

CSCI 6442

REQUESTS AND ACTIONS

Requests

The first event that begins a process on HOAPeach is a request. A request can come from a homeowner—the primary purpose of the application—or it can come from a property manager employee, a property manager supervisor, or a board member (who would enter the request as a homeowner).

What Is Requested?

A request is just what the word indicates—a person is asking the property manager to do something. What might that be? A tree that's on community property might have fallen over and need to be removed. Perhaps the trash pickup skipped one residence, and the trash people need to come back. Or snow has to be plowed from a parking lot owned by the community. Or perhaps the homeowner's financial account appears to have errors that need to be corrected.

How Do Requests Arrive?

A request can arrive at HOAPeach through email. There is an email address, request@<communitydomainname.org>, that's used for requests. The app checks for incoming email every few minutes (settable). The app also checks whether the email address is known as a homeowner or property manager employee, and sends a (polite) reply rejecting the email if the from address is not recognized. If the address is recognized, then the app sends an acknowledgement that it has been received and the submitter should hear back from the property manager on the next business day.

A request can also arrive at the property manager by telephone. The recipient first verifies that the caller is a homeowner or employee of the property manager, then uses the app to create a request, that is then treated the same as a request that arrives through email. The requestor receives a response by email unless a telephone response is requested.

The third way a request can arrive at the property manager is by means of a form on the website that's filled out by a homeowner. A homeowner can login to an account on the community website and complete a form to submit a request to the property manager. On the form, the homeowner indicates

whether feedback about the request is to be delivered by email or telephone.

The request is separate from the actions taken by the property manager. The request is simply a communication from a homeowner that must have a certain collection of responses: a quick response that the request has been accepted and is entering work, and a later response whenever there is a significant event and a final response that the request has been fulfilled, along with reporting of any significant information.

Some requests do not originate from either a telephone call or an email. For a periodic activity such as all the various landscaping and other work that takes place in the spring, a repeating request that is triggered on a time basis can be used. For example, the spring actions might be triggered by a request that automatically repeats every March 1. Similarly, delivery of monthly financial reports to the board could be triggered by a repeating request that repeats every month on the first of the month. The annual audit could be triggered by a repeating request that repeats every year.

Actions

Actions are activities undertaken by the property manager in the course of fulfilling a request. An action might be as simple as providing an answer to a question—"What is my outstanding balance?" for example. Or it might be more complex, such as a call that a park bench had collapsed. In that case, there would be multiple actions—remove the collapsed bench, identify a bench to buy, obtain board approval, make the purchase and then have it installed.

How Does An Action Get Started?

An action is created when a property manager employee is working through the queue of requests. As the employee opens a request, the employee will create an action and connected to the request. If the request will require several actions, the employee may create several actions, all connected to the request. The actions might have to be carried out serially, in which case each action will follow another action, or if they can all be undertaken at once they can all be connected to the request not in a particular order.

An example of actions which must be undertaken in a certain sequence would be the actions associated with the park bench example above. First, the old bench would be removed; then, the new bench would be identified and approval would be sought from the board as a third action. And so on.

Note that some requests will be created automatically because they automatically repeat. Such requests will show up in the request queue at the appropriate time. A property manager employee can then associate appropriate actions with that automatically issued request.

Projects

There will be actions that are repeated. An example of such an action is the annual financial audit of the HOA. Every year, in February, an auditor reviews all the financial records of the HOA and gives the board an opinion concerning the reliability of the reporting period. Another example would be all the actions that take place in the spring. The wood slats in the park benches need to be oiled with protective oil. The landscaping needs as spring cleanup. Water drains that the HOA has installed must be checked for proper operation. In the case of all the spring activities, all these actions could be grouped together into a project called spring. In the case of the annual audit, it would be a project that is a single action called audit.