

CONDO HOA

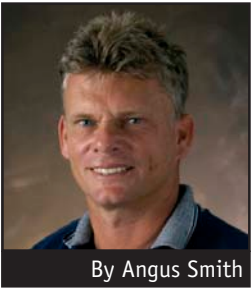
MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

In this issue...

- » Start small when planning a fitness center
- » Do your vendors analyze the details?
- » Newly revised Davis-Stirling CID Act: What do the changes mean?
- » Construction and communication for community associations



CALIFORNIA EDITION



By Angus Smith

Vendor selection can be a daunting challenge, even for the more seasoned and experienced board member. Poor selection can create long term problems and adversity for your community. Experienced vendors look for and analyze the cause of the problem, rather than merely addressing the symptom of the problem's source. Small details such as appropriate flashing installation or proper pitch away from the building envelope can easily add 15 years to the life

DO YOUR VENDORS ANALYZE THE DETAILS?

expectancy of a balcony for example. These small, conscientious details are applicable in every service and your association should look carefully to find a vendor who has the knowledge and integrity to properly handle all the details, big or small.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A CONTRACTOR

These insurance requirements are necessary for any contractor being considered for work at your association:

- » Appropriate General Liability Insurance
- » Appropriate Workers Compensation Insurance
- » Appropriate Vehicle Insurance

The contractor might be required to have a city license. The California Contractors State License Board website can be accessed for valuable contractor information and history. Violations, bonding history, workers compensation history and company ownership information are all available. This information can be accessed quickly at www.cslb.gov. It should be part of the process to determine suitability of contractor for your association.

The first contact from a contracting company will generally be made by a sales representative. This representative may or may not be a good example of the company's culture. Remember, they are selling and not executing the job. The most important people for you to consider are members of the production crew. Gather as much information on the company, its character and its history of performing a job on time and within the established budget. Contractor employees are going to be on your property, perhaps inside your residents' homes. Should you be concerned about that? Of course you should. Determine these factors:

- » Are they experienced and capable? Can they get the job done professionally, efficiently and make the desired improvement to your association?
- » Are they identifiable and wear company uniforms?
- » Do they have professional work vehicles and enough of them? Are the vehicles identifiable with company and license information? Can they transport materials/products safely?
 - » Does the company have long-term employees? This would be an indication that the company respects and treats its workers fairly.
 - » Is the employer paying them appropriately? If not, they may be tempted to take something that does not belong to them.
 - » Do they have modern, professional equipment? This will provide better quality and efficiency for the project and will be the mark of a high-end company who cares about their product.
 - » Do they have OSHA-approved equipment - scaffolding, roof harnesses, etc.?
 - » Can you look at a job they did three or even 10 years ago? How does it look now?

Photo below: Custom made beam to wall flashing lapped with bituthene at vulnerable water intrusion location in condo complex



Photo below: Careful attention to proper lapping of building papers and flashing at window replacement project



This may sound time consuming but it will surely be time well spent and benefit your community in the short and long term.

DO YOU NEED A CONSULTANT?

Some associations prefer the use of consultants; some don't. Consultants are generally hired to oversee the contractor's work, integrity and to prepare the scope of work to be performed. Roofing projects may be a suitable case for their use, as roof tops are difficult locations for association leadership to oversee - physically and technically. Due diligence is necessary for consultant selection also. Their responsibility may be to oversee another entity's integrity. Make sure *their* integrity is appropriate as well, prior to selection. Make sure they have someone on board who has the experience and expertise to be an asset to your project. They generally provide spread sheet job analysis, which can be useful information for future budgeting. However, most capable contractors can also provide this or any maintenance information that will be of value to the association. The consulting entity will be another layer of management that ultimately falls under the board's oversight. If your preferred contractor has a proven track record of capability and integrity, the additional layer of a consultant may not be necessary.

BE AWARE OF BUILDING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Recent years have seen many local cities in Orange County pursue additional revenue from their building departments. Some jobs that previously did not require building permits require them now. Small repair jobs may need architectural drawings and engineering calculations prior to permit issuance. The association should be aware of this. Experienced vendors can provide counsel to the board on permitting requirements. Adherence to rules and regulations will keep your association on high ground and hopefully mitigate litigation potential. Your diligent selection of a capable support team will minimize the pain and expense of this process.



Building permit job card, issued with the building permit, should be visible at job site

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

Another important player in the community association's business operations is the community association manager. Go beyond the colorful brochure, website and friendly salesperson. Your manager will police your association, their fingers will be on your finances and they will be the first line of communication with community residents and vendors. A lot of responsibility and duty fall on their shoulders, often more than one person can carry. Be sure the right company and the right manager is selected for the particular needs of your association. The board should not make assumptions on what services the association management company will provide. Everything should be listed clearly in writing and agreed upon by both parties. It's often advisable to have your attorney review the contract to be sure it is written in the interest of the association.

Associations that have long term relationships with capable vendors will have a stronger root system and bear more fruit than associations who are changing vendors on a regular basis. This may take time to establish but it is possible and would be a worthy goal for your community.

Angus Smith is the owner of Angus Smith Construction. For more information, please call 714-538-1191, e-mail us at angussmith@cox.net or visit us on the web at www.angussmithconstruction.com.



Interior joist repair/replacement at cantilevered balcony reconstruction - city building permits required for this project



Metal pan flashing installation at subfloor prior to new sliding glass door replacement

Raising the Bar

Angus Smith Construction is a “can do company” with the integrity and expertise to get your job done to the highest possible standards of quality and efficiency. Partnered with

long-term employees who share these same values and commitment, Angus Smith Construction is the builder of choice for reconstruction and repair for Homeowner Associations.

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