

# THE UCOM PRESS

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## Spreading the Power of Education!

By: Dawn Miller-UCOM President/  
Communications Director

UCOM is an organization that educates Condominium Association Board of Directors and Management Companies and navigates them through their volunteer positions and careers so that they can best contribute to their communities! Our roles are constantly evolving as to how we can best service the communities that we work so

hard to help operate. Therefore if we can gain professional insight when opportunities arise, it only makes our contribution better and more efficient. We are all faced with new personalities, different issues and obstacles while working with one another on how to best solve problems, all while trying our best to accomplish the goals that are needed for our communities, Through its educational philosophy UCOM's goal is to help you get "better" at understanding the complexity of your roles and we hope that you continue to see the value of our mission and share with other members on boards so that they can be "better" too.

*"UCOM has really been an asset to our board members to gain understanding and knowledge in this evolving volunteer position."*

*-Jackie Castiglione*

## Role of the Secretary

By: Clara Sumeghy-UCOM Secretary

The secretary of the condominium board of directors is a very important position on the board. It is the secretary's responsibility to set the agenda in consultation with the president. The agenda is the guide to the meeting and is useful for the secretary to use this agenda as a guideline for taking the minutes of the meeting. The minutes are the legal record of the proceedings of the meeting and therefore must include the following: the organization, location, date and time of the event, participants (board members, management, etc.) The first order of business following the "call to order" is establishing a quorum next the approval of the draft minutes. Do not waste time to correct grammatical errors.

Minutes contain a brief summary of each topic discussed, the action taken, timeline and who is responsible. In other words, minutes are a record of what was done, not said. The content of the reports of the officers or committees are not included in the minutes. These are referenced as "Reports were given by the President, treasurer...". All main motions must have the exact wording, the name of the mover, but not seconder, and whether or not it was adopted or defeated.

Finally, the time of adjournment but not mover or whether it was adopted need to be recorded. The minutes should then be signed by the secretary.

*"Don't forget to register for the June 14th, 2023 Educational Seminar, you won't want to miss it!"*

*Register at:  
[www.ucomonline.org](http://www.ucomonline.org)*

## **Board Service— Daunting and Rewarding**

**By: Sidney McBride-UCOM Board Member**

Anyone who has served as a director on any official Board of Directors has gained an edified vision of the operations of that entity compared to their earlier perception before board service. Even more illuminating is the awareness gained as a board member on a 'not-for-profit' housing entity such as a condominium, cooperative or other homeowner association (HOA). Your reflection on those "inexcusable" delays and "crazy" board decisions become more understandable once you are in the seat of the decision makers. You now spend countless hours analyzing the varied opinions of professional vendors who have bid on a costly repair or replacement project, or prioritizing a long list of projects against the association's rather limited funds. Bottom line, many more factors (than ever previously contemplated) become critically important to making that 'best and final' decision.

Of course, none of this commentary is intended to excuse those directors who fail to try to give their best service or those who seek the board position for some "imaginary" fame or status. While often considered to be a "thankless job", in reality, directors who remain focused on their role in this "collective" governing and oversight process find solace in the contributions they provide to maintain and enhance their respective condominium, cooperative and HOA community.

Having served on one or more housing boards for over 25 years, the experience has been both daunting and rewarding. "Daunting" when you realize the cost of many desperately needed projects far exceed what is available in the HOA's financial accounts, and you know that fee increases are ALWAYS unpopular whether in the form of a short-term special assessment on slightly higher monthly maintenance fee. "Rewarding" when you reflect that notwithstanding the unpopular sentiment of fee increases, the decision to address a repair and replacement need at an early stage helped stave off the exponential cost and added damage caused by deferring that decision to a later time.

Overall, if you have the talent, temperament, commitment and "a sense of humor" to serve as a board member at your condominium, cooperative or HOA, consider trying it. You may be pleasantly surprised that the input and service you provide will contribute to the continuing success and sustainability of your residential community.

## **Violation Notices**

**By: Cindy Locke- UCOM Board Member**

One of the biggest problems for condominium associations is how to handle violations. This can be intimidating for both co-owners and board of directors. Some of the violation notices can seem very threatening to the residents. Before sending a notice, it may be a good idea to talk to the co-owner in person or by phone. A nice little chat can sometimes lead to compliance before it goes any further. If that doesn't work, the next step is to send the dreaded violation notice. Our Board has decided to add a friendly and polite first violation letter as a warning. One of us will also speak with the co-owner to see how it has come across. Most of the time, it has worked so well we have not had to go any further. Sending a harsh violation notice right off the bat can lead to negative feelings and the co-owner wanting to immediately fight back. This can lead to bad feelings on both sides. The primary goal should be to get the co-owner to acquiescent to the first warning before a battle ensues. Remember, these enforcement notices can affect how the residents view the association. Most directors would like to live in harmony with the co-owners. Our main goal at UCOM is to educate and support directors to achieve success in the management of their association. There is no such thing as having too much knowledge.

## **Landscaping**

**By: Eva Veller-UCOM Vice President**

Tis the season. Yes, spring is finally visiting Michigan.

Here are a few helpful contractor screening suggestions. Check the following:

Capabilities, as some companies offer extra services such as installing drainage/irrigation systems and retaining walls.

Horticulture degrees, years of actual experience, and membership in state or national landscape associations.

Is the company licensed by the state or certified.

Maintenance level, meaning seasonal plantings, pest control, intricate pruning, or basic cutting trimming, weed control. The budget will vary depending on whether your association is low or high maintenance.

Ask for proof of insurance. Check to make certain that company vehicles, workman's comp, and liability are in place. The contractor should be prepared to give you this information.

Ask for a list of the landscaper's active clients. Visit some of those properties.

Check the contract to make certain that it includes a detailed description of all scheduled work.

Each season has challenges. A good landscaper will be able to handle almost anything that nature may offer, leaving your association's property looking well maintained and manicured.

## **Don't call Sam or Mike!**

**By: Neil Moore-UCOM Treasurer**

Don't call Sam or Mike if you have a question about the law that applies to condominiums. Lawyers, like most professionals, generally specialize in specific areas of the legal profession, of which there are many.

Hiring a lawyer without condominium experience usually means that you will be paying for his/her education in condominium law.

There are a number of law offices that have specialists in condo law.

Do your homework!

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WATER SOURCES AND WATER DAMAGE

**By: Cheryl Curley-UCOM Hospitality Director & Commercial Account Manager-Jarvis Property Restoration/BMS CAT**

### **There are three basic sources of water:**

Category 1- Originates from a sanitary source and poses no substantial risk from dermal, ingestion, or inhalation exposure. However, it may not always remain clean after it comes into contact with other surfaces or materials.

Category 2- contains significant contamination and has the potential to cause discomfort or sickness if contacted or consumed by humans. It may contain potentially unsafe levels of microorganisms or nutrients for microorganisms, as well as the other organic or inorganic matter (chemical or biological).

Category 3- is grossly contaminated and may contain pathogenic, toxigenic or other harmful agents. Such water sources may carry silt, organic matter, pesticides, heavy metals, regulated materials, or toxic organic substances.

\*Time and temperature can also affect the quality of water, thereby changing its category.

There are four primary classifications of water damage.

Class 1 is the least amount of water, absorption and evaporation. It affects only part of a room or area, or larger areas containing materials that have absorbed minimal moisture. Little or no wet carpet and/or cushion is present.

Class 2 involves a large amount of water, absorption and evaporation. It affects at least an entire room of carpet and cushion (pad). Water has wicked up walls less than 24 inches. There is moisture remaining in structural materials and substructure soil.

Class 3 involves the greatest amount of water, absorption and evaporation. Water may have come from overhead. Ceilings, walls, insulation, carpet, cushion and subfloor in virtually the entire area are saturated.

Class 4 relates to specialty drying situations. Wet materials with very low permeance/porosity (e.g., hardwood, plaster, brick, concrete, light weight concrete and stone). Typically, there are deep pockets of saturation, which require very low specific humidity. These types of losses may require longer drying times and special methods.

Best practice is to call a professional to tackle this water situation. The equipment used for the job is industrial and guaranteed to get the job done in the least amount of time!!! Better safe than sorry!!