

Here's the Deal: We Need YOUR Input!

Once upon a time, I was "elected" to do a job helping my neighbors. Knowing only that the job would be thankless, I plunged in and was appalled by what I found in Prokop, so we got rid of them. Now to face the other challenges.

Having built the Association website, I hope that it has been useful as a source of information and communication. With that in mind, I'm asking for **every single one of you** for your help so that the Board can help you!

We need your input to make the choices that most of you want us to make. If you don't respond, all we can do is what **we** think is right. If that doesn't work for you, and you ignored this chance to be heard, oh, well.

I'm going to outline what I see as actions we need to take to maintain and improve our community in order to keep it a place where you're proud to live and the property values reflect that.

Our next Board meeting where you can offer your input is Tuesday, September 24th. You'll get a more detailed notice prior to that but I'm *strongly encouraging your attendance*.

After that, we **were** going to have a membership meeting in November to vote on the By-laws authorizing some of the changes we are proposing. Seventy-five percent of the unit owners will be needed to approve some of these changes, so a well-informed community will make the best decisions. For reasons I'll explain later, ***we will be moving the November membership meeting to Sunday, October 13 at 4 p.m.*** to allow for as much participation as possible. So let us begin.

1. The Pool Deck

My understanding is that this need has been going on for about 3-4 years. We've been collecting quotes for repair and one vendor refused to even quote because, for reasons of quality, the deck would crack again later down the road, hurting their reputation.

Switching to pavers would solve the problem giving us a more flexible surface to respond to the foundation cracking, so we are finally able to improve not only the safety of our pool but give our community more "curb appeal" in terms of property values. To do this, we need to change our by-laws since it is a structural change. That means 75% of you need to approve this in October.

Since the vendors we've been dealing with are getting antsy and tired of revising quotes, we need to approve this in October instead of November, in order to make this happen.

2. Limited Common Elements

For those of you who, like myself, had no idea what this term meant, I'll now explain. Things like the lawn, and the trees, and the streets are Common Elements and the Association is obligated to maintain them because we all use them. Limited Common Elements, however, seem to fall into that gray area that *could* be a Common Element, but because no one else can use it, it's not. I'm referring in particular to our patios, and our front doors, with the space between the front door and the outer wall, called a Limited Common Element.

Between previous boards and previous management companies, there seems to be a great deal of confusion as to what these terms mean and how the by-laws have implemented the rules concerning them. Some people have changed the colors of their front doors, while others think that's against the rules. I have also seen no uniformity regarding who paints what in the patios. The garage door specifications were written in the 1980s and don't take into account the hurricane or impact glass of modern doors. Thus, the choice seems to be either plain glass or no glass, and no glass is against the rules when replacing the garage doors.

I want to codify anything that is confusing so that future owners don't have to go through this.

3. Roofing

In 2004, the by-laws were changed and the rounded barrel tile roofs were replaced with shingles at each owner's expense. One company, Shue Kauffman, was contracted to do this work. The shingles were warranted against manufacturing defect for 40 years and the installation for five years. Maintenance and replacement for the roof also became the unit owner's responsibility.

It's 15 years later and Shue Kauffman has had the occasion to inspect one of our properties recently and finds the roof to have another five years of practical life in it. Now, I don't know how things are in Florida, but being from Jersey, we expected our roofs to last 20 years, so that makes sense to me.

What the by-law change did **not** take into account, was roofmate issues. For example, what if one roofmate wanted or needed a new roof, but the other did not? Shue Kauffman has already told us that structurally, they cannot replace only one half of a roof.

We have found this to be a really complicated issue, so I'm hoping that one of you has a really bright idea. We've toyed with this idea:

1. Starting now, we would create a reserve fund of the \$25 increase in fees which began in 2018 to help offset the cost of roof replacement five years

from now. One company would again do the work in the hope of getting a volume discount and ensuring uniformity in depreciation.

2. At that point, the roofs would become the Association's responsibility again and a new fund would be created for reserves to accumulate for the next 20 years to replace the community roofs.
3. Approximating the cost of a unit roof in 25 years (5 years to replace the current roof and 20 years to replace the next) to be \$12k, which gives the reserves fund 240 months to equal \$12k, or \$50 per month. Half of that fee would come from the \$25 we already collect from the 2018 increase, so the *effective fee increase would be \$25 per month*.
4. As averse as I am to ANY fee increase, this would at least remove any roofmate issues that we have yet to find a resolution for, and **add more resale value to our community**, while giving us five years to prepare for the next roof replacement.
5. On the plus side, we are now earning 2.5% on our reserves as opposed to the 0.6% we were earning with Prokop.

The only alternative that has come to mind is the establishment of an architectural or grievance committee with the power to arbitrate roofmate issues. Am I fond of this solution? Not really fond of anyone telling us that we must spend over \$10k to replace our roof when my roofmate needs to do that, but we don't really need to do that yet. I'm hoping that some of you have better ideas.

4. Financial Reserves Cross Utilization

This will also require a by-laws change. Presently, each line item of reserves can only be used for what it was originally designated for. As we are generally underfunded, we need the authority to "borrow" from one reserve line to use for another reserve that becomes more urgent.

Conclusion

Hopefully, this all makes sense and you can see why your input is so valuable. To that end, please use this simple survey on our website where you can just click on some checkboxes for most things and elaborate on others in a way that makes it easier for us to consolidate the community thoughts.

Click the link below and let us know your thoughts.

<https://centergatevillagevi.org/membership-survey/>