

The Bid Process

By John Sisker

Ever since Deborah and I officially moved here into Newport Terrace, around 7-months ago, one of the most talked about and controversial subjects we constantly hear about seems to be centered around the selected vendors the association has in place to perform all the required and necessary tasks associated with a complex of this scope and size. In fact, I was personally attending each and every HOA meeting for 6-month even prior to moving in here. That's how determined I was to learn, first-hand, about all there is to know. Do I know it all now? Of course not? No-one does, it's always a learning process. Yet, some of the concerns from others, while naturally with reasons behind them, are not all that different than one will hear about in just about any other homeowners association. Some are obviously opinions, which everyone is welcome to have; some are simply heresy, based not on facts, but on misinformation; and yet, others (unfortunately) are aimed more at seemingly having some type of ax to grind. I have no problem dealing with the facts... it's the speculations and vendettas that seem to surface that presents a problem for all of us. Yet, some of these doubts from others will naturally surface, by simple virtue of the rather high association fees we currently have to pay. They just want to make sure we are all getting our money's worth. That's understandable!

Yet, some of this is not just based on a difference in personalities, but in a genuine belief in what they do, think and say. A good, but maybe too simple of an example in this case, is the bid process. While I am a true supporter of the bid process in order to get the right vendors for each and every project (based on my experience in both the public and private sectors), if something does go wrong along the way, we don't always want to be too quick and simply throw the baby out with the bath water. The timing and facts will present themselves soon enough, when we indeed may have to look elsewhere for select vendors, if in fact, their work in becoming substandard and their prices becoming too high. Likewise, and from my understanding, that's how we got the vendors we now have in place; the time had come to replace the other ones. Yet, let's not just mix up what may now need to be re-negotiated and with some type of internal and select estimates with the same vendors, with thinking that we always need to start from scratch. Let's not just shoot ourselves in the foot, just because others may not always be privy to, understands, or are aware of all the facts involved in these types of internal workings. The need to go beyond fixing the obvious, and in looking for other vendors, in this case, should first become obvious to our related and internal committees. If one is not even on a committee, their credibility to know what's really going on, in my personal opinion, is rather diluted with necessary first-hand information.

This is not to say, that occasionally, select vendors cannot and will not screw-up at times; there are a lot of variables involved in these many projects. This could be from misunderstands, poor communication, an occasional lazy employee, and the list could go on. In a case such as this, we need to make such matters known to the principals involved, so hopefully they will get it fixed as soon as possible. Believe me, there is no such thing as a perfect, or "saint" vendor... yet, the grass is not always greener in someone else's yard. And no, this is not just a case that some may feel others are being led down the brim-rose path, believing everything they are being told by some of these vendors. That's where awareness and education comes into play, and the ability to

ask the right question. Yet, as I said before, everyone is entitled to their opinion. But remember, an alternative without a viable solution, is just a complaint.

Now, don't get me wrong here. I am not taking sides, even though others seem to be selectively choosing sides for me. I am just looking at all the facts and figures, and believe me, after some research on this, in many cases, we are actually getting more than our money worth. Remember, the vendors we have now, originally came about from the bid process. And bidding again will be the norm to complete our siding, roofing and other needed projects.

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