

Do You Know the Difference Between a Neighborhood Association and a Homeowners Association?

A neighborhood association is a voluntary organization of residents who work together to improve and maintain the quality of life in its neighborhood. Associations can form out of concern over a particular issue or as a means of enhancing a sense of community.

Features of A Neighborhood Association:

- Membership is open to all residents and property owners in the neighborhood, but participation is optional; boundaries are established by the association.
- Dues are voluntary
- There is no legal authority to enact or enforce maintenance or design requirements beyond those established by County ordinances.
- To ensure a visibly democratic process, the organization establishes formal or informal bylaws to provide for at least one general membership meeting per year and to require an annual election of officers.

Homeowners associations, unlike neighborhood associations, are formal legal entities created to maintain common areas and enforce private deed restrictions. Most condominium and town house developments and some newer single-family subdivisions have homeowners associations which are usually created when the development is built.

Features of a Homeowners Association:

- Membership is mandatory for all property owners within the boundaries of the development.
- Members are usually charged mandatory dues.
- Homeowners associations have the legal authority to enact and enforce maintenance and design standards in addition to those established by County ordinance.
- Homeowners associations are corporations with formal bylaws, which have a governing board that is elected annually.