

## The Manager's Attendance at Membership Committee Meetings

### **Issue:**

The question has arisen as to whether the General Manager should sit on the Membership Committee and attend its monthly meetings. He currently does not do so. The following *position statement* should be helpful in understanding the reason why he once sat on the committee but no longer does, what the industry standard is for manager participation on the membership committee, what previous Beach Club membership chairs think is appropriate and what the manager believes is the best decision for the Board, Membership Committee and general membership.

### **Issues:**

#### **1. The History of the Manager's Involvement with the Membership Committee:**

For most of the Beach Club's history the manager was not a member of the Membership Committee. However, the former manager was not only a past president of the club but also an equity member. It is assumed that these two facts influenced the Board's decision at the time to include the manager on the Membership Committee.

When the current manager was hired, the then existing practice of having the manager participate on the Membership Committee was continued since, after five years, it was considered "the norm." Several years later, during a period of turmoil and controversy in the membership process, the Board decided that the manager should not sit on the membership committee because of the sensitive nature of those deliberations. This has been the practice for over a decade.

The manager's comments on various applicants, however, are solicited by the Board and the Membership Chairman at the monthly Board meetings during the normal review of candidates in process.

#### **2. The Industry Norm:**

Typically the manager does not sit on the Membership Committee. This is true throughout the country as well as here in Southern California at the Bel Air Bay Club, The Jonathan Club, The Brentwood Country Club, The Los Angeles Country Club, The Wilshire Country Club and most other clubs in the region.

This is accepted practice because the manager is not an equity member of the club he administers. The admission process is about social compatibility *amongst members* and not amongst staff and the sensitivity of the issues discussed is not pertinent to and can even compromise the execution of the manager's operational responsibilities.

#### **3. The Position of the Membership Chairmen:**

The most recent Membership Committee Chairmen are in agreement that the manager should not sit on the Membership Committee. All believe that the monthly Board meeting and private conversations with the chairman are both appropriate and sufficient forum for the manager's comments, if in fact he has any comments to make on particular candidates being processed by the committee.

#### **4. The Position of the Current Manager:**

The current manager feels that the membership process is a confidential membership responsibility, that the deliberations of the committee should be done in private and that neither the manager nor his management team should participate in the preliminary closed door deliberations of the Membership Committee. The manager should be available to the Chairman for the confidential discussion of any and all matters regarding membership candidates or the membership process and the manager's thoughts, observations or feelings on a particular candidate can be aired with those of the other Board members at the monthly Board meeting or in private conversation. Sitting on the Committee would add nothing materially to the process currently in place.

**Conclusion:**

The current membership process is thorough, fair, thoughtful and remarkably successful. There are no systemic problems that the manager has observed or is aware of in the process. The manager and "non-Membership Committee Directors" have an opportunity to comment on candidates each month at the regularly scheduled Board meeting. There would not appear to be any compelling reason to include the manager in the Committee's monthly meetings nor to change the composition of the Membership Committee as currently configured nor to alter the procedure that has been in place for over a decade.