

COOCVE President's Report 03-24

By DONNA CAPOBIANCO, President of COOCVE



I've received several emails from owners who live in large condominiums up north in the summer, asking why it is so confusing to live in CVE. Their other condos have one website, one office manned 9-5 by a property management team that handles everyone's questions, complaints, problems, sales, rentals, etc. Everyone shares the same documents and rules, pays one monthly fee by unit size, attends budget and annual meetings, and elects one board of directors to vote on items where the property manager has no decision authority. Descriptions used include "less complicated", "less confusing", "less stressful" for owners and the Board.

The root cause why CVE is the way it is goes back to how it was built. The developer planned four large Century Village complexes. It was easier and quicker for him to incorporate and build each building separately and sell the percentage of units required before starting another. Worked great for him. Created complex governance and management for us owners. The developer did this in West Palm and CVE before he realized the consequences hundreds of totally separate condominium properties and their respective associations would face.

Swansea is the only area in CVE where both buildings are incorporated as one. Century Village Boca and Pembroke Pines were incorporated by area like Swansea rather than by building, helping them to function a bit more reasonably.

Next month we will explore our complex governance and management. Stay tuned....

COOCVE President's Report 04-24

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CVE has more complex governance and management than most condominium complexes. To help understand where that originates from means looking into a little of our development history.

In the “outside of Florida normal world” of condominium development, all buildings, property, recreation, and services to be built are incorporated under one association. During buildout of the project, the developer is responsible for everything associated with recreation, transportation, roads, landscaping, lake systems, security, cable, all property, units, owner issues, etc. Once the project is completed, the developer turns all of this over to the association who elects its governing board, that in turn takes over total operations and management.

With 300+ unit owners, that association normally hires full-time, on-site, professional day-to-day management so they can govern and still enjoy, as in our wonderful 55+ community, more of their retirement time. All owners pay one monthly association fee (determined by unit size) covering all operating and reserve expenses. As discussed in my February report, the more units under an association, the more opportunity professional management has to plan and negotiate projects and services to maintain a safe living environment and property values. All this allows for business continuity as boards change over time.

In CVE’s case, three different things occurred. First, each time our developer finished one of the 253 separately incorporated associations, he turned it over to that association to hold its own election for its own board of directors who then took over all governance and management of its own association documents, property, units, owner issues, etc. The condominium owners pay a monthly association fee (determined by unit size) to their individual, little association only, sharing in all budgeted operating and reserve expenses required to maintain a safe living environment and maintain or increase property values.

Second, until all condominium construction was finished, the developer was responsible for managing transportation, roads, landscaping, lake systems, security, cable, etc. Once the project was completed, with no single association to

turn it over to, the developer formed and assigned all that responsibility to CVE Master Management Company, Inc. (see Master Management Agreement in your documents). All 8,508 owners pay the same monthly fee to share in that ownership and enjoy all the property and services offered by that corporation.

Third, CVE's developer retained ownership of all recreation property under a "LONG-TERM LEASE" (see in your documents if dated before 2022). Owners were required to pay a monthly fee that included rent to the developer for use of the recreation facilities plus an additional amount to cover all its maintenance and management costs. In 2020 that lease was bought out by CenClub Homeowners Association, Inc. on behalf of all CVE unit owners (see CenClub's documents). All 8,508 owners pay the same monthly fee to share in that ownership and enjoy all the property and services offered by that corporation.

Most of us can deal with paying three fees. So why do we hear "normal" condo complexes outside of Florida are less complicated, confusing, stressful compared to CVE? Next month we will explore why this is and what those who desire more "normal", can do about it.

COOCVE President's Report 05-24

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Why are standard, well run condo complexes less complicated, confusing, stressful compared to CVE? The answers involve documents, management, expectations, and willingness to respect the laws that govern condominium living. Standard condo complexes have one set of up-to-date documents and one board governing all unit owners. Property managers (**PM**), and the board they report to, govern by those docs, and set consistent expectations everyone is to abide by.

Everyone is treated the same as specified in the docs. Normally, standard condos with 300+ units have a PM on site full time that unit owners and board members go to when any problem arises. PM handles most issues, start to finish and is a buffer to help prevent hostility between owners and board members. PM brings to the board, in regularly scheduled, open board meetings, all items to be discussed and voted on, i.e., contract decisions, off-budget spending approvals, etc. Proper notice of meetings and subsequent minutes are posted.

CVE's 253 condos all have different sets of documents, their own boards and management companies. Our 191 garden condos range from 16 to 24 units and our 62 high rises range from 56 to 144 units, limiting the type of property management available to them. We have much inconsistency in the way boards treat owners, presidents treat board members, owners demanding special treatment and a general disregard by all for their documents. When a property or unit owner problem arises, property management may get called and may provide a response. Normally problems and complaints go to the board. Depending on the issue, management contract, quality of PM and how many condos' PM is handling, boards may get assistance from the property manager. Most often boards must handle most of the issues themselves. Unlike expectations in standard condos where the full-time PM handles almost everything and manages according to the documents, CVE's associations often handle issues inconsistently, which makes expectations unclear.

New requirements in engineering surveys, repairs and reserves, insurance demands and pricing, and coming laws changing administration, reporting and communication will all contribute to more work for our small associations and their PM's. How much help the various management companies will provide and at what cost remains to be seen. Given we already hear escalating complaints about lack of timely and correct financial reporting, PM's spread thin, high turnover and lack of customer service call response, it's hard to predict.

Single docs, a single board, size (300+ units) and professional management allow standard condo complexes to take advantage of economies of scale to save money, operate more efficiently, have more open communication, all contributing to a less complicated, confusing, stressful environment.

Although our associations are independent and small, we have some very progressive people in our midst doing some pretty terrific things. that choose to simplify their lives and that of their owners by simply living within the law. Unit owners in those buildings feel the difference. COOCVE is about positive thinking and finding ways to improve our lives in CVE. Getting CIAC certification is one of those ways. COOCVE is in the middle of a project right now that may help many associations move toward simpler, easier, less stressful ways to operate. Take a moment to go to COOCVE.com under Associations and look at the Standard Document Package presentation for the scoop on that project.