

EFFECTIVE USE OF COMMITTEES

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Service as a board member in a community association can be time-consuming and exhausting. Many board members shoulder burdens for informational review and factual investigation, which prevent them from spending necessary time on overall policy development, governance, and fiscal and operational management. When properly structured and utilized, committees are a valuable tool for boards of directors. They can and should shift some of the burden and free the board members up to focus on the essentials to have a strong and vibrant community.

Committees allow boards to delegate authority and obtain assistance from other members of the community for specific items. This process frees time for the board members and develops a team approach to resolving community-wide issues. Community members who are involved in the committee process are empowered, which enhances the legitimacy of decisions based upon committee recommendations.

To effectively use committees here are a few simple steps to follow:

1. Adopt a specific resolution which describes in detail the committee's function.
2. Adopt a committee charter by using this [worksheet](#) to clearly define the authority, responsibility, and limitations of the committee.
3. Decide the best structure for the committee. Effective committees need an effective chair. Will a board member chair the committee or be a member of the committee? How many committee members will there be?
4. Thoughtfully appoint members to the committee who have the needed skills and interest.
5. Require the committee to set [goals](#) which are approved by the board.
6. Require committee to provide [periodic updates](#) to the board.
7. Require the committee to maintain minutes and records of its actions.
8. Provide timely direction and oversight of the committee through board feedback and response.
9. Review all recommendations from the committee and make timely decisions with recognition of the greater time, effort and investigation undertaken by the committee and deference to appropriate recommendations from committees.
10. Review need for committees at least annually and where committees have been formed for certain functions which are no longer relevant or become moot, disband the committee or redefine its objectives in light of current circumstances.
11. Praise, reward, and thank committee members.