

Toxic Co-op / Condo Boards: Why Your Professionals May Want to Drop You

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In today's troubled economy, it borders on blasphemy to even suggest that a property manager, attorney, CPA or other professional serving a co-op board or condo association may consider letting you go. Speaking as an attorney, most of us are very fortunate to work with great communities who appreciate what we do, follow the advice they pay us to give, pay their bills and treat our employees with courtesy and respect.

However, there is always a flip side. How many condominium or co-op professionals, which also include, insurance agents, engineers and more, have that particular building or complex that makes life a little harder for everyone involved?

Are you one of them? Well, here a few red flags:

- Boards with internal strife who send conflicting messages and/or expect their professional advisors to take sides;
- Boards constantly under recall assault;
- Boards that are being run by one person alone despite having a full board in place;
- Boards that pay for opinions only to discard same and embark on dangerous courses of action;
- Boards that admit that they know they are doing wrong but just don't care;
- Boards who couldn't care less about changes in the law or educational offerings;
- Boards whose members communicate with your staff in a disparaging or demeaning manner;
- Boards who have sued many professional advisors in the past; and,
- Boards who have failed to pay many professional advisors in the past.

How many times do you read about a community doing everything wrong where and wonder if the managing agent, attorney or other professional advisor who is listed as servicing that community has endorsed or assisted in the bad behavior?

Just as communities can often tell when a professional advisor is not a good fit and they move on, professional advisors would be wise to do the same. If your co-op or condo board exhibits some of the red flags above, it can create a difficult situation for all involved. Hopefully, your professional will try every tool in his or her arsenal to educate a board and hopefully head off potential problems. However, for some incorrigible clients that won't be persuaded by reason or education, responsible professionals will limit themselves at what point that troublesome client become a potential liability that is too much to bear.