

**SEA COUNTRY AT RANCHO NIGUEL**  
**ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES**

**Campaigning**

If any candidate or member advocating a point of view is provided access to Sea Country at Rancho Niguel ("Association") media, newsletters, or websites during a campaign, for purposes that are reasonably related to that election, then all candidates and members advocating a point of view will be provided equal access.

Any views, comments or opinions set forth in any communication from a candidate or member are those solely of the candidate or member, and the Association is not responsible or liable for such content. The candidate or member, and not the Association, is solely responsible for the content of all materials and/or communications presented by the candidate or member.

Access to the common area meeting space will be provided during a campaign, at no cost, to all candidates and members advocating a point of view for purposes reasonably related to the election. Members and residents shall not be prevented from peacefully assembling or meeting with members, residents, and their invitees or guests during reasonable hours and in a reasonable manner for purposes relating to association elections. Residents may use the common area and homes for an assembly when the common area is not otherwise in use. Canvassing, petitioning, and circulating materials to the members in connection with an election is permitted if done in a reasonable manner, and during reasonable hours, and is not otherwise prohibited by law, municipal or otherwise.

Association funds will not be used for campaign purposes in connection with any Association Board election. Association funds shall not be used for campaign purposes in connection with any other Association election except to the extent necessary to comply with duties of the Association imposed by law. For the purposes of this section, "campaign purposes" include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Expressly advocating the election or defeat of any candidate who is on the Association election ballot.
2. Including the photograph or prominently featuring the name of any candidate on a communication from the Association or the Board, excepting the ballot and ballot materials, within thirty (30) days of election, provided that this is not a campaign purpose if the communication is one for which the law requires that equal access be provided to another candidate or advocate.

### **Nominee Qualifications**

The Association is required by law to disqualify a person from nomination if the person is not a member of the Association at the time of the nomination. To be a “member” of the Association a person or entity must be a record owner of a Lot within the Association.

Additionally, the Association may disqualify a person from nomination based on any of the following:

1. If the nominee discloses, or if the Association is aware or becomes aware of, a past criminal conviction that would either prevent the Association from purchasing the fidelity bond coverage required by *Civil Code* section 5806 should the person be elected or terminate the Association’s existing fidelity bond coverage as to that person should the person be elected.
2. If the person, if elected, would be serving on the board at the same time as another person who holds a joint ownership interest in the same separate interest parcel as the person and the other person has already been properly nominated for the current election or is an incumbent director.

However, the foregoing option to disqualify a member shall not apply if the member has not been provided the opportunity to engage in IDR.

### **Voting Qualifications**

Every person who is a member at the time the ballots are distributed is entitled to receive a ballot. Persons with a general power of attorney for a member shall be entitled to obtain a ballot and vote after providing a copy of the signed general power of attorney to the Association. Those with specific powers of attorney are generally not entitled to a ballot. Members shall be entitled to cast one (1) ballot for each Lot owned. In any election of the Board every member entitled to vote shall have the right to accumulate his/her votes and give one candidate, or divide among any number of candidates, a number of votes equal to the number of Directors to be elected.

If a record date for voting is not fixed by the Board of Directors, those who are members on the day of the meeting who are otherwise eligible to vote are entitled to vote at the meeting of the Association.

### **Joint Owner Disputes**

The vote for each Lot shall be cast by a single vote, and fractional votes shall not be allowed. If any owner casts a vote representing a certain Lot, it will thereafter be conclusively presumed for all purposes that he or they were acting with the authority and consent of all Owners of the same Lot.

### **Voter List**

The Association shall maintain a voter list to include the name, voting power, and either the physical address of the voter's Lot, the parcel number, or both. The mailing address for the ballot shall be listed on the voter list if it differs from the physical address of the voter's Lot or if only the parcel number is used. Members may verify the accuracy of their individual information on the voter list at least thirty (30) days before the ballots are distributed. The Association or member shall report any errors or omissions to the list to the Inspector(s) who shall make the corrections within two (2) business days. The member should simultaneously convey this information to the management company.

### **Nomination Procedures**

The Association will provide general notice, as defined by *Civil Code* section 4045, of the procedure and deadline for submitting a nomination at least thirty (30) days before any deadline for submitting a nomination. Each nominee shall be given a reasonable opportunity to communicate to the members the nominees qualifications and the reasons for the nominee's candidacy. Each nominee shall be given a reasonable opportunity to solicit votes and the members shall be given a reasonable opportunity to choose among the nominees.

Nomination for election to the Board of Directors shall be made by a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of a Chairman, who shall be a member of the Board, and two (2) or more members of the Association. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors prior to each Annual Meeting of the members to serve from the close of such Annual Meeting until the close of the next Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall make as many nominations for election to the Board as it may in its discretion, determine, but not less than the number of vacancies that are to be filled. Nominations may be from members or non-members. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting. Self-nominations are permitted.

### **Candidate List**

Members may verify the accuracy of their individual information on the candidate list at least thirty (30) days before the ballots are distributed. The Association or member shall report any errors or omissions to the list to the Inspector(s) who shall make the corrections within two (2) business days.

### **Pre-Election Notice**

The Association shall provide general notice, as defined by *Civil Code* section 4045, at least thirty (30) days before the ballots are distributed of the following:

1. The date and time by which, and the physical address where, ballots are to be returned by mail or handed to the inspector(s).

2. The date, time, and location of the meeting at which ballots will be counted.
3. The list of all candidates' names that will appear on the ballot.

### **Voting Procedures**

Secret ballots will be provided to all members for their use. Elections will be conducted in accordance with the following balloting procedures:

1. The Inspector(s) shall cause the ballots and two pre-addressed envelopes (with instructions) to be delivered or mailed by first-class mail to every member not less than thirty (30) days prior to the election;
2. The Inspector(s) shall cause these Election Rules to be "delivered" to the members not less than thirty (30) days prior to the election. Delivery may be accomplished by posting these Election Rules to an internet website and including the corresponding internet website address on the ballot together with the phrase, in at least 12-point font: "The rules governing this election may be found here \_\_\_\_\_:" or by personal delivery or first-class mail.
3. Ballots are *not* to be signed by the voter and a member who places any identifying marks or signature on his or her ballot will waive his or her right to secrecy;
4. Completed ballots must be placed into an inner envelope that has no identifying information on it (*e.g.*, no member name, no property address, no signature, etc.), and the inner envelope is then sealed by the member;
5. The inner envelope is then inserted into the outer envelope that is pre-addressed to the Inspector(s) of Election and then sealed by the member;
6. In the upper left-hand corner of the outer envelope, the member must indicate his or her name and the address of the property within the Association and then the member must sign his or her name in the upper left-hand corner of the outer envelope. Ballots received in improperly completed envelopes (*e.g.*, not signed or without identifying information) may not be counted by the Inspector(s);
7. The envelope may be mailed or delivered by hand to the management office, unless another place is designated by the Inspector(s). The member may request a receipt for delivery;
8. Once a ballot is received by the Association, in the place designated by the Inspector(s), it is deemed irrevocable, even if it is unopened;

9. The sealed ballots shall be in the custody of the Inspector(s) or in the place designated by the Inspector(s) at all times;
10. No person may open or otherwise review any ballot prior to the time and place at which the ballots are counted and tabulated; and
11. The voting period for member meetings shall commence when the first ballot is mailed or delivered to a member of the Association and shall end at such time as the Inspector(s) determine the polls close.

### **Use of Proxies**

Every person entitled to vote or execute consents shall have the right to do so either in person or by an agent or agents authorized by a written proxy executed by such person or his duly authorized agent and filed with the secretary of the Association; provided that no such proxy shall be valid after the expiration of eleven (11) months from the date of its execution. The transfer of title to any Lot shall void any outstanding proxy pertaining to the voting rights of the membership appurtenant to that Lot. Any such form of proxy or written ballot shall afford the opportunity to specify a choice between approval and disapproval of each matter or group of matters to be acted upon, except that a candidate for election to the Board need not be named in a proxy or written ballot. The proxy or written ballot shall provide that, where the member specifies a choice, the vote shall be cast in accordance with that choice. The proxy shall also identify the person or persons authorized to exercise the proxy and the length of time it will be valid.

A proxy must (1) identify a proxyholder (who must physically attend the meeting for which the proxy is being exercised), (2) contain voting instructions, and (3) be signed by the member giving the proxy. Any instruction given in a proxy issued for an election that directs the manner in which the proxyholder is to cast the vote must be set forth on a separate page of the proxy that can be detached and given to the proxyholder to retain. The proxyholder must cast the member's vote by secret ballot. A proxy that does not satisfy these requirements may not be counted.

### **Inspectors of Election**

Inspector(s) of Election ("Inspector(s)") will be appointed by the Board of Directors at a board meeting held prior to the election and will serve as Inspectors until such time that their successors are appointed by the Board of Directors. There shall be one (1) or three (3) Inspectors for the Association. If there are three (3) Inspectors, the decision or act of a majority shall be effective in all respects as the decision or act of all. Inspector(s) may be a member of the Association, but may not be a member of the Board, a candidate for the Board, or related to a member of the Board or candidate for the Board. An Inspector may not be a person or entity who or which is currently employed or under contract to the Association for any compensable services, other than inspection services.

### **Role of Inspectors of Elections**

Inspector(s) will determine the number of memberships entitled to vote and the voting power of each in accordance with the Association's governing documents. Inspector(s) will determine the authenticity, validity, and effect of proxies, if any. Inspector(s) will hear and determine all challenges and questions in any way arising out of or in connection with the right to vote. Ballots will be returned to the Association's managing office, unless another location is designated by the Inspectors. Inspector(s) will determine when the polls shall close. Inspector(s) will determine and announce the tabulated results of the election.

The Inspector(s) may appoint and oversee additional persons to verify signatures, count and tabulate votes as the Inspector(s) deem appropriate, provided that the persons are independent third parties. Inspector(s) may also perform any acts as may be proper to conduct the election with fairness to all members in accordance with all applicable rules of the Association regarding the conduct of the election that are not in conflict with current law. Inspector(s) must perform all duties impartially, in good faith, to the best of his or her ability, and as expeditiously as is practical, and in a manner that protects the interest of all members of the Association.

### **Tabulation of Votes**

Inspector(s) count and tabulate all votes. All votes shall be counted and tabulated by the Inspector(s) at a duly noticed board or membership meeting. Any candidate or other member of the Association may witness the counting and tabulation of the votes. Members who are not Inspectors or being overseen by an Inspector must remain at least five (50 feet away from the counting area. Members who are not Inspectors may not participate in the counting or tabulation process or any discussions that may arise among the Inspectors or their designated assistants.

Every Inspector(s) must provide an inspection report for the Association's corporate records. After the final tabulation of the votes, custody of all election materials will be transferred to the custody of the Association, unless first retained by the Inspector in a secure place for no less than one (1) year after the date of the election. Once retained by the Association, the election materials shall be stored for a period not less than the current fiscal year, plus two (2) additional fiscal years.

### **Recording and Announcing Election Results**

Inspector(s) must report the results of the election promptly to the Board of Directors, and the results will be recorded in the next regular session board meeting minutes. In addition to recording the election results in the next regular session board meeting minutes, the Association shall keep Annual Meeting Minutes that reflect the election results. The Board of

Directors will publicize the results of the election in a communication directed to all members within fifteen (15) days of a successful (quorum achieved) election.

### **Retention and Inspection of Records**

The ballots, signed voter envelopes, voter list, proxies, and candidate registration list shall at all times be in the custody of the Inspector(s) or at a location designated by the Inspector(s) until after the tabulation of the vote, and until the time allowed by *Civil Code* section 5145 for challenging the election has expired, at which time custody shall be transferred to the Association.

Returned ballots, signed voter envelopes, the voter list of names, parcel numbers, and voters to whom ballots were to be sent, proxies, and the candidate registration list are subject to inspection. Signed voter envelopes may be inspected but may not be copied. If there is a recount or other challenge to the election process, the Inspector(s) shall, upon written request, make the ballots available for inspection and review by an Association member or the member's authorized representative. Any recount shall be conducted in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of the vote.