

## **From the President's Desk**

Greetings homeowners,

2020 and 2021 have been very trying years, and 2022 has the potential to be a much better year; let us all hope it is a prosperous year for everyone!

We are approaching another monthly meeting. At this time, we do not have any current Board business to conduct and vote on. As a result, there will not be a meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Board Business by definition is actionable items for the Board to vote on to ensure the community is achieving corporate actions.

As such, I wanted to provide a letter from the President's Desk to provide any corporate updates of procedural items in the works and address a few concerned homeowners reports that we have received over the last month, including a group of solicitors who has been going door-to-door.

The Board of Directors is committed to doing the best job we can for the Association and our community, which means we need to be able to conduct orderly meetings to accomplish goals and make progress towards community improvement. Disorderly meetings and disruptive behavior do not help the Association and inhibits Association action; it is also disrespectful of other attending homeowners' time. The Association wants to ensure that we are able to continue improving our community and respecting all homeowner's time and investments. As a result, the Association has made a commitment to conducting business in our meetings in an orderly fashion by implementing the many helpful corporate board rules from Robert's Rules of Order. These rules will enable everyone to be respectful of Board meetings goals and agenda, give members designated opportunities to speak, and, generally, ensure that everyone treats each other with respect. As the presider of the meeting, the President will be setting clear meeting rules and ensuring all rules are respected and orderly followed.

Furthermore, the Association is implementing an Officer and Director Code of Conduct that holds each Board member, Officer, Director, and Committee Member accountable to the corporation, while ensuring that each person is focused on representing the best interest of the Owners and committing to being transparent with their actions and Association business. To begin, the Association has asked each Board member to commit to these principles in writing.

Due to the group pushing false information in our community, as discussed in more detail below, the Association's funds have been used in responding to overly burdensome requests and idiosyncrasies. As a result, the Association is working with its management company to implement a Records Inspection Policy that will set the parameters for requesting and retrieving records that aligns with Section 720.303(5), *Florida Statutes*. This new policy will ensure that homeowners have access to Association records and, in the long term, save the Association time and money. Please understand that the new policy will promote transparency, it will give homeowner's easier access to records, and save Association resources.

On a final note, over the last month, the Association has received reports and concerns from multiple homeowners that there is a group of individuals that are going door-to-door. It has been reported back to the Association that many homeowners who have been approached have felt uncomfortable and imposed upon by the door-to-door solicitation from these individuals; and that these solicitors are engaging conversation and grabbing attention by perpetuating shocking, serious, and alarming allegations against the Association and the Board of Directors, including:

- Thousands of dollars of Association funds are missing – **False**
- Your dues are being raised – **False**

- There are more than two seats up for election – **False**
- The Board of Directors is not being transparent – **False**
- The Association is not giving access to records – **False**
- The current board members are serving illegal terms – **False**
- Current Board members are embezzling funds – **False**
- The election is rigged – **False**
- Secret meetings are being held – **False**
- The Association's accounting is wrong – **False**
- The Board refuses to do an audit – **False**

Rest assured, please understand, that none of these claims have any merit. Each of these claims are false. The claims are being asserted to intentionally shock and awe homeowners. The claims are intended to be misleading. Indeed, they are libelous and give right to a civil action for damages. Please understand that there is a place in process for everything, heavily regulated by Chapter 720, *Florida Statutes*. There are no Association funds missing. Over nearly 1,000 pages of Association financial documents have been provided and reviewed. No Board members have access to any of the Association bank accounts. Association dues are not being raised, there is no plan or budget in place that even proposes raising your Association dues. In fact, over the past eight years, dues have been consistently lowered. Only two of the five Director Board seats are up for the current election year. Everyone in the Association and on the Board of Directors is fully committed to transparency, access to records, proper accounting, orderly meetings, clearer roles, fiduciary oaths of office, and better and more modern communication. The Association has authorized paying for an audit that it is not even legally obligated to perform, however the solicitor chairing the project has not moved forward with the CPA. The Association is not a Facebook group, a political ad, tabloid gossip, or an overly-dramatic PTA; the Association is a corporation under the Florida Statutes responsible for seeing the betterment of the largest investment we will all make in our lives, our home.

Based upon the reports received, it is apparent that the solicitors are pushing untruths to create distrust and invoke inciteful emotions in order to bait homeowners into casting votes on false pretenses. It has been reported that the stated ultimate goal of the groups pushing these false narratives is to "overthrow the current Board of Directors." It has also been reported that in addition to going door-to-door, these same solicitors are staging informal small group meetings and self-proclaimed "townhalls", "on behalf of all homeowners", staging "community trials" to present "evidence" that supports the conspiracy theories. It has also been reported that a few lead solicitors come from current individuals on the Board and current individuals running as candidates for the Board. And that, the goal is to drive a divide in our community, including exacerbating the combative environment by going above and beyond in order to make it clear to everyone involved, "This is Not a Board Meeting" in order to create an emotionally charged, "us vs. them" contentious divide, where homeowners in attendance can take "heroic action" to "save the community."

Please understand, that based upon the reports received, these welcoming and inclusive "community trials," are more sinister in nature and are intended to perpetuate mistruths and misinformation under the guise of real "evidence" to invoke negative emotions and garner support for their own election campaign or the campaigns of their close friends, who are running on the platform of "transparency" in an upcoming election. The "transparent" townhall is staged around real documents, but intentionally manipulative of the truth of the issues raised. The community trial with all of its "evidence" is solely intended to target specific individuals, promote specific campaign slogans and causes, and to undermine the Association or its Board members. These real documents and conversations are being presented as "evidence" to lead to a manipulated conclusion and interpretation, and ultimately to be used as "proof" that what the solicitors are saying is "true" in an attempt to "overthrow the current Board of Directors." Throughout early American history, and particularly through the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, our Nation saw firsthand how whisper campaigns fueled by small "inclusive" community trials, using false and "hidden" known evidence,

negatively swayed public opinion, inciting emotions and garnering support for “just” public causes simply based on gossip, manipulation, groupthink, misinformation and rumor mongering, rather than real facts.

Contrary to all “transparent” claims, these groups have been given an abundance of documents, yet still “swear” to have Association records, that the Association itself does not even have. The Association, its Board Members, its management company, and its legal counsel (hereinafter, “the non-transparent entities”) have offered to look at any documents or conversations and have promised to take any and all necessary action. In an ironic twist, the Association and all non-transparent entities have yet to receive any of the “hidden” definitive proof documents from the “transparent” group.

While door-to-door solicitations and social media rants may be entertaining for an audience of a select few, and it may even feel vindicating for the solicitor, helpful to the solicitor’s agenda, and supported by the solicitor’s friends, both forums are not the place for such serious allegations and proper discussion; indeed, this behavior isn’t civil, is unnecessarily negative, fraught with misinformation, false facts, and propaganda, and is often aggressively imposing. Instead of creating productive dialogue, it has the opposite effect of deterring real conversation, makes many homeowners uncomfortable, creates a permanent “us vs. them” divide that restricts understanding, and has a chilling effect on any real conversations on any real issues. Likewise, a “community trial” intended to show “evidence” and convince homeowners that by “voting” they can be a “hero” and “save our community!” is also not the proper procedure. Rather, 200 years of American History later, in today’s day and age, there is a proper civil, congenial, true place for this, and it is not the public square. Instead, it is contained in the statutes the Florida Legislature provides, the mediation procedures the Florida Statutes provide, and if there are real issues, it lies in our community’s rules and bylaws which are legally required to be followed, and if not followed, fully enforceable by our Florida Courts against any association, director, officer, or homeowner. While the Association understands that these solicitors do not personally believe in the law or its ability to fully regulate an association, a board of directors, or an individual, such personal beliefs do not justify resorting to the false “evidence” presented at community trials, door to door non-business solicitations, and cleverly termed “townhall” gatherings. I understand that we have a horrible example set for us by the behavior of our own US Congressional politicians, but that is not the way we will behave or treat each other in this community.

The Board of Directors wanted to let all of our homeowners in the community know that, as a corporation, the Association has a duty to make sure the community is peaceful and our homeowners have an enjoyment of life in and around their home, which includes being free from unwanted solicitations and being subjected to staged community trails. Please understand that solicitation of your home and your family is not allowed in our community. This not only applies to commercial vendors trying to solicit business, like a Multi-Level Marketing salesman from Mary Kay Cosmetics, but it also applies to individuals in our community going door-to-door seeking to solicit you and your family for non-business purposes, including promoting rumors, manipulation, and misinformation as “truth” for their own self-benefit, the self-benefit of their individual campaigns and the self-benefit of the campaigns of their personal friends – all under the guise of “transparency” propounding extreme “illegal activity” conspiracy theories that shock and awe its intended audience.

**Please understand, if you have a door-to-door solicitor promoting this misinformation or asking you to attend a small community trial and you feel uncomfortable or that the interaction is unwanted, please know that the Association and its vendors are able to get involved to stop these unwanted solicitations from happening. To help the Association take action, please officially report any unwanted or uncomfortable interactions to the Association by emailing [neighborhoodwatch@copperidgeHOA.com](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@copperidgeHOA.com). It is the Association's job to make sure the community is peaceful and our homeowners have an enjoyment of life in and around their home, which includes being free from unwanted solicitations. If you are able to obtain the person(s) name or safely obtain a photo of the person(s) outside your home, the Association will use the procedures given to it in**

**the governing documents to stop the solicitation from happening to you and your family at your home in our community. We are here to assist you in enjoying your home and community.**

While the Association understands that the group of solicitors might believe they have a just cause or might believe they are doing the right thing, and while the Association understands that the individuals soliciting may become upset by the Association addressing their tactics or feel the Association is unfairly targeting them in some way, the Association has a duty to protect individual homeowner rights, inform all homeowners of the misinformation, and provide proper Association processes in the governing documents for information, retrieval, and communication. Again, should you feel you have been the subject of unwanted soliciting from anyone, please contact [neighborhoodwatch@copperidgeHOA.com](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@copperidgeHOA.com) to tell your story, and thank you to the many homeowners who have already done so.

As an individual, I am not up for the election this year. I do not have a horse in the race. I do not endorse or promote one candidate over any other candidate. I support any actual candidates and actual votes. I welcome volunteers who get involved by bringing their best to the corporate form. I admire those selfless volunteers who bring people together. I respect those who build community, not hostility. I admire those who put themselves last, not their campaigns and personal agendas first. Often, those true leaders have the softest voice, the smallest platform, the fewest Insta-Followers, and simply lead by example with the way they live their life. I cannot condone those who emotionally incite, who encourage discord, who promote and perpetuate propaganda, and who intentionally divide our community. Indeed, it is not ironic that often those same individuals who incite and divide are the same ones who adamantly refuse to use the proper processes currently in place for our community to solve any and all issues that lay before us as a community - civilly and productively. However, I must point out that it is easier to blame than to build, it is easier to attack than to collaborate, and it is easier to undermine than lead. I took and signed an oath of office. I will serve this community to the best of my ability, and, as President, it is my duty to ensure that the community is a safe and peaceful place for all homeowners to enjoy their homes and their neighbors. That is a place free from anger, negativity, inciteful statements, drama, solicitation, gossip, and self-righteous self-promotion, regardless of how "transparent" one hopes the self-promotion is. It is not enough to espouse the word "transparency" and use it as an excuse to perpetuate misinformation, justify negative "opinions" that attack any single Copper Ridge homeowner or use it as a mantra or rallying cry for any candidate in an election. It is our responsibility to lead by example. As President, I must encourage and ensure the law and our governing documents are followed for the sake and benefit of all of our homeowners. And, as an officer who owes a duty to the corporation, I cannot ethically, legally, or factually endorse the intentional misinformation, underhanded campaign tactics, or the purposeful manipulation of any homeowners in our community.

As President, I call on our community leaders, our board members, our corporate officers, and those candidates desiring to run for office to a higher level of personal responsibility, civility, respect, and accountability. You owe it to the corporation, you owe it to each other, and most importantly, you owe it to our homeowners.

Thank you to all for your understanding and help in making our community a beautiful place to live.

Sincerely,



Tim Furr  
HOA President