

SYCAMORE



CREEK

OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

MARCH 2018

**ANCHOR COMMUNITY
MANAGEMENT, INC.**
805-388-3848

FAX: 805-388-0856

AFTER HOURS EMERGENCY #:
805-558-6581

CORNWALL SECURITY:
805-676-1828 or 866-921-1238

E-MAIL:
info@anchorcommunitymgt.com

BILLING QUESTIONS: 388-3848, x2
julie@anchorcommunitymgt.com

WEBPAGE:
anchorcommunitymgt.com/
sycamore.htm

ONLINE PAYMENTS:
Links on the webpage

ANNUAL & BOARD MEETING:
Wed., April 4, 6:30 pm
215 Daily Drive, Ste. 10, Camarillo
(across from Marie Callender's,
by Best Western)



2018 ANNUAL MEETING COMING SOON!

April 4th is the date of the 2018 Annual Meeting and 6:30 is the time. The meeting will be held in the Anchor Community Management office at 215 E. Daily Drive, Ste. 10, Camarillo.

A nomination form and a Notice of Meeting were mailed to you in early February. Three spots, each for a two year term, will be up for election this year. Sycamore Creek owners in good standing may submit their names to be included on the ballot, which will be mailed out in early March. If you would like to be considered, submit the nomination form by the date indicated on the form.

Those considering running for a position on the Board must be members in good standing. You must also be able to attend 6 regular Board meetings and the Annual Meeting each year. Board members also sometimes serve in special capacities for projects or research.

If you are not running for a Board position and you are not related to someone who is running, we would love for you to volunteer to count ballots the night of the meeting, providing we receive enough ballots to establish a quorum. Let Anchor know if you will count ballots.

PERCHED ON THE LEDGE

We kindly ask Sycamore Creek residents to remove items on second story ledges. We make this request so that someone below is not injured should the item(s) fall, for whatever reason.



HAPPS AROUND THE 'CREEK'

MGM Landscape has been busy improving the grounds. They have greatly improved the landscaping at the corner area of Arneill and Ponderosa with some colorful plants, giving it a more cohesive look.

The Board approved another landscape upgrade at their most recent meeting. Both sides of the

driveway and next to the waterfalls as you enter off of Arneill will be renovated. This renovation will also include the long area under the trees, along the inside driveway.

Other landscape renovations are also being discussed.

The roofs received their preventative maintenance recently. Several chimney caps had to be ordered and replaced, vents and other protrusions from the roof were sealed and the gutters and downspouts facing the driveways were cleaned.

The gutters on the inside will be cleaned by Tri-County Power Washing on **March 19-24**. Residents may recall that cleaning those gutters involves the crew members sometimes getting up on balconies, so you may want to keep your windows and blinds/drapes closed when they get near your unit. This cleaning can be a messy job and sometimes the crew misses and area to clean up. If this happens, give Anchor Community Management a call and someone will come back and make it right.

Mutual of Omaha Bank 
Community Association Banking

IF YOUR DUES ARE PAID BY AUTO DEBIT, PLEASE READ THIS

For those owners who signed up for auto debit through Mutual of Omaha Bank, those auto pays expire after a maximum of 3 years. Owners need to check their auto debit amount and make sure it has been updated to reflect the correct dues amount. Otherwise, you will be charged late fees and interest charges.

Mutual of Omaha send auto debit owners a monthly email, reminding them that an auto debit will soon take place. That is a good time for owners to check the amount and ensure it is correct. Mutual of Omaha also sends an email reminder when your auto debit is about to expire.

We encourage those on auto debit to read the emails from Mutual of Omaha, or it could cost you.

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NEXT BOARD MEETING:
Wed., February 7, 6:30pm
215 Daily Drive, Ste. 10, Camarillo
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PROPER WAY TO DISPOSE OF YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE



Just like they have done in the past, E.J. Harrison & Sons will pick up discarded Christmas trees for free on January 10, 2018.

E.J. Harrison has provided this free service for many years. They also made this free service even better... you can now leave flocked trees for pick up as well as unflocked trees.

The discarded trees must be left in parking spaces #28 and #29 (on the Arneill side of the complex) and must be stripped of all decorations, tree stands and tinsel in order to be picked up. Be sure to get the trees out to the spaces early so you don't miss the pick-up. E.J. Harrison can arrive as early as 7:00am!

Please do not put discarded trees into the dumpsters! Doing so will fill up the dumpsters so others cannot use them. Stack the trees in the above mentioned parking spaces instead.

AND, THE WINNERS ARE...



This year, long time Sycamore Creek owner Dee Marchiona was kind enough to reinstitute the annual Holiday Decorating Contest! Many participants ensured the competition would be fierce, but only five would be declared 'Winners'.

1. Creative use of the Garden Window - winner is # 697.
 2. Best Use of Lights - winner is # 777.
 3. Originality - winner is # 723
 4. Use of Motion - winner is # 703
 5. Honorable Mention - winner is # 667
- Congrats to all! And, special thanks to Dee for chairing this event.



THE HAPPS AROUND SYCAMORE CREEK

December turned out to be an anxiety filled month for the creek vendor. Severe and frequent winds caused all sorts of havoc on the creeks. When winds are strong, the baskets in the water that catch the leaves and debris fill up faster, which cause the creeks to

sound like they are sucking in water.

Several power outages, reportedly related to the Thomas Fire, caused the creek pumps to shut down. When the pumps shut down, the water in the creeks begins to start rolling off into the overflow basin at the Ponderosa end of the creeks. And, when the water begins to flow out, certain areas of the creeks experience really low water levels. When that happens, residents worry about the Koi fish having enough water to survive in. When the power comes back on, we restart the pumps and the creeks begin to fill again, but this can take hours to complete. Let's hope the winds end soon.

Work on stairs with loose steps or other structural issues with the stairs will begin in early 2018. This is a yearly event and occurs when the contractor and manager physically inspect each staircase. This yearly project does not include cosmetic improvement to all stairs; only to the ones being done that year.

The roofs are expected to receive a tune up in early 2018, providing the contractor gets to it prior to March 1st. Properly licensed and insured roofers who want to work in HOA's are difficult to find these days, and have been difficult to find since the rains of last year. Those rains uncovered many problems on many HOA roofs that boards finally had to deal with, so roofers have been very busy in 2017 taking care of those issues. Sycamore Creek is scheduled with a reputable company, who as mentioned earlier, we are hoping can get to our roofs early next year. We will keep you apprised.

And finally, a new landscape company will start with Sycamore Creek on January 2, 2018. The name of the new company is MGM Landscape. The Board and management are cautiously optimistic that this new company will do a better job than was done in the past by others. There will one employee on-site 4 days a week.

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NOVEMBER 2017

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NEXT BOARD MEETING:
Wed., December 6, 6:30pm
215 Daily Drive, Ste. 10, Camarillo
(across from Marie Callender's,
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PROJECTS GALORE!



We are in the midst of major project # 3 for the year, and only have a few weeks to go before it is completed. If you haven't looked at the new bridges being replaced (project # 3), take a look. They are vinyl product with treated wood underpinnings. The vinyl should ensure that the bridges wear well and look nicer for a longer period of time. This project should wrap up in November. Sycamore Creek residents will not be troubled with any more planned projects until next year.



POTS ON RAILS NOT A GOOD IDEA

We ask that residents remove any objects currently located on balcony or stair or other railings. These objects create a safety hazard when they fall.

While we don't forbid plants in pots located on balconies or patios or porches, the pots must sit in a tray to catch water. The plants also must be maintained. We also discourage residents from creating a 'forest' look on the patios. A few plants are acceptable; enough plants to block the windows and the rest of the patio are not acceptable. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.



2018 BUDGET APPROVED

The Board recently approved the 2018 budget with a \$ 5.00 increase in the monthly dues for each unit.

It could have been higher. The reserve study preparer recommended that we continue to fund the reserves at their current level. To do so would have meant an \$8.00 increase in dues for each unit. Water rates continue to rise, sometime seven though we are using less water. This is because cities continue to increase the cost of water. Landscape costs have increase mostly, we are told by landscape companies, due to the minimum wage increasing. So, we will be funding the reserves at a level that is a bit lower than the suggested amount. However, the Association reserves are still funded to the tune of 78%.



WINDOW DECORATING CONTEST FOR HOLIDAYS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

Sycamore Creek owners and renters alike are encouraged to decorate the inside of their garden window for the upcoming Holiday Season. The contest will run from December 1 – December 15th. Judging will take place on December 16th between 7pm -9pm. Sycamore Creek owner Dee Marchionna is the organizational power behind this event.

There are 5 categories to be judged and 5 prizes to be won!

Categories to be judged include:

1. Creative use of the garden window
2. Best use of lights
3. Originality
4. Use of Motion
5. Honorable mention

Helpful Hints for this contest include using timers for lights, cleaning (and keeping clean) your windows, and spying on your neighbor's windows for their ideas. Just to admire, of course and not to copy.

Oh, did we mention the prizes? They are terrific and they are listed here:

- \$100 Rosemar Florist
- \$50 Wood Ranch Gift Card (yum)- donated by Dee Marchionna and Anchor Community Management
- 2 - \$50 Buca di Beppo Gift Cards (yum yum) - donated by Pat Lang-Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage
- \$20 Avon gift basket – donated by Karrie Wing, ISR Fund-raising Specialist

Enter by sending an email to Dee Marchionna at Rosemar101@aol.com with your address so she knows who is participating. A special thanks to Dee for organizing this event!

Let's make Sycamore Creek a beautiful Wonderland this Holiday Season! We could all use a little Cheering Up, so we hope you participate.

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SEPTEMBER 2017

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NEXT BOARD MEETING:
Wed., October 4, 6:30pm
215 Daily Drive, Ste. 10, Camarillo
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HAPPY POOL NEWS



Pool users will be happy to hear that the pool will be heated through October 8th instead of just through Labor Day (Sept. 4th)!

We take this opportunity to remind folks that Cornwall Security locks the pool each night close to the closing time during the summer when the pool is heated. If people are still using the pool or spa past closing time, they will be asked to leave by the Cornwall person.

The gates are then unlocked by Cornwall the next morning prior to opening hours. Once the pool heater is shut down, we don't have the gates locked and unlocked.

Please remember: **NO DOGS OR RAFTS ALLOWED IN POOL AREA!**

CREEK(S) UPDATE



John, the vendor in charge of the creek, reports that things are turning out better than he expected in the underground vaults where the creek equipment is housed.

In a previous newsletter, we advised that the west creek motor has a large metal intake pipe which developed a leak. This meant that several parts were going to have to be replaced. When John and crew took apart the motor, he found the inside of the equipment to be in excellent shape! Valves and check valves still had to be replaced, but things were better than we dared hope!

Also mentioned previously, both creeks will be cleaned as part of this project.



BRIDGING THE GAP!

All of the bridges that span the creeks throughout Sycamore Creek will be replaced with custom built vinyl bridges. The bridges will still have a wood component in the support structure, but the part that you walk across will be vinyl, for the most part.

We are hopeful that the vinyl will last longer and look better longer. As it stands now, those bridges are repaired and rebuilt on a frequent basis.

Look for this work to start Sept. 12th and last for about 9 weeks. Vinyl Concepts,

the company who will build the bridges will build them one at a time so as not to inconvenience residents too much.

TIPS FOR KEEPING RODENTS AWAY



Some residents are not aware that Sycamore Creek is its own natural environment. The creek makes this natural environment, and the wildlife run free in a natural environment. It is not uncommon to see possums, koi fish, raccoons, and even the occasional egret. Ducks return year after year to have their babies at Sycamore Creek, and every so often, a mouse or rat is seen.

We are proud of this environment and we don't want to take steps that will change it, because doing so will upset the food chain. It is also the reason so many residents wanted to live here in the first place.

There are a couple of steps residents can take to help keep rodents under control. One step is to add door sweeps to the bottom of the laundry room doors so critters don't get under those doors. During the winter, rodents may seek the warmth of the dryer. To keep them out of the dryer (after you've added the sweep to the bottom of the door), put a screen over the dryer vent opening.

Rats and mice are also attracted to food, such as cat and dog food left out, fish food, birdseed, or any trash left on patios. This is a good reason to keep your patio clean! An unclean patio is also an attraction to cockroaches. Your neighbors will not appreciate having your patio become a haven for unwanted critters.

Residents have had success keeping the rodents away by following these suggestions.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Don't forget to start gathering items to place in the **Sycamore Creek Garage Sale** coming **Saturday, Sept. 16th, 8am – 1pm!**

The **asphalt reseal project** is scheduled for mid-September. Because of the other on-going projects, we will have to see if it can still occur then or whether it will need to be postponed. We will keep you apprised on the webpage.

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NEXT BOARD MEETING:
Wed., August 2, 6:30pm
215 Daily Drive, Ste. 10, Camarillo
(across from Marie Callender's,
by Best Western)

GARAGE SALE SCHEDULED FOR SEPT. 16TH



This year, the Sycamore Creek HOA garage sale will be held on Saturday, September 16th between the hours of 8am – 1pm.

All residents are encouraged to participate in the sale. All you have to do is display your sale items in your open garage! It's a great way to meet your neighbors and to get rid of items you no longer want. Residents must make their own arrangements to have unsold items picked up. The Association will arrange and pay for advertising, and put flyers up in Sycamore Creek.

As with previous garage sales, please contain your items to your garage so that attendees can still drive through the complex. Please don't park in guest parking as those attending the sale, to hopefully buy, will need those spaces in which to park. We will send out reminders as the time draws near.



ASPHALT SEALING BEING SCHEDULED

It's been about 5 years since the asphalt at Sycamore Creek was replaced and sealed. Industry standards, as well as the current condition of the asphalt call for it to be resealed about every 5 years.

GPM is the local company who will be doing the work. It is anticipated that the work can be completed in one day, but there will be some disruption to residents getting in and out of their garages. How much disruption we do not yet know.

We also do not yet know the schedule for this work or all the details, but we will certainly let all residents know when we do.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND 'THE CREEK'?



Since January of this year, several balconies have had major repairs completed on them as a condition of escrows. Not all are completed yet, but we are making progress!

The outdoor shower at the pool area was power washed and looks great! Next, the bathrooms in the pool room will receive new toilets and the floors will also be power washed.

The drain at the outdoor shower had to be rebuilt as it had collapsed about 4' down in the ground due to tree roots. That was a major, expensive fix because of the 4' of concrete footings that had to be jackhammered to expose the pipe.

The Fire Dept. is requiring the replacement of two Knox Boxes which house a key to the gates which only fire and police can access in case their services are needed on the 'island' (units 779-789). A new alarm bell and a new flow switch must also be installed, all of which is in the works.

BIG CREEK REPAIR AND CLEANING PROJECT ON THE HORIZON



The equipment in the underground vault for the west creek has some issues that we must address. Right now, a large suction pipe on one of the motors has a leak which has a temporary patch at this time. The patch isn't going to hold for long. That steel pipe, as well as six 8" valves and all the check valves will need to be replaced. It is no surprise that over time, the equipment will develop rust from the moisture. While we have the west creek down, we will go ahead and clean the bio filters and the stream bed as it has been 3 years since they were last cleaned.

Once the west creek is completed and back in service, we will take the east creek down to clean its bio filters and stream beds, as well.

Every time we do one of these creek projects, it becomes more difficult because of all the agencies that have to be involved in our running off the water. We have to meet all sorts of criteria to run our relatively clean creek water off into the sewer!

We will keep you informed as we get closer to starting this project.

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NEXT BOARD MEETING:
Wed., June 7, 6:30pm
215 Daily Drive, Ste. 10, Camarillo
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ANNUAL MEETING A SUCCESS



The 33% quorum required to hold the Sycamore Creek Annual Meeting was achieved, and the meeting was held as scheduled on April 5, 2017. This year, there were 4 Board positions open, each for a two year term.

Election results are as follows:

Patrice Banyai..... 32 votes
Maureen Hernandez27 votes
Martina Renville34 votes
Donna Talent 39 votes

Donna and Maureen are incumbent Board members, and Patrice and Martina are new to the Board.

The IRS Ruling 70-604 was approved with 32 votes in favor, and 1 no vote.

Board members met in open session to choose their Board positions. The results are:

Donna Atkins..... President
Maureen Hernandez..... Vice-President
Donna Talent..... Treasurer
Jim Bond..... Secretary
Catherine Parker member
Martina Renville..... member
Patrice Banyai member

Thank you to all who turned in their ballots, and to Christine Bayliss who volunteered to count ballots at the meeting.



PROJECTS BEING CONSIDERED (BUT NOT YET APPROVED)

There are several possible projects on the horizon for Sycamore Creek. All but one is a recurring item that we address when the reserve study suggests maintenance may be needed. For example; the asphalt was completely removed and replaced in 2012. Five years later, the reserve study suggests we have the asphalt slurry sealed to prolong its life. We are obtaining proposals to do so.

Sycamore Creek has trees trimmed every year; one year, we have the trees on the exterior of the property

trimmed, and the next year we have the trees on the interior trimmed. 2017 is the year we are due to have the exterior trees trimmed. That is a much more expensive job than trimming the interior, partly because of traffic issues and partly because they trees grow so fast and are so large. We will be obtaining proposals to trim in the fall.

In 2004, the complex was repainted. The reserve study suggests that it may need repainting again in 2018. The Board will review the paint and make the decision whether to paint next year or sometime in the future.

In 2003, after passing a special assessment, Sycamore Creek had the entire complex reroofed. While the roofs should certainly have many more years of useful life left, they do require maintenance. This year, we began experiencing some minor leak issues, which is normal for this point in time. The roofing company who replaced them last time was consulted, and they will be providing an estimate to do some work, mostly on the flat roofs. It is expected to be costly, but funds have been saved for this project.

And finally, the 9 bridges over the creek are a constant maintenance issue, which is to be expected when wood sits over water and has lots of foot traffic! Management has asked Vinyl Concepts to design a vinyl bridge, with pressurized wood supports to replace the existing wood bridges. If this plan is successful, the bridges would also look nicer than wood bridges and stay nice for a longer period of time. No formal pricing yet, but it is in the works.

We will keep you in the loop on these and other issues.



SOMETHING IS FISHY

One of the Board members scored a great deal on previously owned Koi. These fish were recently added to the east creek.

We hope residents enjoy seeing more fish swimming by their units!

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ACCEPTABLE ITEMS ON PORCHES, PATIOS AND BALCONIES

Recent inspections of Sycamore Creek revealed that some units are using the exterior areas around their units for improper storage.

Page one, item # 7 of the Rules and Regulations reads: "No articles (i.e.; bicycles, exercise equipment, firewood, trash cans, etc.) shall be stored outside in either the common areas or the exclusive use common areas (such as balconies and patios), unless those objects are barbecues, patio furniture, flower pots on coasters and hoses (not attached to the wall).

Several units have an accumulation of items that are not acceptable, and which give the patio or balcony a shabby look. Those who do not permanently remove all unacceptable items by March 15, 2017 will be receiving violations and fines until the items are removed.

ALL KINDS OF FENCING



Management has received communications from other Sycamore Creek owners who lodge concerns and sometimes complaints about those who put up unapproved fences, either in front of their unit, which is common area and not an individual's own area, or around patios on the creek side.

While the patios (on first floor units) are the exclusive use of individual owners, the HOA has a say in what type of fence can be installed. For these patios, the only kind of fence that is acceptable is the approximately 3' high, white, wood built around the patio. All of those fences were approved by the HOA, and all of them conform to the requirements of acceptable fencing.

Those who have installed any other type of fencing, including types that just stick in the ground, are in violation and should remove those fences by March 15, 2017 in order to avoid receiving violations and fines.

Some people may not know that condo living is all about uniformity. The exterior of the units should look alike to a certain degree. Fencing is one of those items which must look alike.

HOMEOWNER COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETINGS



CA Civil Code requires boards to dedicate a portion of each meeting to hearing homeowner comments (sometimes referred to as open forum). This section of the meeting may be held near the beginning of the meeting, or may be held near the end of the meeting. Civil Code **requires that a reasonable amount of time** be set aside by the Board for the open forum.

Sycamore Creek includes their homeowner comments near the start of the meeting so that owners may make their comments and leave, if they so wish. Sycamore Creek gives 5 minutes for each owner to express themselves, but the length of time can depend on other circumstances and can change. There is no limit on the number of topics a member can raise, as long as they do not exceed the 5 minute time limit. Boards cannot create **unreasonable rules** that would stifle a member's right to address the board. Boards can, however place reasonable restrictions on some topics members may want to discuss. For example, topics should not:

- Involve matters outside the board's authority
- Be defamatory, indecent, abusive or involve personal attacks or threats, legal or otherwise.
- Involve personnel issues
- Involve the disclosure of confidential info
- Maintenance issues can be raised during open forum, but are often better addressed in writing with management

Answering Questions – During the open forum portion of board meetings, members may ask questions, but the board's ability to answer them is limited by statute. As provided for in Civil Code §4930(b), boards may:

1. Briefly respond to statements made or questions posed;
2. Ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement, or make a brief report on the person's own activities, whether in response to questions posed by a member or based upon the person's own initiative.

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LARGE TRASH ITEMS COST HOA MONEY

Every time someone leaves a mattress or a bed frame or bookcase or any item outside of a dumpster, Sycamore has to pay \$25 for each item to be removed. The residents who dump these items may save money on dump fees, but the owners have to pick up the cost via dues increases.

We haven't found an affordable solution to this problem. Research on installing cameras revealed it would cost tens of thousands of dollars to setup a system. Even then, we may not be able to identify people caught on camera.

Anyone who can identify the people doing this dropping off, should take a picture and let management know. We would like to stop this practice of the entire HOA having to pay for individuals' junk to be carted away.

TIPS FOR KEEPING RODENTS AWAY



Some residents are not aware that Sycamore Creek is its own natural environment. The creek makes a natural environment, and the wildlife run free in a natural environment. It is not uncommon to see possums, koi fish, raccoons, and even the occasional egret. Ducks return year after year to have their babies at Sycamore Creek, and every so often, a mouse or rat is seen.

We are proud of this environment and we don't want to take steps that will change it, because doing so will upset the food chain. It is also the reason so many wanted to live here in the first place.

There are a couple of steps residents can take to help keep rodents under control. One step is to add door sweeps to the bottom of the laundry room doors so they don't get under those doors. During the winter, they may seek the warmth of the dryer. To keep them out of the dryer (after

you've added the sweep to the bottom of the door), put a screen over the dryer vent opening.

Rats and mice are also attracted to food, such as cat and dog food left out, or fish food, birdseed, or any trash left on patios. This is a good reason to keep your patio clean!

Sycamore Creek does not allow traps to be set outside as they can harm other residents' pets, and upset our natural environment. We are sure that if you take these steps, you will not have issues with rodents.

CALIFORNIA LAW AND HOA BOARD MEETINGS



Condo sales are on the rise in California, and we take this opportunity to let new owners know about important laws the state legislature has enacted regarding HOA board meetings.

Owners are always welcome at Board meetings and may make comments in the Homeowner Comments section of the meeting. Homeowner comments are close to the top of the agenda on the Sycamore Creek agenda. Owners are given 5 minutes in which to make their comments. According to CA Civil Code, "A board meeting is a meeting of the corporations' board of directors, not a meeting of association members. Accordingly, members do not have a right to participate in the board's discussions and votes." According to Civil Code §4975, members can watch the board conduct business, but they do not have a legal right to participate in board discussions. The president can invite comments from the audience on particular items of business if he or she so chooses, but is not required to do so.

This is the first article in a series of articles to be written about board meetings. These articles are designed to provide information, especially for new owners, on what they may expect when attending a board meeting.