

Townhome Community Improves Communication by Using Town Hall Meeting

A townhome community in Greenville, South Carolina, was facing financial issues and needed to levy a special assessment to begin much-needed repairs to the community's common areas. Community members were against a special assessment as many of them didn't understand the urgency of having repairs done to the exterior of most of the units. CAMS' regional vice president and community managers, alongside board members, conducted a town hall meeting which allowed for open discussion, provided a forum for repair needs to be thoroughly explained, and gave members the opportunity to have their questions answered.

SITUATION

This community was having financial issues and was unable to get a loan, largely due to ongoing litigation between a homeowner and the association. In the absence of funding, many of the common elements including the exterior of most units had gone into disrepair and a special assessment had to be considered to make these necessary repairs. The membership was initially against a special assessment as many of them felt this would be a financial burden and did not understand the impact of continuing to defer maintenance.

- CAMS' regional vice president suggested the board hold a town hall meeting as these meetings provide a less-formal, open forum for discussion and she had seen great success with these types of meetings in the past.
- For this meeting, there were no attendance requirements as there was no voting taking place.

SOLUTION

- Members were given an opportunity to share their thoughts on the matter with the board and their neighbors as well as hear others' opinions.
- The board was able to explain their side of the issue which allowed members to become more comfortable with the board's special assessment proposal.

SOLUTION (CONT.)

CAMS TRUSTED GUIDANCE

- › CAMS' community manager and regional vice president were able to lend their managerial expertise to the meeting to keep it running smoothly and focused on the matter at hand.
- › The meeting created an opportunity to educate members on what needed to be done in the community as a whole and shift focus from their individual property needs.
- › Participation was much higher in this type of meeting vs. regular membership meetings and a Zoom call was setup and run by a CAMS team member to allow those who couldn't attend in person to participate.
- › In addition to the board and CAMS representatives, various other professionals were present to explain the urgency of the common area repairs.
- › The CAMS team was able to keep members calm and display empathy towards all sides of the situation.



OUTCOME

- › This meeting had one of the highest turnouts the association had ever seen.
- › Due to the success of this meeting, the board is planning to continue to hold town hall meetings again in the future as they work on improving their community.
- › Providing the members with the information they needed allowed them to better understand the issues at hand which made them more comfortable with considering a special assessment.
- › Those in attendance were able to discuss and share information presented at the meeting with their neighbors who weren't in attendance.
- › Since special assessments require a majority vote of the membership in this community, the open discussion increased the chance that the majority vote will be achieved.
- › Members now have specific information to discuss regarding the needed repairs and feel that their concerns have been heard and questions have been answered.

Communication is key to any successful relationship, and this is certainly true of the relationship between board members and community members. By creating a forum for open discussion, everyone can share their concerns, ask questions, and feel that they've been heard. In addition, members were able to receive concrete information regarding future plans for their community. The CAMS team's suggestion of the town hall meeting and ability to properly run such a meeting put this association in a better position to continue having open discussions and overall improved communication, trust between members and the board, and meeting attendance.

Does your community have the guidance it needs? [Call for details.](#)