

Aurora/CAI HOA Meeting, May 11: they called the police on us, REALLY

First, thanks to all our members who attended. Without our folks they may have had 12-15 in attendance from the public plus the 8 or so representatives from the Community Association Institute (CAI) and city of Aurora (plus one armed police officer). Total attendance about fifty.

The meeting was a joint effort of the CAI (Community Association Institute) and city of Aurora (May 11 in Aurora). Meeting was to focus on HOA topics. Some helpful information provided by the city concerning water conservation and environmental issues and free water usage assessments. Talking with some CAI members I was pleased to find out they would support the requirement that HOA home owners vote on using their own funds for litigation (specifically on HOA construction defects litigation): our position for three years. CAI top leadership has not supported legislation to empower home owners on the use of their own funds for litigation.

There was the usual answer from the CAI to all HOA home owner's questions and problem resolution: get a lawyer (that surely will help home owners!). This was mostly a CAI marketing and membership promotion meeting disguised as a city of Aurora HOA town hall meeting. When one attends these CAI events the same cast of characters appears and they push expensive memberships with little to offer in answering questions from home owners.

Let me first say if one has a meeting and only wants to spit out propaganda and the company line and filter questions then send out invitations and set rules. This was supposed to be a round table discussion not a lecture series to praise property managers and HOA lawyers and the CAI. If you are a home owner seeking questions about the HOA living environment this was not the meeting. You already know how to hire a lawyer, that lawyers are not the answer to all HOA complaints, and the cost of hiring a lawyer is simply not within reach of most making HOA complaint resolution from the home owner's perspective biased towards the HOA with its' unlimited funds and legal advice.

Prior to the meeting start, which they knew our group was going to be there in numbers, they stood by listening (snooping) to our conversations and when they heard us say "CAI" or I handed out a business card they (CAI operatives) sort of freaked out. The primary CAI host warned us about challenging the CAI's accuracy on information presented or asking provocative questions. Two CAI folks followed several of us around listening to our conversations warning us again about challenging anything the CAI said. They cut short conversations in round tables that pointed out the lack of effectiveness of HOA laws unless you can go to court. No questions tolerated about why the CAI hadn't supported several Bills on HOA reform. If the CAI wants to represent themselves as HOA home owner advocates our questions were appropriate. When we stood in the lobby in a group of two or more talking about HOA issues some CAI woman told us to sit down (when others were standing) and didn't want our members networking with others. The CAI truly fears open discussion and debate!

Now the real absurdity of it all. A representative from the Aurora city government said she was going to ask a police officer to standby to monitor our members and if we challenged the content presented, asked any questions that directly challenged CAI information presented, or acted unruly she would have us evicted. Yes, a cop stood at the entranceway with a gun in holster ready to evict the rowdies. Note, not once had she ever heard us raise our voice, yell, be aggressive, or curse. She told me the CAI is sponsoring the event and we are not to debate them on any issue or content or to speak in any way that can be construed as negative about them. In other words, shut up, be a good boy or girl or the police

will come and throw you out. Note, the meeting hadn't even started and the police were put in standby mode. WOW!

Really, don't have a public meeting if you want to censor the participants. Don't imply outreach when you want to shut out other's opinions. We thought this was information sharing and exchange and not indoctrination.