

CTC PRESIDENT RESIGNS

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COMMONWEALTH TERRACE COOPERATIVE

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The Members of Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative

Dear CTC Members:

This is my resignation letter from my position as President of the Board of Directors of Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative. I want to share with all members of the community the reasons for my decision and my observations about the state of CTC.

First, let me talk about timing. Some people will say I am resigning today because the "Board of Directors" has published and sent me a letter calling for a vote of no confidence in my leadership. That is not the reason for my decision. I waited until today to make sure that I sent a new notice of a Special Meeting of Shareholders to all members of the community in accordance with our Bylaws. Previously, I sent a notice for a Special Meeting in response to a petition from members to the community. Some Board Members objected to the notice as not giving them enough time. They threatened to bring an expensive legal proceeding against CTC. They also raised concern that the meeting room was not big enough for the meeting. Although I have wanted to end my duties on the CTC Executive Committee for some time, I wanted to make sure that the members had an opportunity for their voices to be heard at a Special Meeting before I left office. I can only hope that no actions are taken by the remaining people seeking to lead CTC to prevent that meeting from taking place.

This has not been an easy decision for me to make. Last year, I served on the Board of CTC and was on the Executive Committee as the Secretary. I loved my service on the Board and felt we accomplished a lot for CTC. When I joined the Board, we were in a period of crisis. We needed outside management to help us get the office and staff in order and to satisfy the University that we could perform under our Management Contract. If something was not done, the University might end the Management Contract. During my year on the Board, we made some major accomplishments that included:

- Hiring a new Manager and hiring and training a complete turnover in office staff.
- Changing our occupancy rules to expand the opportunities for residency and filling a large number of vacancies. If CTC had not filled these vacancies, we all would have faced steep increases in our rents.
- Switching from outside management to self-governance with a Community Manager, Eduardo Christ, that the Board felt was carrying out all of the goals we set for him.

When this year's elections came about, we lost a lot of good Board Members. Some people were moving. Many people just had too many demands on their time. There was very little carry-over from last year's Board to this year's Board. With the change in how people get compensated for volunteering, many people did not want to take the time needed to participate on the Board. In some Wards no one wanted to be on the Board.

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I came to this country to pursue a Master's Degree in Basic Science with a Certificate in Prosthetic Dentistry. My work and educational schedule is very demanding. I did not want to serve in an executive position. I was persuaded to take the office of President in large part because no one else wanted to do it. I felt I owed CTC something for the opportunities I had enjoyed as a single person who was able to live here. I wanted to see the momentum we had with our Board last year go forward to accomplish the projects we had started and to set new goals. Unfortunately, things did not work out the way I had hoped.

Last year's Board had directed the General Manager to move from handling crisis and problems to start implementing and enforcing the rules and policies that used to be in place at CTC. These policies included existing policies (that had not been enforced when we were disorganized) like collecting utilities' costs for air conditioners and parking fee for additional cars. New rules we asked the General Manager to enforce included keeping track of participation and giving warnings for members that were not earning their membership rent discount. The new Board prevented management from carrying forward these goals.

The new Board had some members that did not trust or carry forward the actions done by the Board the year before and did not trust Management. Because many Board Members did not have experience or confidence in their roles, one or two Board Members with more education, and a better grasp of English than other Board Members, were able to take control of many Board meetings. The office was not able to enforce policies. When the General Manager asked the Board for direction on how our rules on parking and other policies should be enforced, the Board never responded.

The atmosphere on the Board has been dysfunctional. When people disagree, they are often met with personal attacks. I have been attacked as being part of a "Spanish mob." I do not speak English as a first language. I do not have a law degree. When people who are not comfortable with English are attacked for their opinions, it is easy to sit back and say nothing. Simple Board actions can take months to accomplish. The Board in prior years put together our policy book. The University asked us to get this distributed to all members. Last year, we got it in a digital format. When this year's Board was asked to approve the policies, the Board would not approve the policies until the Manager could "prove" there were minutes to pass the policies in the past. This type of distrust can only lead good people, like our current General Manager and staff, to seek employment opportunities some where else where they can do their jobs.

As President of the Board, I do not have a vote. I found Board meetings very frustrating. I did not think this Board was operating with efficiency or a spirit of cooperation. I felt one or two people were monopolizing Board meetings and were very intimidating.

I have wanted to resign from my position on the Executive Committee and the Board for several weeks. I shared my frustration with the current Board, and the lack of good leadership at CTC, with fellow members of the Executive Committee, the General Manager, and the University Housing Office. Many people, including members of the community who wanted to hold a Special Meeting, urged me to stay on so that the members could have an open meeting to discuss this subject. There are some people on the Board who may take this action very personally. Some people may really want to fight for their Board positions. There have been lots of private meetings among a few Board Members, or on the Ward level, taking place without proper notice, without quorum, or without full Board or Ward participation and other political maneuverings that are not in the spirit of a community of neighbors trying to work for the good of CTC.

I can only tell my fellow members and neighbors that I tried to do my best for CTC. I am very proud of the accomplishments we achieved last year. My greatest regret is that those accomplishments may be lost in the days and weeks ahead if we cannot find ways to work together with the University, our management staff, and each other as a community.

Respectfully,

ALEJANDRO KOVACS

P.S. If you want to see for yourself what Board meetings have been like for the past few months, go to the CTC web page for the meeting minutes. Do not believe what you hear from me or anyone else. Read the minutes of the last few meetings and decide for yourself if the CTC Board is running your Cooperative the way you want it to be run.