

Aurora, Co, 7 pm, Oct 18, HOA Town Hall Meeting an overwhelming success The HOA Town Hall Meeting provided some surprises, good homeowner involvement, and more of the same from some of the invited panel participants Homeowners from our group and others not only filled the lecture hall but filled the hallway Unfortunately, some simply left when no more room was available We apologize for those who left due to seating capacity and fire codes being exceeded and this will not happen again A few pictures of the turnout can be accessed via the Home Page of our web site The turnout was a strong indication of the interest by citizens in HOA issues Thanks to all that attended, for your good questions, and your patience and courteous behavior I mention courteous behavior because so many label groups as ours as extremists, crazies, complainers, and folks who simply don't want to obey any law How wrong and hateful these people are. We would like to see the media/press show more concern and interest in the over 1.5 million Colorado residents who live in HOA's We sent invitations to the local TV news channels and Denver Post and they were no shows What goes with the media A dog dressed up in stupid clothing or catching a frizz-bee in the park gets more media coverage than issues facing over half the population in Colorado The expected of the night, in our view, was the response to homeowner issues from the representative of the CAI (the well-funded interest group representing the property management industry) That doesn't have to be bad! Our summary of what we heard from them: Their attitude seems to be that if there is something written in State law defining what an HOA or property management company should do all will be well in the world. Wow! Hey homeowner, if an HOA Board or property management company (PMC) doesn't comply with the law, just take them to court Why on earth would so many people show up for an evening session on HOA issues if it was all that simple Yes, just lawyer up or be nice to each other and homeowner's issues with HOA's will disappear This attitude we felt to be condescending, simplistic, exhibited a lack of understanding of the real world for HOA law enforcement, and showed no empathy for most homeowners who simply can't spend all their resources on lawyers and court costs to have their rights enforced They also pointed blame for dysfunctional HOA Boards on the lack of homeowner involvement To an extent this is true However, the reality of removing such a Board via elections is many times manipulated with a Board's controlling HOA media, community information, improper information in minutes of meetings and other improper tactics Stories on this topic would take ten more paragraphs So, throwing the bums out is easier said than done (but a good alternative) To let our members know, our group has met with the CAI in the past As soon as we suggested a dispute resolution process for most HOA complaints that is out-of-court, mandatory, binding, and inexpensive they put up a wall of resistance We would hope to partner with them on HOA legislative reform but our initial effort to discuss our suggestions was met with arrogance and an attitude that our ideas were meaningless This attitude also applied when we suggested some type of out of court dispute resolution between homeowners and PMC's The CAI, a principle participant in this meeting, appears to finally be on board in Colorado with the issue of licensing PMC's and have even proposed the specific legislation However, our reading of their proposal seems to serve too much of a self-interest They should've involved homeowner groups if their interests were at all to serve both the PMC and homeowners; they didn't We most certainly will not settle for any idea they may propose that involves using our court system for conflict resolution for licensed PMC violations or the use of any peer review Board to resolve complaints (that would be insulting!) We'll write more on their proposal as it is of great interest to many of you Oh yes, the CAI believes our court system and Small Claims is inexpensive and workable: just try it, you'll like it. What planet is this person

on? A bright note for the evening was the participation from a member of the Mediation Association of Colorado (MAC) Here is a group that holds the possible solution to HOA disputes being handled out of court These folks are professional, unbiased, and trained in their profession They are a key part of mandatory, binding, out of court dispute resolution We think they get it. They understand there is a problem and there must be a better solution to resolve all these relatively minor HOA disputes than Court They understand that HOA disputes mostly don't belong in our over-burdened courts That the courts are too expensive, litigious, and time consuming for the average person They understand that a timely, inexpensive dispute resolution at the earliest point in a conflict stops the escalation of conflict (the courts don't serve this very well) These folks represent no particular interest group or trade association They simply perform their job of conflict resolution in an impartial manner They understand that the idea of a mediator-arbitrator trained in HOA law can be very effective They level the playing field in our justice system and take the pay-to-play aspect out of enforcement and justice We hope to have a continuing relationship with this group to work on HOA legislative reform: they are the answer. We also heard from the representative of the Colorado HOA Information Office and Resource Center This Office serves as a good source of HOA information and compiling and classifying HOA homeowner complaints that we hope our legislators will read We hope for their continued participation in our efforts and future town hall meetings. We do plan on additional HOA Town Hall Meetings Requests for similar meetings in Fort Collins and Grand Junction have already been received We hope the CAI, MAC, and others participate I can't tell you how many nasty emails we got from people saying that nobody would turn out, that HOA homeowners simply complain but are too lazy to attend such an event, and on and on Well, I guess you all proved these jerks wrong Sometimes name calling is appropriate Thanks again to all homeowners who attended and all of you who have joined our organization and contribute your thoughts and stories

8:17 pm mst