

Jason's Guest Commentary for Aspen Times - 536 words (needs to be 500)

Centennial's Responsible Behavior to Fix Design Flaws Should Be Celebrated by APCHA

We've all heard the lament from APCHA, City Council and staff about the issues with the upkeep of affordable housing inventory. The homeowners and Board of Centennial agree. APCHA owners need to budget not just for immediate needs but for future contingencies as well. HOAs need to have capital reserves budgets based on capital reserve studies and a plan to keep their properties in good condition.

Immediate concerns should be addressed as well so that small problems do not become a crisis. Maintenance should take place continually to preserve the quality of homes while larger ticket items should be analyzed preemptively so that repair work can take place in a timely and cost effective manner. Monthly dues should be collected at appropriate amounts to avoid excessive special assessments.

It should have made APCHA and our City officials proud to learn that Centennial owners had taken these steps early on in its existence. Within two years of the first owners taking possession, the problems with water intrusion due to poor design and shoddy construction were evident. The HOA hired experts, including the former County building official who had signed the Certificate of Occupancy, to analyze issues and suggest corrections. Several HOA-contracted studies took place, which confirmed the original design flaws at Centennial and the damage they caused.

The HOA spent \$60 - \$120K annually in critical repairs and replacement of defective, substandard, or missing materials. Dues were raised to fund repairs while maintenance budgets were sustained. Capital reserve studies were conducted. The experts were brought back to verify that the work was successful.

Imminent structural failures have been staved off by homeowners. The expense has been enormous. Seemingly this would be the model for the responsible behavior APCHA has campaigned for.

However, against all evidence, the City told the public that Centennial's buildings were built to perfection and were allowed to deteriorate by negligent, irresponsible homeowners. They said those owners ignored obvious problems, and that they deferred maintenance and kept dues low. Our records prove that is false, but many in local government continue to believe and spread lies about Centennial.

Here are our questions to APCHA & the City:

- If you've laid out the parameters for what you expect from the lottery "winners," and our HOA has done everything within reason to meet those standards, then why is Centennial a pariah?

- Why are the well-documented and clearly-apparent original design flaws and construction defects, which could have been avoided with proper oversight, planning, and budgeting, not a shared problem requiring a shared solution?
- Why does an APCHA project that received no public subsidy become the burden of only the current owners while APCHA collects a 2% commission on every sale for 30 years?
- How much better could our buildings have been if they had been subsidized?

Colorado Affordable Housing Policy requires housing to be sustainably affordable, safe, and sanitary. City Council's affordable housing goal is for safety and quality of life. Before you put another shovel in the ground, don't we have the responsibility to have our current inventory meet these standards? Hundreds of thousands in taxpayer and homeowners' dollars are now being spent to fight legal battles to absolve the City/APCHA of this responsibility versus meeting its own adopted standards.
