

Difference of Opinion

By John Sisker

At each and every Homeowners Association Meeting, I cannot help but be reminded of the perspective or difference of the so-called Homeowners Associations I was involved and/or associated with in the past. This was all from the perspective of life in mobile/manufactured home parks or communities.

From what I have observed here in Newport Terrace, I don't think just how lucky others know they are when it comes to our association. At least here, they are free to express their opinions, whether they agree with each other or the current Board or not. At least here they have the freedom to speak up; not so in a mobile home park.

While all sides and opinions may not always prevail in our situation here in Newport Terrace, at least others do have the opportunity to express opposing points of view. It simply comes down to a vote, the democratic process in action.

Life and the situation are entirely different in these mobile home parks. In reality, there are no resident homeowners associations as we now enjoy here, even though if there is one, it is in name only. The reason why is, in a mobile home park, even though we call ourselves residents, from a legal point of view, we are nothing more than tenants, renting a space on someone else's land.

All the rights, decisions, say-so and privileges are the exclusive entitlements of the park or property owner only. The tenants have little rights and no input whatsoever in anything that happens within the park. There are no so-called homeowners associations, where us residents (tenants) can express our opinions. In fact, speaking up is actually the last thing anyone wants to do.

The park owner makes all the decisions in the entire operation of the park, from a maintenance schedule to rent increases. The only real input the residents/tenants have is to pay whatever rent the park owner wants to impose on us. And by current law, rents can be increased every 90-days, if the park owner felt like it, and to any amount they want.

When we moved from Pacific Mobile Home Park in Huntington Beach, in July of 2011, our monthly space rent was \$975, and that was actually the lowest space rent in the entire area. In addition, all utilities were metered and added on to that base rent. Yet, as park owners constantly point out, if you don't like it... move!

This is also why few will ever speak out; basically, they can't. Remember, the park owner in essence pays for nothing in the park; us tenants do, in the form of increasing space rents. Yet, keep in mind, besides the monthly space rent, we had to buy or are buying the mobile/manufactured home itself that sits on this rented lot. In other words, few, if any residents will want to make waves, they simply have too much to lose. If they are perceived as trouble makers by the park owners, then all hell breaks loose in the form of harassment.

Believe me, I've seen this time and again, the park owner, usually in the form of their management company, will start eviction procedures on anyone they want out. They simply look at it as eliminating the troublemakers.

Is this actually legal? It is if no one has the means or money to fight this to the end. The bottom line is, while mobile home owners in California do have the Mobilehome Residency Law to help protect them, there is no enforcement agency behind any of these laws. The state leaves that up to the individual tenant to file a lawsuit against the park owner. We can all see how that will go. As an alternative, this is also why I chose to become so involved in doing what I could to help protect and represent mobile/manufactured home owners everywhere, by being on a number of Boards and Committees to help overcome such injustices.

So, the next time you think our Newport Terrace Board of Directors is not listening to you, at least here, you have the right to express your opinion - without being evicted. Now, getting your point across and/or support for your ideas, there are effective ways to do this, which I better leave for another time.

Yet, for now, at least take some comfort in the fact that there will be no retaliation simply for a difference of opinion.

Sincerely,
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