



BENEFITS OF HOA COMMITTEES

1. HOA COMMITTEES PROVIDE VALUABLE ASSISTANCE TO THE BOARD

HOA board members are not community management professionals. They are homeowners who volunteer to serve their community. As such, board members may not have the experience or expertise to manage the community. With work, family, and other personal obligations, HOA board members also don't have enough time to take care of every aspect of the community.

By establishing HOA committees, board members can delegate some of the tasks and responsibilities to volunteer homeowners. HOA committees can take care of the more basic tasks while board members can focus on bigger HOA duties — such as preparing financial reports, taking care of HOA funds, and planning capital improvement projects. With HOA boards and committees working together, the community will be able to function properly and seamlessly.

2. HOA COMMITTEES UTILIZE THE SKILLS AND TALENTS OF HOMEOWNERS

One of the benefits of HOA committees is the ability of the board to draw upon the skills and talents of homeowners. For instance, a person with landscaping expertise — who is not seeking a contract for their company — may be of tremendous help to the HOA landscape committee.

By seeking out homeowners with professional training or abilities, the HOA board can save money and time.

3. HOA COMMUNITIES HELP FOSTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It's important for residents to become involved in community matters. This enables residents to appreciate the importance of certain issues such as maintaining property values and resident safety. Since committee membership can change over time, many residents can participate in HOA communities. Joining HOA committees not only fosters community engagement but also helps the HOA board accomplish important community tasks.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOA COMMITTEES?

Committees can be categorized into three general types:

- **Executive.** Executive committees are committees that are exclusively made up of HOA board members.
- **Standing.** Standing committees are committees that have constant tasks to fulfill. As the name suggests, these committees exist for an indefinite period.
- **Ad Hoc.** Also known as special committees, ad hoc committees are assembled for a specific purpose and disband after that purpose is achieved.

There are many different types of HOA committees. However, a community doesn't need to have all of them. It will depend on your community's needs. Here is a list of Wood Creek's current HOA committees and their descriptions.

HOA ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

The HOA activities committee plans and coordinates community events. They ensure homeowners have the opportunity to meet their neighbors. For instance, the committee can host a welcome party to introduce new homeowners to the neighborhood. Activities planned and organized by the committee will be self-supporting social and cultural events or programs for the benefit of all residents.

The community may also have fixed events such as a holiday party or summer festival.

HOA ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The HOA architectural control committee is responsible for maintaining the community's property values. Committee members will review design applications from homeowners to ensure compliance with architectural guidelines stated in the governing documents. This prevents residents from installing elements that may lower the property values within the community.

HOA BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

The HOA beautification committee improves and maintains the attractiveness of subdivision entrances and common grounds for the enjoyment of residents and attraction of new residents. Activities and projects will enhance quality of life and improve property values for all residents.

HOA COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The HOA communications committee ensures that residents are always informed when it comes to community news or updates. Committee members may oversee community newsletters, email blasts, HOA website, and HOA social media accounts. It is anticipated much of the communication will be done by email, so it will be important to maintain an accurate email list or collaborate with the property management company to send out information.

HOA FINANCE COMMITTEE

The HOA finance committee helps the board of directors when it comes to planning the annual budget, tracking monthly expenses, managing HOA reserves and investments, scheduling audits and reserve studies, and other financial management tasks in collaboration with the property management company. This group can also assist the Board in obtaining community discounts for electricity, gas, and other relevant services.

HOA GOLF COMMITTEE

The HOA golf committee establishes the objectives and priorities, for the on-going operation and improvement of the golf course and golf facilities.

HOA INSPECTORS OF ELECTION

The Inspectors of Election develop and oversee the process of the HOA Board elections in December. Montgomery County CCOC offers a packet with timelines and checklists on its website to assist. (Note: this group is not a "committee")

HOA LANDSCAPE/BUILDINGS/GROUNDS COMMITTEE

This HOA committee monitors the properties of homeowners, in collaboration with the property management company, to ensure they are well taken care of. Committee members help ensure community landscapes are beautiful and well-maintained. The committee also makes sure that homeowners' lawns and gardens comply with the landscaping rules in the governing documents. The committee can also take charge of reviewing bids from landscape vendors and recommending the best one for the community and assist with finding vendors to help community members take care of their homes.

HOA SAFETY COMMITTEE

This committee helps improve the security of the community to ensure residents feel safe. Activities might include the development of a safety assessment, surveying and checking in with residents to gauge feelings on safety, providing reminders on the maintenance of CO detectors/fire alarms, collaborating with local police to help prevent crime, ensuring proper street signage and lighting, etc.

HOA WELCOME COMMITTEE

The welcome committee greets new neighbors, creates, and delivers welcome baskets, shares information on community rules and processes, and invites new families to upcoming social activities.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each committee should have an organizational structure which will include a committee chair who leads meetings and handles the agenda, a secretary responsible for taking minutes and making sure they are published or saved in a designated location, and a third member to ensure a quorum of the committee. There must be a quorum for the meeting to be valid. Committees are charged with holding regular open meetings and providing updates on activities along with making recommendations to the Board. Each committee member will serve from January 1st, or time of appointment, through December 31st.

1. REVIEW GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Review governing documents as well as the Maryland Homeowners Association Act regarding committee guidelines.

2. CREATE HOA COMMITTEE CHARTERS

Assist the HOA board by creating HOA committee charters. A charter is a document that clearly states the committee's mission statement or purpose, budget, roles and responsibilities, decision-making abilities, and limits of authority. The committee charter may also have a timeframe, which details how long the committee will exist. You can use an HOA committee charter template and customize it for each committee that you are planning to set up.

3. ESTABLISH AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR EACH HOA COMMITTEE

Just like the HOA board, each HOA committee should have an organizational structure. At the very least, there should be a committee chair who presides over committee meetings and handles the committee agenda.

There should also be a committee secretary who oversees taking and publishing the minutes of every meeting.

If an HOA board member is on a committee, they typically serve as a chair or point person.

4. CREATE CLEAR JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The HOA board must create a clear job description for committee members. This ensures that committee members understand their duties and limitations. Job descriptions should be very detailed to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts between board members, committee members, and homeowners. For example, HOA

landscape committee members should be clear on HOA landscape committee guidelines to be able to do their job properly.

5 DECIDE WHETHER TO HOLD OPEN OR CLOSED MEETINGS

Since committees make important decisions, it is generally recommended to hold open committee meetings. This way, homeowners can observe the decision-making process and even become encouraged to join committees in the future. Additionally, holding open meetings ensures transparency and accountability. Just remember to provide adequate notice as well.

Conversely, though, some committees — such as advisory committees and disciplinary committees — make confidential decisions that should be kept private. For such committees, it is best to keep meetings closed from all members. Committees are held to the same standards as the Board and must follow all procedures for holding a closed meeting.

HOA COMMITTEES AND YOUR COMMUNITY'S SUCCESS

Without a doubt, HOA committees can benefit your community tremendously. The HOA board can rely on homeowners to perform essential duties instead of having to spend for professional management services. However, for your community to be successful, HOA committees should be done right.

Committee members should know the guidelines and the scope of their authority. Otherwise, the HOA board might just create more harm than good. If you follow these HOA committee guidelines, though, you'll be able to set up your community for success.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER INFORMATION

- Committees must review governing documents and the Maryland Homeowners Association Act for information on committees
- Committees will work with the Board to develop Committee Charters
- Reminder, Committees are held to the same standard as the Board
 - All meetings will be open to the community with exception of:
 - Discussion pertaining to employees or personnel
 - Protection of the privacy or reputation of individuals in matters related to the homeowner's association's business
 - Consultation with legal counsel on legal matters
 - Consultation with staff personnel, consultants, attorneys, board members, or other persons in connection with pending or potential litigation or other legal matters
 - Investigative proceedings concerning possible or actual criminal misconduct
 - Consideration of the terms or conditions of a business transaction in the negotiation stage, if the disclosure could adversely affect the economic interests of the homeowners association
 - Compliance with specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirements protecting proceedings or matters from public disclosure
 - Discussion of individual owner assessment accounts
 - If a closed meeting is held:
 - No actions may be taken, and no matters may be discussed if not permitted above,
 - A statement of the time, place and purpose of a closed meeting, the record of any votes by each Board or committee member by which the meeting was closed and the authority under the above for a closed meeting should be included in minutes of the next meeting of the Board.
 - Provide 15 days-notice to community and committee members for upcoming meetings
 - Take minutes of meetings, these should be saved and provided to the Board Secretary for storage
 - Provide the Board updates on activities and recommendations