

Culture Shift Hot Springs Village – Part 1

Description

Hot Springs Village Culture Shift Part 1 (The video is located at the bottom of this transcript.)

Lloyd Sherman, June 3, 2021

Hello, fellow Property Owners – This is Lloyd Sherman. Today I want to bring you some background information on an issue I think we need to address, within the Village. I am going to do this, because of the length, in two segments. The first will be more of the background. Two will be the structure and recommendations. I really want to hear what the Future Funding Task Force has to say at today's meeting. [June 3, 2021]

Straight Talk

- Today I want to begin a 2-part series into what I am referring to as a **CULTURE SHIFT** that needs to take place within the POA structure as well as **WHY**.
- Prepared Comments

Culture Shift by Lloyd Sherman

This two-part series is being referred to by me as a “culture shift” that needs to take place within the POA and why. Actually, that needs to take place on several different levels, but let’s get to the background first. But before we do that, I have some prepared comments that I want to make. I will get to that first.

It is time for some straight talk. I don’t want any of my comments to be misinterpreted as being disparaging towards individuals and especially towards Staff members. I have no preconceived judgments regarding employees’ ability to operate in their functions. What I do have preconceived opinions on is that we have not given the proper guidance to them.

I have recently been accused of being ‘anti Village,’ and nothing could be further from the truth. Linda and I love living here but we do find ourselves frustrated with the politics that get played and how nothing really ever changes in the overall results. We keep repeating huge financial mistakes.

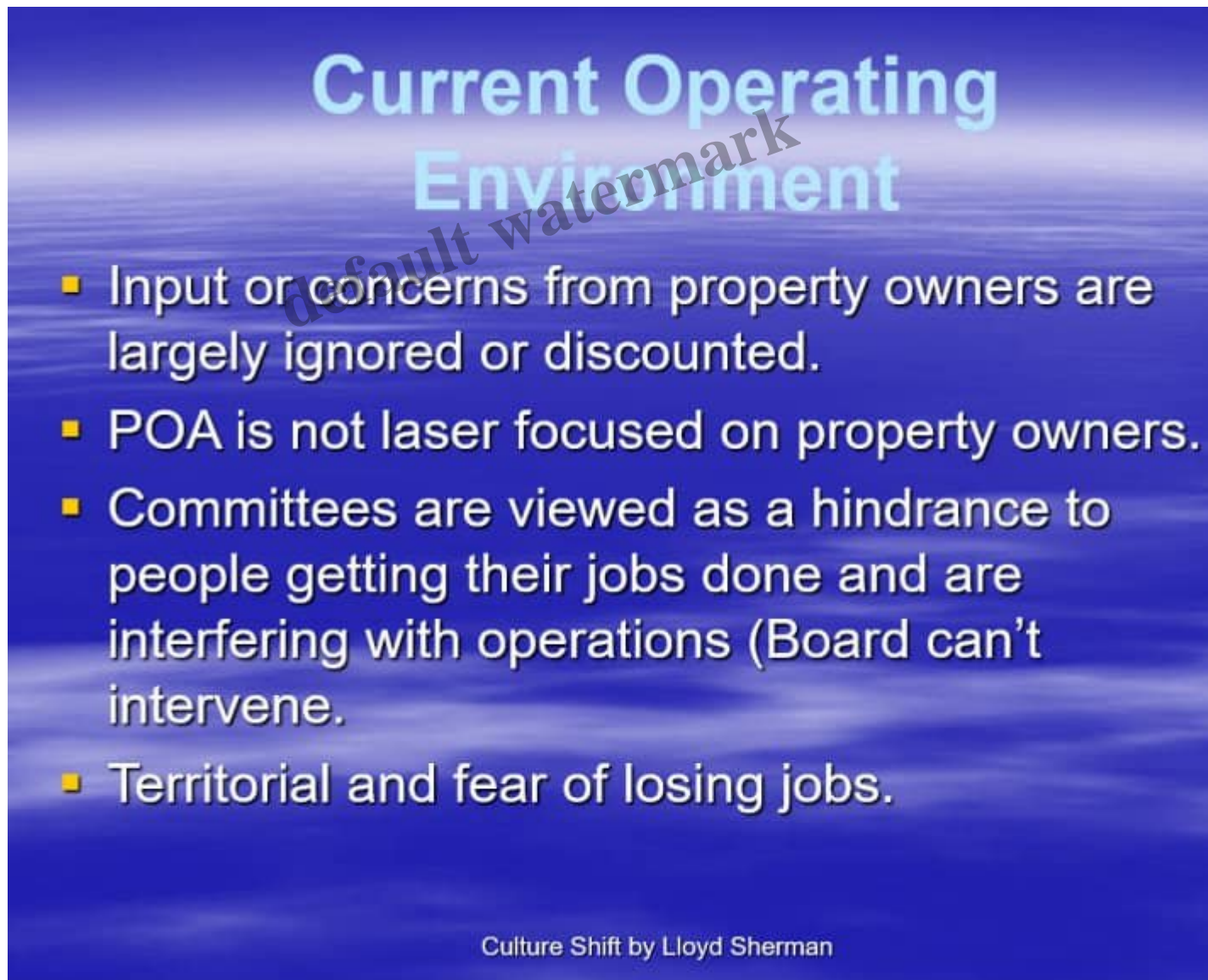
I also have no personal agenda other than I believe I can be instrumental in bringing about the change that is needed. Some of my comments are going to be taken as offensive to some and for that, all I can

tell you is that nothing being done is done in a mean-spirited vent. It is, however, designed to point out the very culture that exists that needs to be changed.

I also want to take a minute to explain to you why I found it necessary to leave the Board. I hope by the end of these two sessions, you will have a better understanding of why.

My decision to leave the Board was not centered on any one specific situation, but rather several of them. However, all of them relate directly back to the cultural shift that will be discussed in these two sessions.

For us, the POA, to move to the next level and secure our future, these changes must occur. While I have chosen to mostly keep these details to myself, I am happy to discuss with any Property Owner the details, should they actually be interested. However, several of my comments are going to come through this process and will tie back to my overall reason for leaving.



Current Operating Environment

- Input or concerns from property owners are largely ignored or discounted.
- POA is not laser focused on property owners.
- Committees are viewed as a hindrance to people getting their jobs done and are interfering with operations (Board can't intervene).
- Territorial and fear of losing jobs.

Culture Shift by Lloyd Sherman

Let's get into the current operating environment. We have had and continue to have an environment

where input and concerns from Property Owners are largely ignored and discounted. I also don't believe that there is enough laser focus on Property Owners and the needs of the Property Owners. We have too much focus on 'wants'.

Committees are often viewed as a hindrance to people getting their jobs done and are interfering with operations. Even the Board can't intervene because they get accused of the same thing. Then there is always the old stand-by of the territoriality of and fear of losing jobs. Whether that is real or imagined, to the employees, it doesn't really matter.



Our current operating environment looks a little bit like this: Managers and Staff, then the Board of Directors, with a huge amount of interaction between these two, as there should be. However, when it comes to Property Owners, we've been flagged as being disruptive and/or whining and complaining. Largely, the input has been ignored and totally discounted. I believe this [see slide above] represents the culture that needs to be shifted.

Current Operating Environment

- Board members enter their office for the most part, with the best of intentions;
- Quickly run into “you are interfering with operations”;
- Not given full and complete information;
- And in some cases are told the information doesn't exist.
- What message?

Culture Shift by Lloyd Sherman

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Our Board Members enter their office, I think for the most part, with the best of intentions. At least that is what I have seen and why wouldn't they? They spent the time and effort of running. But they quickly run into, 'you are interfering with operations.'

In experience, they are not given complete and full information. In some cases are told the information doesn't exist.

So, what message does that send? Well, it basically sends a message that staff is 'potentially' hiding something or doesn't know what the information is. It doesn't matter. It's the message that gets sent, that is important. Many Property Owners are feeling this and have felt this for years.

Current Operating Environment

- Many elected Board Members soon become convinced that staff knows what they are doing and they should just accept what is provided to them.
- This in a nutshell is the basis of why a CULTURAL SHIFT is required.

Culture Shift by Lloyd Sherman

What winds up happening is the go-along-to-get-along kind of mentality creeps in. For whatever reason, and it doesn't really matter how – maybe because it is easier. Many of the Board Members are convinced that the staff actually knows what they are doing. Which, I am sure they do. But they just accept what is being provided to them.

That's not a good environment to be in, given their [Board Members'] responsibility to oversight and fiduciary responsibility.

This in a nutshell is the basis of why a cultural shift is required. Again, part two will get into suggestions and recommendations as to how I see some of this could be, if not eliminated, certainly reduced.

Current Operating Environment Examples:

- New GM tells board member to “slow down and back off” Doesn’t care for committees
- Made unfounded accusations about board members and volunteers that was not accurate
- Systematically removing property owners: CPA and Treasurer
- Eliminating board level marketing committee
- Staff threatening if certain property owners are placed on committees, they are quitting
- Board then reverts back to staff being members of the board (i.e. Secretary and Treasurer) 3 staff members
- - 7 member board
- Difficult & impossible to obtain info

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But, as I promised, I want to get into a little bit of **why** some of this is happening.

Within weeks of the new GM coming on board, this Board Member [Lloyd] was told to ‘slow down and back off.’ Along that line, I also heard at least a half a dozen times, if not more, that, ‘I got this,’ from the GM. I also heard that he had ‘20 years of experience.’ Great! Many Members on that Board have over 40 years of experience. That doesn’t mean you are going to be an effective manager.

The other problem that led into continuing what had been here before was that comments were made that the GM didn’t care for the use of committees and that we had too many of them. It doesn’t matter. It sends the wrong message.

We also had situations where accusations were made about Board Members and Volunteers that were not accurate and were unfounded. Again, I can provide the details to you, as I know them. But I was never approached with the specific issues that they were making the accusations on.

We systematically removed Volunteers from positions where they were helping the POA because, again, they were felt to be interfering with operations.

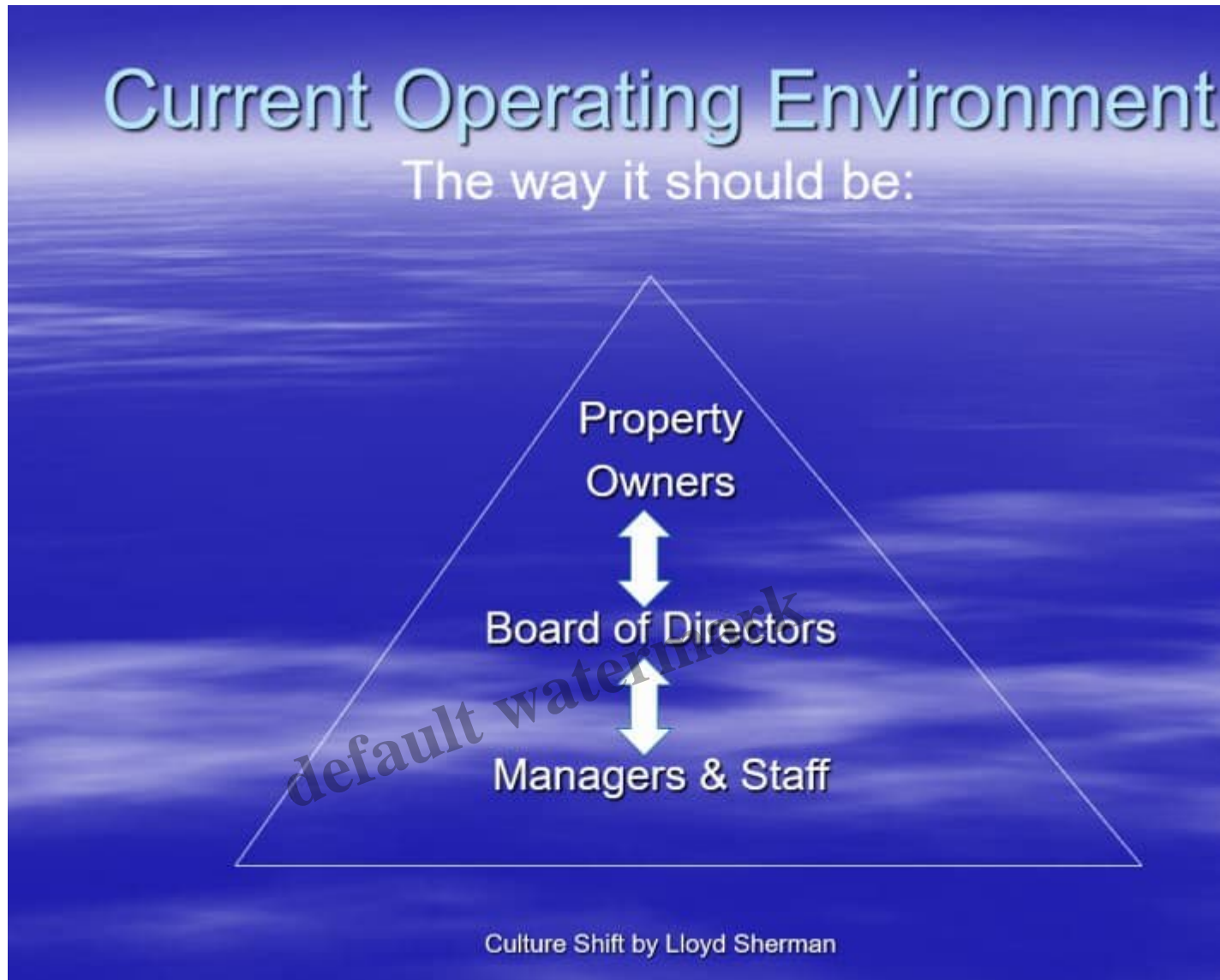
Then, we took out the Treasurer for much the same reason. And even today, we are talking about eliminating a board-level marketing committee. We have a marketing department of one person. Why, for one of the more important things that you have to do in an organization to increase your revenues, would you not want help with marketing, which has been a problem for at least ten to twelve years and probably longer than that?

We've had situations where Staff has threatened to quit their jobs if certain people are placed on committees. Again, Staff can't be having this kind of an impact on Property Owners trying to assist in the running of **their** POA.

So now we are back to the Staff being comprised of the seven-member Board, although, we had a chance to make it seven members and we didn't do it, for some reason. But there are three Staff members. So today your Board is comprised of six Board Members, elected, and three Staff members. That just doesn't work. I am sorry.

We also know that through the years we had difficulty and impossibility obtaining information at the Property Owner level. So, these are all contributors to the culture that needs to change.

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What should this look like? Well, this should look like a team, is what it should look like. Property Owners, Board of Directors, Managers, and Staff, all working for the same objective.

To some extent, I think we are, except that personal agendas, wants versus needs, are getting in the way and being driven at this level [Managers & Staff] when they should be driven at this level [Property Owners] through the elected officials. Not really happening that way, today, folks. That, again, in a nutshell, is pretty much the culture that I think needs to be changed.

Culture Change Needed

- Ensure all decisions are Property Owner Centric
- Customer Service laser focused on property owners

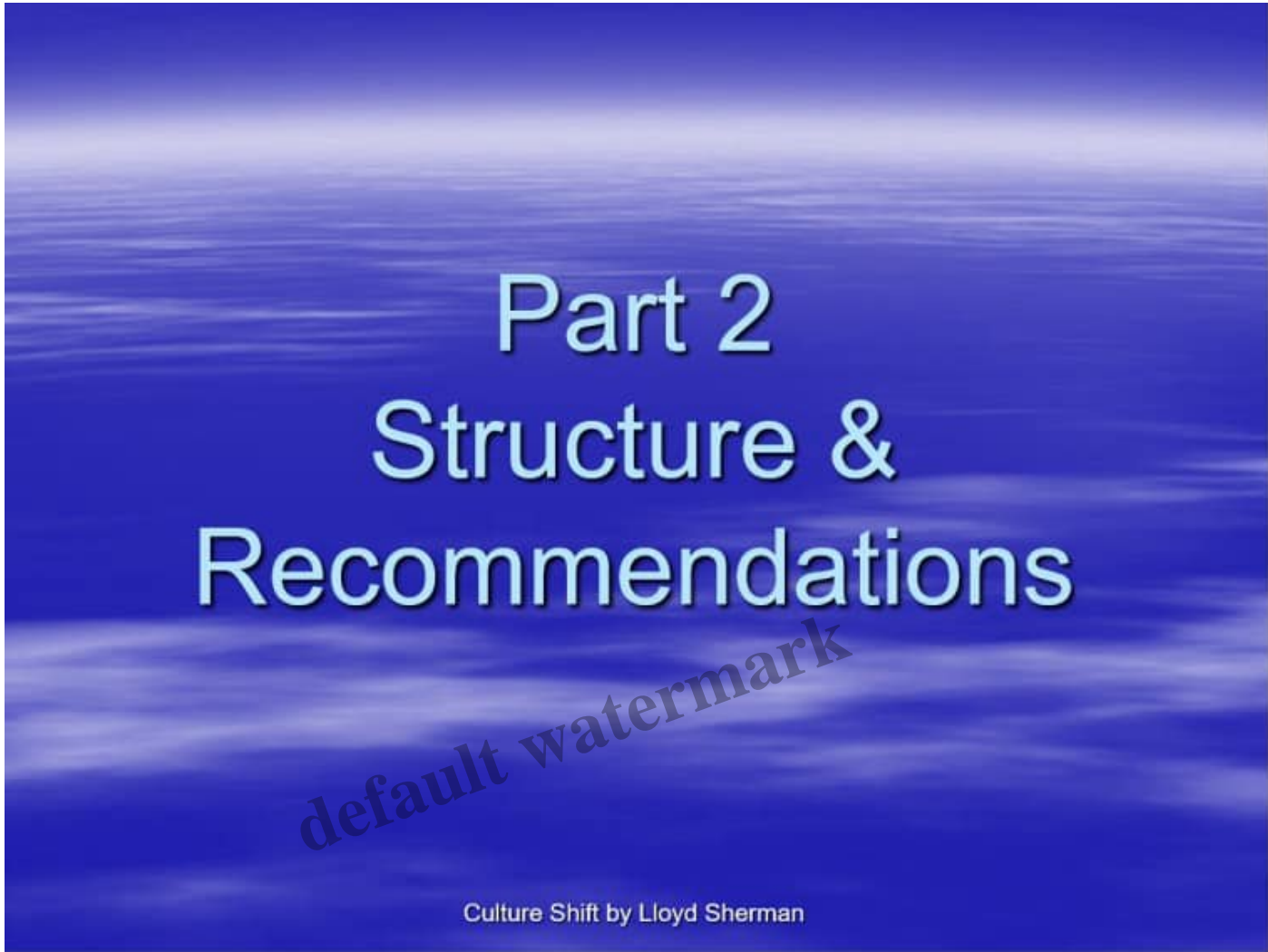
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Culture Shift by Lloyd Sherman

What can we do? Again, part two will provide further details on this. But, we need to ensure that all decisions are Property Owner centric. What does that mean? That means that the Property Owners have a say in how their money is spent. We have example after example where things are shoved down the Property Owners' throats. I could list them, but there is no need. You probably all know what I am talking about. It just isn't right and we've got to figure out a way for the Property Owners to have a voice in the spending of the money that they are providing to the POA.

The other thing is, we have got to ensure that customer service is laser focused on the Property Owner and again, on needs and not wants.

With that, I will finish up for today go to the Future Funding Task Force Meeting this afternoon and hopefully finish this up by this weekend. Talk to you soon. [Part 2 is coming soon.]



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Culture Shift Video – Part 1

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