

How has HVLA gotten to be in such a Mess?

A comparison of HOA “Best Practices” with historical HVLA Practices tells the story --

1. HOA Best Practices -- Boards make policy, review results and update policy as needed.

HVLA Practice -- Boards have frequently not set policies; have gotten directly (overly) involved in day-to-day Association decisions. By-Laws have not been fully updated since 1993.

Consequence: (1) Confusion abounds at all levels in the Assn.

2. HOA Standard -- Boards hire GM’s to carrying out policies. The GM supervises Dept. Managers in developing and implementing procedures to support policies. Managers are held accountable for results in-line with policies.

HVLA Practice -- Dirs. have often dealt directly with Dept. Managers and vendors -- undermining manager’s and GM’s role/authority. Several past managers have taken actions that were unauthorized, outside their role and/or, at times, corrupt.

Consequences: (1) A hodge-podge of actions that do not follow any organizational policy/plan; (2) Organizational confusion and excessive pressure GM’s to take corrective action -- or, to conform to the status quo; (3) Many GM’s “asked to leave”; (4) Assn. destabilized; and, (5) Line-staff improperly supervised, and mis/under-perform.

3. HOA Standard -- Being a Director in an HOA of 2,400 homes (and nearly 900 undeveloped lots) with 6,500 people and an annual budget of over \$5 Million is a “job” that demands skill-sets of significant depth and breadth. There is a level of complexity that goes beyond the skill-sets possessed by most people: complex fiscal issues, personnel management, community-relations, conflict management, accuracy and diplomacy in communication, knowledge of organizational-dynamics, conducting effective meetings, active-listening- skills and knowledge of local-State-Federal regulations.

HVLA Practice -- Elections, directorships and even manager-hiring and retention have become “popularity contests” rather than serious efforts to determine those candidates with the strongest, most effective skill-sets for the “position.” Necessary skill-sets for Director/Manager positions have NEVER been defined. They have become ill-defined in terms of vague platitudes, e.g., honest, hard-working, dedicated, cares about the Community, etc. HVLA has contributed further to this problem by not providing ongoing education or in-service training for Dirs., Committee members or Managers.

Consequences: (1) Dirs. with minimal skills applicable to Assn. needs; (2) Dirs. become overwhelmed; (3) Dirs. with more advanced skill-sets become frustrated; (4) Board decision-

making process gets bogged-down; (5) Conflicts develop between/among Dirs., Managers; (6) Basic Board/Staff functions become riddled with miscommunications; (6) Dirs. leave.

4. HOA Standard -- Being a Director means setting aside personal, group interests and focusing on “member/community” interests/needs. This includes an ability to focus on “the issues” and avoid emphasis on specific people/groups. It also demands much-above-average active-listening-skills, i.e., the ability to listen-for-meaning and to not interpret criticism as a “personal” affront.

HVLA Practice -- Several Directors have taken their Dir. role as one wherein they could pursue “personal” goals (or special-interest-group-goals); and/or have handled criticism in a highly personal manner, i.e., become angry, hostile.

Consequences: (1) Severe skew between care of Golf Ops. vs. other amenities; (2) Many members disillusioned with and avoided governance process; (3) “Bully Culture” developed.

5. HOA Standard -- Boards develop policies representative of the Association-As-A-Whole; and, maintain awareness of the current/ongoing needs of the Assn.-As-A-Whole.

HVLA Practice -- A small sub-group of members (from the late 1990’s until present) has controlled the Board. They have fraudulently manipulated elections to achieve this. This group has viewed themselves as more important than other Assn. members in terms of length-of-ownership, level of contribution to revenue and activeness in events. Consequently, they have come to believe they are entitled to more say over Assn. affairs, e.g., amenity funding.

Consequence: (1) Assn. funding of Golf Ops. losses in excess of \$600K per year and defunding of maintenance of other amenities; (2) Drastic under-funding of reserves; (3) Drastic build-up of delinquent accounts (unpaid dues).

6. HOA Standard -- Boards should conduct Strategic Planning: Developing Assn. Vision and Mission Statements, and Plans for 1, 5 and 10 years into the future.

HVLA Practice -- HVLA has NEVER done Strategic Planning. Two recent top leaders disparaged the concept/process by characterizing it as a paper-exercise and as unattainable because of one failed attempt to engage outside expertise to develop it. One Dir. has recently been assigned this task.

7. HOA Standard -- Associations should strive to engage a majority of its members in the processes of governance: Serving, voting, welcoming/educating new members, articulating Community needs, i.e., “Community Engagement.”

HVLA Practice -- HVLA only once briefly attempted a “Welcome Committee.” Member surveys have gotten low response rates and are deemed, “non-binding.” A firm was hired in Jan. 2017

to develop a new, more informative, user-friendly and interactive website, i.e., where member surveys could be done more routinely. Implementation has languished.

Consequences: (1) Increasingly fewer members seek governance roles; (2) Those representing small-interest-groups find it easier to enter governance and stay there; (3) Voting has deteriorated to an average of 30% in elections and less than 20% in community-surveys.

8. HOA Standard -- Hire advanced-skill “professionals” to handle complex Assn. functions, so that Dirs. and Committees can have readily-available access to the best information, guidance and recommendations on a wide array of needs. Dirs. and Committees are then more “free” to focus on deciding which solutions best match Assn. needs. Then, also, Dirs. are more “free” to focus just on assessing Community-Needs and evaluating related management performance.

HVLA Practice -- HVLA has steadfastly refused to seriously consider a large HOA management firm or a GM with more advanced training/certification, e.g., CAI “Large Scale Manager”, or “Specialty Certificate” – [more info](#).

Consequences: (1) Dirs. continue to get overwhelmed, engage in internal organizational conflict and/or resign; (2) Member opinions and opinion-groups (social media) have expanded and proliferate, further polarizing the Community; (3) Many Assn. needs continue to go under-addressed or unaddressed.