IS THERE CORRUPTION AT POMONA PARK CONDOS? Part 1

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter

HOA's (Home Owners Associations) can have their advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that when there is a problem with the managing agency, you have an ally to help you deal with it. The disadvantage is that when the board stops working for the benefit of the owners. Many people, myself included, stay away from complexes with them because we want to be able to do what we want with our homes in the way of decorating, painting and anything else we want to do to our property and not have to conform to someone else's rules or ideas.

This story is one about the HOA at Pomona Park and how the board has abandoned its responsibility to the homeowners by disregarding their expressed wishes on a particular project and other issues that have arisen according to two of the homeowners Michelle Rodriguez and Tim Adler who are leading the crusade to hold the board accountable for their actions.

What's going on? You say you have some problems at your complex?

Rodriguez spoke first. "We both reside at Pomona Park condominium complex. Timmy's been living there since 1997. I have been living there since 2004.

What's the problems?

Adler said, "Well, it's more or less what's happening is the, the board of managers is pretty much taking into their own that forget the community it's what we want it's what we want to do and this all started mainly because of a project that was, set forth by the board of managers and the management company for Service residential so what we're looking at is when we were at the annual meeting, we had asked questions when they first presented this project. People had asked, why do we have to tear up the sidewalks? They've been here since the 70s. There's really nothing wrong with them. Can't we just fix what needs to be, repaired what needs to be done and coat them with something? And of course, they said no, we can't do that. We, we'd rather put the pavers in."

He said that the board's response was that they have good recommendations on pavers and with that being said, people were kind of reluctant and said, well, how much is this going to cost us? They said, well, of course, there would be an assessment, and everyone said, well, we don't want to be assessed.

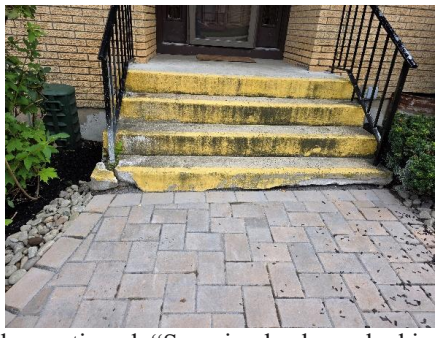
"Things kind of got lost in translation somewhere with emails and stuff and eventually they said, oh, we're going to do it anyway, especially after Michelle was good enough to stick up for the community and go get petition signed out of 230 units, 166 people said no to the pavers. That was more than what they needed. They said no." Adler explained.

"They turned around and pretty much told the community, you know what? We don't care what you say. We're going to do it. They just started it as soon as they could. They've been nothing but, very vindictively, their, their behavior is very vindictive, and the way they're behaving, It, it's just they're not, they're not looking out in the best interest of the community. I mean, if you were to do a walk through with me with a camera." Adler added.

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"I mean, if you want to talk about increasing your property value, people say when they drive down into the development, they don't see the sidewalks until you actually walk on them, but the things that they do see are the things they want to see addressed and they haven't been." Adler stated.

Rodriguez chimed in, "The pavers look horrible. They're not even the company… Let me just, I'm going to go back to May of 2025 for a minute. That was the first meeting about the sidewalks. It was on a Saturday morning and the only contractor that was there was our landscaping company Curtis's, which everybody hates, but for some reason the board of managers and Ellen Brown from First Service Residential, they love them. They do a horrible job every time and they always keep winning the bids on every special project. When I saw that Curtis's was the only contractor there, now I was on the board. There's 2 boards. There's the board of managers and then there's the board that runs the clubhouse and Paul they're called the Community Facility Corporation CFC. I just recently resigned last Thursday because of what's going on, they, because they have wives on one board, the husbands are on the other board, which is total nepotism, and it's a total conflict of interest."



She continued, "So going back, we had just finished a retaining wall project, and you have to bid it out properly. But anytime we ask contractors to come and speak to us. That was a $200,000 project. So, they would come running. So, this is almost a $700,000 project, you're telling me no other.

Contractors were willing to come and speak to the community. I knew she was lying. So then if they're going to switch to concrete pavers. They still have to get three estimates on the at least 3 estimates on the concrete and 3 estimates on the pavers."

Rodriguez asked them at that meeting; to see these estimates and of course conveniently they didn't have them. They told her she would have to come to the next board meeting, which was at the end of May. She knew they weren't following protocol, so she said ok, she'll be at the next meeting. She emailed Ellen to tell her please put her on the agenda. One of her neighbors at the time also emailed Ellen. That neighbor was asking her to see the estimates, and she got the same response, you need to go to the next board meeting, but unfortunately she works nights, so Rodriguez went.

"I went to the meeting, and I asked to see the estimates, they're all looking at each other. I said, 'What are you looking at?'

Do you have the estimates? They didn't have the estimates. They said I would have to go see Ellen in her office if I want see the estimates, and I said, no, Ellen's right here. Our neighbor emailed her and she even said to come to this meeting. Then I called out the person that I spoke to that was a board member then at that time I looked at her." Rodriguez stated.

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She continued, "Now we're going to start having meetings at Sam's because what, what happened was I ended because now the clubhouse, which I was a part of, I was working volunteering for about a year and a half, a couple of back in 2021 to 2022, about a year. I went off the board then because I didn't like what was going on. They were using me. Then I got approached to come back on when the president, this guy was going to be president, and I was friends with him. He's an older gentleman and he's, he's my neighbor and he says, Michelle, I can't do this without you. I really need you. I agreed to go on back to, you know, I got voted back on the board. In October of '23 My tenure is coming up; I would have to get reelected back on this October."

She said that she never misrepresented the community by telling the community that the CFC was involved in any way,

shape, or form. Senator Bill Weber came to speak to them in the beginning of the month. She did let the president and the manager of the facilities; she gets paid, know She told her that the room was free. Everything was fine.

"This time around when we had a meeting on August 15th. The president was not around. He has a wife on the board, but she really doesn't have a on the board of managers, but she doesn't have a like a real position. She's just a member. However, my vice president of my board, his wife is the vice president of the other board, and we don't get along, so I didn't want to get in touch with him and tell him about this meeting. Then there's me, this other girl, Nicole, and Melinda.

Well, the three of them knew about the meeting. Nicole is on our committee. I told I told the manager, her name's Lisa. I said, Lisa, is the clubhouse free on the 15th? She said yes. I said book it for me and then I told her we're having a little committee meeting with the people here that are upset and she said, all right. I said, if anybody asks on the board, just let them know the truth." She explained.

"We had a meeting for an hour. We have cameras all over the place. It's not like I was hiding anything. That was on a Wednesday night, the following Sunday we had our big barbecue. Anthony, he was the vice president, overheard people talking about the meeting. Except he now lied and said that people were going up to him asking if the CFC was involved. This is what he tells the president.

"Now John did approach me. He told me next time you decide to have a meeting, I don't care if I'm away or not, just text me. He even said if I'm home I might even want to join one of the meetings because he's against the pavers even though his wife's on the board of managers, and he made that clear to me and I'm sure Michelle as well. Yes, he made it very clear. He even gave me his copy of the bylaws. He snuck it to me when Peggy wasn't around. Thursday afternoon, we all get this email saying that the meeting that was held August 15th was an unauthorized meeting and that the CFC is not involved in any of these meetings. It was signed only by the president and vice president of the CFC, which is wrong because they have wives on the other board. It is discrediting me." Rodriguez said.

Adler stepped in, "Not to mention, not to cut her off, but it's the community building, it's the clubhouse. It's there for the purpose of the community. For the board, the CFC board to start dictating who and who cannot go in there is kind of overstepping their authority or their power, because again, if you live there and you need to go in there for an hour or have a meeting, even if you're meeting with a realtor or a lawyer first instead of meeting at your condo or, setting up a program or something. As long as the person that runs the clubhouse, which is Lisa, says it's free. right now, if you want to go in and use it, that should be the end of the story.

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What is their next step? They do have a lawyer and they're getting the community together. Quite a few people are chipping in for the $3500 retaining fee. They're collecting the money as we speak. From there, they're starting to sign a petition. They need to get 100 signatures, but really 77 signatures, but they need one third of the community that's 77 signatures but they're aiming for 100. Once they get those signatures, they can start the process they have to have a letter drawn up from their lawyer. They are going to copy the Bylaw which states that they can remove the whole board without it. It's in the bylaws that without a reason.

"We're going to make sure we have a copy of that bylaw right there for Nancy Zimmer, the president, to see and the copy of the petition with the 100 signatures, and then they have to set up a meeting, so and then at that meeting, 66 and 2/3 people have to vote. If they want to remove this board either by proxy or they have to show up and vote. This all has to be done before the annual meeting, which is at the end of October. So we really are we're trying to move very fast on this so we can remove the board of managers and then our next step is to we have to give 90 days' notice in to for service residential." Rodriguez said.

"We'll put in a new board, yeah, we're going to replace it with people that are ready to step up and do what we need to do, exactly take over whatever catastrophe they have. We have our work cut out for us. Basically, we're going to do like what the Harbors is going to do, eventually. They're going to give 90-day notice to First Service Residential, and then hire another company, basically just to do the paperwork and payment stuff. Then we decided that we don't need a property manager. We can do that pretty much on our own. We're going to probably do that. A lot of people, we walk the complex anyway. And that's another thing. Ellen Brown doesn't walk the complex. No, she gets driven by one of the golf vendors in the golf cart. Adler explained.

y that the construction started… Well, let's go back. June 30th, we saw sc some subcontractors, Lenny and Dennis, I think their names were, and my d and I were walking our dogs, and we saw Tim talking to them, so we w and all I told them was, listen, there was a petition. You may not get paid ney, so I'm just letting you know. The guy had said to me, 'What are you He said, 'What are you going to block us, lay down on the ground and ng?' We started laughing and we said, "No we're not, we're just trying to whole thing came about."

She said she was having a very nice discussion with Dennis. "The next day, three of us get letters, a cease-and-desist letter. It came very quickly and in that, that letter, it stated that we said that we were going to block the trucks. Now, can you see me blocking anything? It was never said. Like I said, the guy, Lenny, is the one that asked us, 'are you going to block them' and we all laughed and said no. That was this blatant lie right there."

He added, "You heard them say that they were going to start another job in Tuxedo, and I think Ellen got worried and then she called the lawyer and the lawyer put up the cease-and-desist letters. I showed mine to the county attorney because I work in that building on every Friday, I just showed it to the county attorney who had a good chuckle with it and said he goes, throw it out."

Rodriguez also went to the Rockland District attorney's office in May and spoke to George Del Furio. She stated that he couldn't believe everything he saw. There's nothing he could do about it until they go see a lawyer. It's civil until it becomes criminal. Until we get on the board, after we remove that board, and then we can start getting the records and everything, then we can really start seeing what a mess it is, and then it might, we're assuming that they don't destroy any records.

"Yeah, that's another thing, because at the harbors apparently there's some missing paperwork and you know, not, and not to get off, well, we're not getting off topic, but a great follow up to this would for, would for you to talk to the guy that we know from down in the Harbors because there is corruption with HOAs all over the place. Well, all, allegedly. Well, this is, again, this is the issue that these people have been there for too long and they're treating it like it's their property.

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