

Ballots and Bills

Years ago, when I first ran for a seat on the PIPOA Board, I noticed that the map given out in the office and published on the PIPOA website included subdivisions that we were told were not part of the PIPOA.

Two and a half years ago, it was clearly obvious that the PIPOA had lost all control of their membership list and wasn't sure who their members were. Hundreds of ballots and bills were returned because they had no accurate contact information.

An effort was made with volunteers to remedy this. Their efforts were an improvement, but they relied on faulty and fragmented information in the outdated and poorly managed TOPS software program and some county records. We were told that we had 5,408 lots owned by PIPOA members and that the properties owned by developers, e.g. the land around the ski basin, were not part of the PIPOA. And yet, the map clearly showed otherwise.

Then we discovered that a sea wall and other properties were within the PIPOA. I was "sworn to secrecy" and ordered to keep quiet about this. I didn't. Instead, I pleaded for a resolution to this. How can we do anything - if we first don't know who our members are? Even our attorney recommended hiring a title company to settle the issues on the questionable properties. But some thought that was too expensive. I argued it was our duty.

Then staff quit and documents went missing in the office. A new director was hired. When John Weis came on board, he discovered an entry in a set of covenants that referred to over *8,000 properties*! This discovery got no traction from some on the Board and no action was taken.

I wanted to bring this up to discuss at board meetings, but the topic wasn't on the agenda. When I tried to put it on the agenda it was removed. I tried to put it under VP comments and that was removed too.

However, several of us did not give up and continued to ask, where did 3,038 properties go? Within this same time frame, the push was on to upgrade our management software and it was clearly evident that there was a huge need for data cleanup. A very competent person was hired for the job and we soon learned that approximately 8,446 lots had been identified as being within the association. That meant that some 36% of our Members were within the PIPOA, but were not being billed for CAM fees.

In December of 2019, when this issue again became a hot topic, I noticed that subdivisions were being removed from the website only to be relisted when I questioned this discovery. Later in June, these subdivisions were removed again. My questions about what was going on were met with shrugs and silence as seen on the film of the June board meeting. Are we to believe that if these subdivisions are taken off the website that everyone will simply forget about them?

As late as February 27th records show the Board debating whether these ELITE members should get their ballots. Our attorney clearly stated that ALL members should get both ballots and bills.

Does it make any sense to complain about the low voting turnout when it is clear that approximately 40% of our Members were not receiving ballots?

Does it astound anyone else that:

- The question of whether All Members should receive ballots and bills would ever be up for debate?
- Or that this wrangling was still going on *17 days* before the election and annual meeting, when the ballots and bills were supposed to go out in early January?
- Or that the ELITE were sent ballots but not bills? How is that fair?

Months ago, I was asked by the Board president to outline a plan to restore the PIPOA to a well-run organization: I called it *Island Reboot*. It included a full review and verification of who our members are and where they are located. I argued that our members are the very foundation of the PIPOA and its whole purpose for existence. At a bare minimum, we have to know that information. How can you serve this community if you don't know that?

I then laid out a plan to listen to our Members, focus on our primary duties, and fix the fining issues, ACC issues, the bulkhead issues, and many more problems. I received no reply. No action was ever taken on any aspect of that plan. Again, I was advised to, "float along."

Today, we know who many of our members are, but uncertainty still exists on many properties. Title companies have not been utilized or not utilized enough. Our map is still wrong. And questions abound.

Bottomline: at a minimum, much work needs to be done to rebuild our Membership list so that ALL Members contribute to CAM fees and everyone's right to vote is honored.

In light of Independence Day: I once did a massive research project for a book, wherein I held original letters written by Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington in my gloved hands. Their words and those from farmers' journals taught me a deeper meaning of freedom and why they fought so hard for democracy. This is America. Countless men and women from those times up until today have and continue to give their lives for this precious freedom.

Cannot the PIPOA at least get the Membership list fixed?

It is no surprise to anyone, that there is a rift in this Board. These honest disclosures show that this divide is not over trivial personality conflicts, but rather a battle to protect your rights, operate a professional well-run organization for your benefit, and to use the funds you provide

for the items we've been mandated to do under our governing documents... that is our duty to you our Members.

Your neighbor. Your friend. Your advocate,
Marta Sprout