

## **Attendance Policy Information from the Provincial Council**

The Statute that most people have been asking about is the one on attendance. So, we thought we'd help with a few guidelines on how this should be handled.

First, the Local Council needs to set the policy and make sure all the members of the community have been informed of the policy. This should probably be done as a letter from the council to the community that does get mailed out to every member on the roster. That way, if someone is gone for a meeting, they can't claim that they didn't hear about it. The letter should indicate when the policy takes effect i.e. starting as of January 2005. This is an important first step so everyone knows what the policy is and has a chance to put it into practice and we're not dismissing people for not meeting expectations that were not clearly communicated. It may mean we take a bit longer to dismiss any folks with absentee problems but it is the most charitable way to approach it.

Most communities which already have a policy usually say that a member is not allowed more than three absences per 12 month period but each council should decide for itself what is considered reasonable.

Once everyone has been notified of the policy and it takes effect, you start from that date in tracking any absentee problems. Don't count absences prior to notice of the policy set by the council, again simply by way of being fair and charitable to the members of the community in regards to what the attendance expectations are. If there is someone who then continues to miss meetings, then once they have hit the limit allowed in the policy, the council should take the next step.

It should start with contacting the person for an explanation of why they have missed these meetings. There might be a good reason for the three absences (using the policy example above) which the council is willing to allow. The basic guideline should be whether the reason for any particular absence is something the person has no control over (child getting married, temporary illness, required to work that day, relatives chose that weekend to visit from 1000 miles away) or something the person DID have some control over and chose the other activity (going to a Knights of Columbus cook-off, attending a baseball game, whatever). If the pattern looks to be more along the lines of missing meetings for things which the person has some say over, then again, the council should encourage the person to return to community life. Give the person one or two more months to appear and begin to regularly attend and if still not showing, then contact the Provincial Council with a description of efforts made to call the person back into community and that the Local Council has decided to dismiss the person from the order. Then send the person a letter explaining the dismissal.

Always, this process should be handled with charity and we should remember the closing words of our Rule: "See that the bounds of common sense are not exceeded, however, for common sense is the guide of the virtues".

Provincial Council:

Pascal Alfano

Gerald Alford

Elizabeth Korves

Nancy Thompson

Amelia Wilken