

Take It To the Board: Mapping the Terrain of Landscaping for Community Associations with Brian Steele, Director of Operations, East Coast Facilities

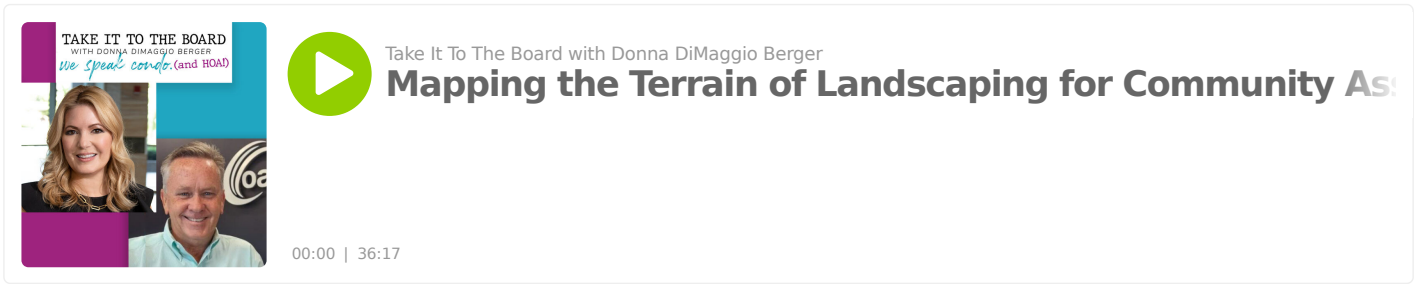
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By: Donna DiMaggio Berger

Can you imagine getting 99 people to agree on the same sofa? That is similar to the tasks that lie before **Brian Steele**, Director of Operations at East Coast Facilities. Among other services, the company provides landscaping to residential communities throughout Florida. In this episode of Take It To the Board, host **Donna DiMaggio Berger** and Brian discuss how landscaping for community associations is an extension of the real estate asset and how emotions can run high when trying to accommodate different tastes. According to Brian, landscaping choices don't only boil down to what people want to see, but also what plant material is most appropriate for the space and what the association's budget can accommodate. Brian also discusses his travels and travails, as well as the curious case of the missing avocados.

Highlights include:

- Why people are so emotional about landscaping choices.
- The effectiveness of landscaping committees.
- How the recent Florida law that makes it easier for a homeowner to remove a tree that "poses an unacceptable risk" might create confusion about what owners and boards can do when they want to remove a tree.
- The kinds of trees and plant materials that pose problems for sidewalks, driveways, homes, and pools due to invasive roots or other growth issues.
- What is xeriscaping and why does Florida need a law to protect it?
- Is there any such thing as maintenance-free landscaping?
- How to mitigate against the deterioration caused by abundant plant material and pools when they are located on top of concrete parking structures.
- What an association can typically save when asking for a price on post-storm debris removal in advance.
- What is "hatracking" and is it okay?
- The possibility of getting insurance coverage to replace damaged plant material.
- The legal importance of ensuring that hedges are installed and maintained in accordance with all state and local requirements.
- How to get the most "bang for the buck" when it comes to landscaping.



About Take It to the Board

Think you know what community association life is all about? Think again. Residents must obey the rules, directors must follow the law, and managers must keep it all running smoothly. Take It To the Board explores the reality of life in a condominium, cooperative or homeowners' association, what's really involved in serving on its board, and how to maintain that ever-so-delicate balance of being legally compliant and community spirited. Leading community association attorney **Donna DiMaggio Berger** acknowledges the balancing act without losing her sense of humor as she talks with a variety of association leaders, experts, and vendors about the challenges and benefits of the community association lifestyle.

If you've got a question, *Take It To the Board with Donna DiMaggio Berger - We Speak Condo & HOA!*

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