



## *How to Build Community Spirit During Challenging Times*

### **MULCAHY Community Association Cheat Sheet®**

#### **BRINGING ANSWERS TO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS**

*This publication discusses significant points of law as they apply to community associations and is not intended to offer specific legal advice or responses to individual circumstances or problems.*

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### **HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY SPIRIT DURING CHALLENGING TIMES**

We have witnessed heartwarming community spirit across our nation since the beginning of the pandemic. Community spirit has brought hope throughout this strange and uncertain time.

At the onset of the pandemic, community members and neighbors joined together on lawns, at windows, on balconies, and on street corners to give frontline and other essential workers a round of applause. Images and videos flooded social media of households banging pots and pans and blowing horns showing their appreciation.

Communities showed spirit by coming together and making signs and banners to be posted at senior long term care facilities.

There are countless examples of community spirit being shown across Arizona and the world. A Favorite example that we have heard is that of a condominium association that decorated the door of a 90 year old gentleman with birthday decorations to wish him a happy 90th. Small acts of kindness, especially during challenging times, are so meaningful and speak volumes about communities.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BUILD AND FOSTER COMMUNITY SPIRIT DURING THIS CHALLENGING TIME?**

**COMMUNICATE** often through email and social media

- Think about gathering information of members through a [Neighbor Card](#)

- Provide important and helpful resources to members

◇ MOST IMPORTANT: City websites have amazing information about classes, facilities that are open, available online classes, availability of library materials, assistance programs, podcasts and college level classes.

- Stay positive with your message!

◇ Acknowledge community heroes (i.e. local firefighter, healthcare worker or teacher)

◇ Acknowledge someone doing something good in the community

◇ Acknowledge positive neighborhood relationships (i.e. neighbors helping neighbors in need - checking on elderly neighbors)

◇ Create a friendly photo submission competition (i.e. pets, gardens, Halloween pumpkin carving, etc.)

◇ Organize a trash clean-up day for your community

◇ Organize a community food drive to help others

◇ Organize a blood drive

◇ Share coping strategies and resources for depression and other mental health issues

◇ Share helpful articles related to distance learning

◇ Support small businesses in your neighborhood

◇ Share online workout classes

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BUILD AND FOSTER COMMUNITY SPIRIT DURING THIS CHALLENGING TIME?  
(CONTINUED)**

**VIRTUAL MEETINGS-** Use Zoom for...

- Resort to Zoom for board meetings and other community events...
  - ◊ Organize a Happy Hour
  - ◊ Find an interesting speaker to address the community
  - ◊ Have a really good cook in your community? Maybe they would be willing to host a Zoom cooking lesson!

**EXTERIOR DECORATIONS**

- In March and April, we had clients contacting us because some members decided to put up Christmas lights at their house. We had also seen similar stories of this trending in the news. Associations should consider taking a relaxed approach to enforcement when it comes to somethings right now...
- Yard Signs! Assuming there is no controversial message being shared, I would encourage clients to embrace the positive messages being shared and the happiness this could potentially bring neighbors.
- Thinking ahead... maybe a friendly holiday decoration contest could be fun for your community!

**SOCIAL DISTANCING ACTIVITIES**

- ◊ Driveway happy hour
- ◊ Bands on back of trucks
- ◊ Socially distanced movie night
- ◊ Santa parade throughout the neighborhood
- ◊ “Booing” people
- ◊ Scavenger hunt
- ◊ Trunk or Treat

**FALL/WINTER/HOLIDAY GATHERINGS:**

- Given the ongoing nature of the pandemic, our firm is generally recommending that communities exercise extreme caution with regard to these types of issues (i.e. in-person events). A holiday block party could potentially be seen as an unnecessary risk. Please note that as of today, the Governor’s Executive Order limiting group gatherings to 50 people or less remains in effect. As such, if any event can potentially result in a gathering of 50+ people, associations would have to obtain approval from the respective city, in addition to implementing safety procedures.
- Keep in mind the requirement of a *Waiver is very unlikely to completely protect the Association from liability in matters such as in-person events during this pandemic.*

Associations should continue to enhance the safety of residents and limit the associations’ potential liability by encouraging social and physical distancing in common areas.

As a general policy, the Associations should reference the CDC guidelines and also follow any additional federal, state or local government guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

If you or your association has any questions on the contents of this cheat sheet or any other questions, please contact Beth Mulcahy, Esq. at [bmulcahy@mulcahylawfirm.com](mailto:bmulcahy@mulcahylawfirm.com).