

The Rancho Tehama Association TRAILBLAZER

SEPTEMBER
2008

www.ranchotehama.org

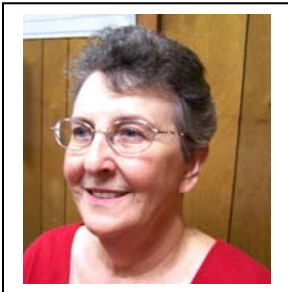
BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER
The only official publication of your association for ALL members; all other local newsletters are only the personal opinions of their publisher/editors. CALL THE OFFICE TO GET COPIES OF OFFICIALLY SIGNED AND ADOPTED MEETING MINUTES.
Staff 530-585-2444: Board 530-585-2631Tel/Fax

Rancho Tehama Signs On With HOA-Certified Management Firm

On August 12, in executive session, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to sign a \$60,000 contract with The Hignell Companies of Chico (Hignell.com) to take over the management of the Association from the Directors (who have been doing the work "pro bono" with the assistance of a staff reduced to one administrative assistant, one and 1/2 utility workers, one part-time bookkeeper and one and 2/3 post office clerks.) Although this expenditure was not a budget item, the board has determined that the corporation cannot afford to continue any longer without professional management. Hignell will assist the members in adopting and implementing a badly-needed, modern, and impartial set of governing documents. Other benefits: 1) Better collections will reduce our delinquency factor, 2) Management will remain consistent even though Boards change, 3) Directors will receive special training in running a Homeowner Association, 4) Members can make dues payments on-line, 5) The Association will get professional help to modernize the governing documents.

The September 20, 2008 Autumn Barbecue has been cancelled. For information, call 530-585-2132.

Annual meeting is now scheduled for October 18, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. in the Rec Hall.



Director/Treasurer Penny McGee Wins Battle
Director Penny McGee has successfully won a seven-year campaign to close the year-end Association books in balance to the CPA-prepared audit adjustments and tax returns. Enclosed are the RTA interim, unaudited Balance sheet and Profit and Loss Budget statements for the period ended June 30, 2008, prepared under her direction.
An experienced full-charge bookkeeper and former manager of a law firm office, Penny's gift of a detail-oriented approach to **(cont. p. 2)**

RANCHO TEHAMA RACCOONS GET NEW PLAYGROUND TOYS
--Back to School!!
In preparation for Rancho Tehama school opening August 21, the Corning Elementary School District was busy installing new playground climbing equipment for our school children grades K through 5. Everyone is urged to observe posted speed limits, especially when driving past the school.



What has my life meant so far, and what can it mean in the time left to me? And now, we're coming to the wicked, poisoned dart. What have I contributed in the great ledger? What am I worth?.....Man owes something to man. If he ignores the debt, it poisons him. And, if he tries to make payments, the debt only increases—and the quality of his gift is the measure of the man. –John Steinbeck

AIRPORT MAINTENANCE



As provided in the 2008 budget sent to the members in November, the Association, under the assistance of airport manager Doug Dugger, has re-sealed the airstrip by using an outside contractor for around \$2,200. RTA staff swept and rolled in the extra debris to create a smooth landing area.

The airport volunteers will be re-marking the surface soon. Call the office for information.

The airport is a common area owned and maintained by the Association and can be used by all members and their friends. Contrasted with the roads maintenance, the job was done in a couple of days, whereas the pothole repair on the roads is ongoing and will continue until the rainy season. Each load of cold patch asphalt costs over \$1,600.

Penny McGee (cont. from page 1)

keeping our financial records is appreciated. Currently, she is also employed by our neighbor, Masami Ranch.

The engagement of an outside management firm has also been a long-time goal of our Treasurer. At last another dream has come true, with the search for a professional manager resulting in this month's engagement of The Hignell Companies from Chico by a supportive Board of Directors.



George Patrick and Los Molinos pilot take off from Rancho Tehama Airport in July to view the Whiskey fire in Paskenta.

New Grading Ordinance

The RTA Architectural/EC Committee wishes to notify members of the new County grading permit requirements. Most lot development work begins with grading, and a plot plan for this work should be prepared and submitted to the committee and the county. RTA job card processing takes about 10 days. Call the office for more information. Committee members are Tom Gano, George Patrick, and Roy Johnson.

ABOUT THE HIGNELL COMPANIES

Beginning in 1948, Fred Hignell, Jr., along with his partner at the time, Floyd Strange, was responsible for the construction of over 1,000 homes in 25 subdivisions, in addition to apartment and commercial projects. Doug Hignell joined his father in 1970, bringing with him new vitality and an expanded vision for the company. Emphasis changed to real estate syndication and property management services, teaming with a solid group of investors. Next was the formation of a professional management team.

In the last three decades, The Hignell Companies has built numerous apartment complexes, a professional office complex of 37,026 square feet, a small specialty shopping center, developed and marketed a 64 duplex subdivision and a 59-lot planned unit development. In addition, we have built and are managing The Courtyard at Little Chico Creek, a 41-unit residential care facility for the elderly. Besides our development abilities, we hold a general building contractor license with six supplemental classifications including electrical, painting and decorating, plumbing, roofing, sanitation systems and sheet metal.

We presently employ more than 150 people who represent the firm in the fields of commercial and residential property management and Community Association Management. We also offer complete professional services for janitorial, maintenance, and painting needs. We are committed to the highest standards of excellence and service, and we guarantee complete customer satisfaction.

Optimizing Committees in Association Governance—

By Molly A. Foley-Healy, Esq.

(Reprinted from the August 2008 ECHO Journal)

A common question from homeowner association boards is whether it is appropriate or prudent to use committees as a tool in the governance of associations. Clearly, the answer is "Yes, committees can be an excellent resource if they are harnessed appropriately." However, if committees are not organized or do not operate effectively, they can become a waste of time or even a runaway train that can lead to anger and resentment for everyone involved. Here are some tips that every board should take into consideration when creating and utilizing committees:

1. Determine whether the governing documents of your association provide for "standing committees." References to committees in governing documents will most typically be found in the bylaws and/or declaration of covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) of associations. It is common for the governing documents of many associations to create standing committees, such as an architectural review committee or design (continued next page)

2008 Open Board Meeting at Rec Hall Schedule

<u>Tuesdays at 9:00a.m.</u>		<u>Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.</u>	
Sept	9		
	23		
		Oct 18	Annual Members Meeting—9 a.m.
			Board Mtg. <u>10 a.m.</u>
Nov	18		

Group Emergency Helicopter Ambulance Insurance Available to RTA members. Call the office at 530-585-2444 for registration information.

Written and Published by The Rancho Tehama Board of Directors:
 Sharon Easton
 Penny McGee
 Danny Murray
 Sheri Schultz

Spanish translations available on request.

Optimizing Committees

Continued from page 2

committees to address requests by homeowners to make improvements to their homes or lots. Some governing documents also require a budget committee to be utilized in financial planning of the association. If the governing documents of your association provide for standing committees, take steps to ensure those committees are organized and function according to the requirements contained in the documents.

2. Board-appointed committees should be carefully structured to ensure they operate at optimal and efficient levels. A common mistake boards make is the failure to outline clearly the parameters and expectations of committees. This can lead to committees that are out of control or are unable to function effectively because the members of the committees do not have a clear understanding of their roles. Therefore, boards should take the time necessary to draft a clear and concise "committee charter," which should include the following:

- **Purpose of the Committee.** The exact purpose of the committee should be outlined in the charter. Is the purpose of the committee to provide the board with a recommendation on an issue? Is the purpose of the committee to carry out a specific task? Whatever the purpose of the committee is, make sure it is spelled out in a clear and understandable manner.
- **Timeframe for Committee Action.** Be clear about the timeframe of the committee. Is the committee to meet during a period of six weeks or a year? Is the committee a standing committee that will meet until the governing documents are amended or until the board takes action to dissolve the committee?
- **Work Product Expected from the Committee.** Be clear about what the committee is expected to produce. Is the committee expected to provide a detailed recommendation to the board? If so, what must be included in the recommendation? Is the committee expected to take some sort of action on behalf of the board or association? If so, be very clear about the action the committee is expected to take. Also, it is important to remember that a board of an association is permitted to delegate a duty to act but it cannot delegate responsi-

bility for any action that is ultimately taken by the committee.

- **Budget for the Committee.** Does the committee have any money to utilize in carrying out the task outlined for the committee? You should be clear about the amount of money the committee has to operate with. You should also be clear about the process the committee should go through to obtain the funds. If the committee is not being provided with funds, you should be upfront with that information.
3. Residents living in associations have a wide array of expertise, talents, and life experiences. An important key to successful committees is to appoint individuals to serve on committees who are able to make valuable contributions to the committees. Do you have landscape architects or gardeners who would be willing to serve on a committee to make recommendations to the board on xeriscaping (landscaping in ways that do not require supplemental irrigation)? Do you have accountants or individuals with a business background who would be willing to serve on a budget committee? Taking time to identify and build relationships with individuals who may ultimately become valued resources will be time well spent.
 4. Another great tool to keep committees on track is to appoint board or staff members to be liaisons to the committees. This can be a valuable resource in providing background and information committees may need to operate more effectively. However, care should be taken to ensure these individuals do not dominate or take over the work of committees.

In the world we live in today, association boards have a lot on their plates. By using the tips outlined in this article, boards will be able to effectively harness committees to work in a collaborative environment to benefit their communities. E|

Molly Foley-Healy is an attorney at the Colorado law firm HindmanSanchez. She counsels homeowners associations in transactional matters ranging from document reviews and amendments to opinion letters on matters affecting the operations and governance of community associations. Previously, Ms. Foley-Healy was a senior vice president and the general counsel for Community Associations Institute and was the chief lobbyist for CAI National.