

What it Takes to be Successful on an HOA Board of Directors

The responsibility of a Homeowners Association (HOA) Board of Directors should not be understated. The role requires a fair amount of work and can be a thankless job. There are also legal and ethical standards that you must comply with in making decisions on behalf of the community while serving on the Board. The best way to quickly learn how the Dulles Farms Community Association works is to read your covenants, bylaws, and other governing documents. You'll quickly find out the things you're required to do, and where you have some flexibility. It's also easier to communicate with neighbors when you know the facts.

One of the many questions that Board members receive on a regular basis is "what are the common traits of a successful Board member?" After thinking about it, the following characteristics are key to serving the Dulles Farms community well.

- 1) **Experience.** Working on an existing Dulles Farms Committee, a similar Community Association or comparable experience in a working capacity. Some of the current Board members served as a Board member for another HOA or actively served on a Committee within Dulles Farms prior to their term on the Board. Serving on a Committee allows the individual to provide an immediate impact and obtain a first-hand account of how the community operates from a governance perspective.
- 2) **Time.** Although it is true that Board meetings are held only once a month, there are many time commitments outside of that 3-hour monthly Board meeting. Each Board member serves as a liaison to a committee, which meets at least once a month. This is in addition to reviewing all the Board packet materials, monthly/annual financial statements, regular e-mails during the week and phone calls with management, attending community events, and other duties as assigned. Estimated commitment of 10 hours/month.
- 3) **Desire to See Dulles Farms Thrive.** There is an old adage that states "Leave this world a little better than how you found it." It goes without saying that the primary reason a Board member will volunteer his or her time to the Dulles Farms Community is to see the Community grow and thrive. A Board position is unpaid, demands valuable time, and involves tough decision-making. The desire to improve our beloved community is paramount when considering becoming a member of the Board.
- 4) **Ability to Have an Unbiased Perspective.** The end goal for any decision that the Board makes is for the benefit of the entire Dulles Farms Community. Personal agendas and any preconceived notions must be left at the door. Board members must take the time to review and understand the Dulles Farms governing documents, which must be adhered to per the Code of Virginia. Since community management is a regulated industry, there are numerous laws and covenants to follow that make it difficult to pursue personal agendas. Community benefits, improvement and enhancement are always prioritized!
- 5) **Transparency in Communication.** Transparency is critical to maintaining a positive relationship between the board and the community. Unless required by law (such as communicating about employee performance), the community should be informed about issues, opportunities, ideas, financial results, etc. As a Board Member, you'll most likely encounter challenges with neighbors, contractors, and sometimes even other Board Members due to reasonable (sometimes unreasonable) differences of opinion.

Even though you're a volunteer, remember that agreeing to serve on the Board means that you take on some level of accountability for the management of the Dulles Farms Community and its assets. When you make decisions you must make them in the best interest of the association, even if those decisions are not in your personal best interest. It's important that you take your time to work through issues and remember that no party is ever 100% satisfied with a compromise.

As a member of the Board, you are providing the community a great service by volunteering. **The Dulles Farms Board of Directors will have 3 open seats for board positions this Fall. Take the time now to consider running for one of these impactful positions in our community.** This is a great way to help.