has proven to be an informal "grooming" process that has worked for our community. |  |