



CONDO CONNECTION NEWSLETTER



An **Associa**® Company

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Message from the President

Back to the Basics

August 1st, 2019 marked the start of Wilson Blanchard's 25th Year in Business! Over the next year we will be celebrating our heritage, our accomplishments and the one thing that has always made WB a success – our employees.

In the first of 25 posts that we will be featuring on our website blog over the next year to celebrate our 25 years, we look back to the very beginning – the initial announcement in Condominium Magazine that Ray Wilson and David Blanchard had formed a new management partnership out of a “real need for a hands-on service oriented company.”

Check it out on our website (www.wilsonblanchard.com) and while there, subscribe to our blog to be instantly notified of new content.

This year (in fact, it seems the past 24 years!) have flown by, and with the new year fast approaching, we want to make sure your board has everything it needs to make 2020 your best year yet. To do that, you need a strong foundation to build a clear vision for the future. That is why we've focused in this edition of our quarterly newsletter on some fundamentals that can really make a difference for your condo.

Included are articles on board meeting basics and community safety tips, however you can also find additional content on our various social media platforms – Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and of course our website. Links can be found on the last page of this newsletter or directly on our website.

We thank you for having the vision to partner with Wilson Blanchard and allowing us to be a part of the strong foundation for the future of your community.

Sincerely,

Brad Wells
President – Wilson, Blanchard Management Inc.
An Associa® Company



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3 THINGS TO DO AT EVERY BOARD MEETING

A condominium corporation's board of directors consists of elected officers who represent a not-for-profit corporation. Serving as a board member is, and should be, a position of respect and leadership in the community, and the responsibility should be taken seriously – especially during board meetings.

Board meetings are an opportunity to prove to homeowners that their community is a well-run organization. Board members can set the tone by being a professional example and making sure to do the following three things at every board meeting.

1. Arrive on time.

To guarantee quorum is met and meetings are efficient, all board members must arrive on time. If you're going to be late or miss a meeting entirely, be sure to communicate your absence with fellow board members and your condominium manager. Most boards meet monthly or quarterly, and meetings are usually scheduled ahead of time so it's easy to plan. Consistently attending your board meetings shows respect for the community and helps build a relationship of trust between the board and homeowners.

2. Come prepared.

“Before anything else, preparation is the key to success.” – Alexander Graham Bell

Board meetings should last no more than 60 to 90 minutes. To achieve this level of efficiency, all board members must come prepared. Review the financials, read the contracts and proposals, and go through the

management report before the meeting. Have your questions ready ahead of time or send them to your manager so they can provide answers without creating more action items. Additionally, showing up prepared signals to homeowners that you have researched the issues and are ready to make informed decisions for the community.

3. Contribute to the meeting.

Most boards have five directors, but there are typically one or two members who run the show. Keep in mind that it takes all types of personalities and backgrounds to run a community. Everyone's opinion is valid and should be heard. Even if speaking up isn't your cup of tea, or there is a boisterous member who tends to dominate every meeting, as an elected board member, you have a responsibility to represent your community. Remember that every board decision doesn't have to be unanimous. One of the most important aspects of a well-run, professional organization is the ability to disagree respectfully. Having positive discourse about choices affecting the community will lead to better decisions in the long run. One elected director is not more important than another, and your homeowners are counting on you to represent them.

If you aren't confident in looking at financials or making landscaping or maintenance decisions, there are many resources available. Your manager is a great resource and can provide materials or training to help you make effective decisions.

About the Author

Jesse Dubuque is the Director of Client Development for Associa Minnesota.





8 RULES CONDO BOARDS CAN FOLLOW TO KEEP RESIDENTS SAFE

When it comes to increasing and maintaining the value of your community, it's on your plate to make sure safety is one of the top priorities for your Board. However, it can often be a challenge to keep up with each and every one of your neighbours. We've rounded up 8 simple rules you can follow that will help you keep track of what's happening in your community.

1. MAKE SURE NEIGHBOURS KNOW YOUR NAME

This may seem obvious, but it's easy to get bogged down by the day-to-day tasks on your condo board. You won't be able to effectively keep your community safe if you don't know who your neighbours are, and in turn, if they don't know who you are.

If you haven't already, put your walking shoes on and take a stroll around your community. Knock on doors and introduce yourself. When you establish a friendly rapport with your neighbours, they will be able to put a face to the person taking care of several homeowner responsibilities for them.

2. KEEP A CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY

Now that you've met your neighbours, make sure they have the chance to meet each other.

You can help foster camaraderie among your neighbours through fun quarterly events or community block parties. If events aren't in the budget for your condo, make use of email newsletters or social media groups to keep in touch with residents. Fostering a community brings neighbours together, and friendly neighbours are more likely to look out for each other.

3. MAINTAIN CLEAN LANDSCAPING

Overgrown shrubs and lawns are signs for burglars that a tenant is out of town, making a home a target. Enforce a safety rule for residents to maintain their shrub and lawn maintenance and help out neighbours who are out of town for long periods of time by taking turns mowing the lawn. Planting thorny shrubs or keeping existing shrubs trimmed eliminates potential hiding places for burglars.

4. KEEP YOUR COMMUNITY TIDY

Clean communities send a message that residents care about their property and will take steps to protect their homes.

Parallel to landscaping maintenance, encourage your residents to keep their surroundings tidy and orderly. On your walks around the community meeting your neighbours, help pick up trash to set an example for other homeowners.

5. MAINTAIN SMART LIGHTING

One of the keys to keeping homes safe is to be thoughtful about outdoor lighting. It is possible for homes to be too well-lit.

In their quest to prevent burglars from breaking in, many homeowners place lights all around their properties, believing the brighter, the better. In fact, too much light can actually attract the attention of burglars.

Encourage residents to install outdoor motion sensor floodlights and remember to point them down and away from other residents' windows or eyes.

6. SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

Many property crimes go unsolved because of a lack of timely reporting. Police say the first 48-72 hours after a crime is committed is crucial to solving the case.

Remind your neighbours not to assume that someone else has reported an incident. If residents see anything out of the ordinary, the best thing for them to do is to say something. When residents assume an incident has been reported, it prolongs the time it takes to gather evidence, making it harder for police to do their job when an incident is finally reported.

7. MAINTAIN YOUR COMMUNITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL POLICE

Many local police departments have a dedicated person or office that serves as a community liaison. As a member of your condo board, find and establish a relationship with this person. Police are often happy to speak at condo meetings. Ask them to provide simple tips on how residents can help keep their community safe.

When residents hear from law enforcement authorities themselves, they will be more likely to follow safety precautions you've set in place. If crime-related activities do occur in your community, you'll also have a contact established at your local police department.

8. KEEP RESIDENTS INFORMED

Keep a line of regular and open communication flowing to your neighbours. As a board member, part of your responsibility to your community is to make sure your neighbours know what's happening around them. Email newsletters and social media are the best ways to quickly share updates with your neighbours. While you don't have to spam your community with weekly emails and daily posts, small touches of thoughtful communication are enough to make a difference.

ASSOCIA CARES



FUNDRAISERS

This summer, Wilson Blanchard offices are holding BBQ fundraisers in support of Associa Cares. On June 21st, the Waterloo Regional office raised approximately \$7,000 at their event that was attended by staff from WB's offices as well as many of WB's vendors & contractors. Guests were invited to purchase lunch, bid on silent auction items, and enter door prize raffles.

On August 9th, a similar event was held at the Hamilton office. An additional contest at the Hamilton BBQ – donating for a chance to hit the WB Executive with a pie-in-the-face – helped increase the amount raised at this event to over \$8,000.

A third BBQ, to be held by our Toronto office on September 19, had not yet taken place at the time of writing this article, but will surely help to increase the total funds raised for Associa Cares to well above the \$15,000 already generated.

We thank all those who supported these BBQ fundraisers for Associa Cares which provides charitable support to those people and communities that have been struck by natural and man-made disasters.



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