

REAL ESTATE NEWS

Faith and passion: Hometowners sell it better

BY GERALD FRAWLEY
STAFF WRITER

Hometown Realtors — can they sell a home better than a Realtor who lives elsewhere?

Owner/broker Joanne Scott of Century 21 J. Scott Inc. in Garden City thinks the hometown Realtor has a decided advantage over an imported counterpart.

The big reason? Faith and passion for the community.

"I really do believe (it's better to be a Realtor in one's own community)," she said.

Realtors don't just sell houses, they sell homes and communities, Scott said. In order to sell a community, a Realtor really needs to

believe in it.

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't have a lot of faith in Garden City."

A Realtor should be a booster for a community, Scott said, and a person who lives in an area is better equipped to know a region.

Scott said it's not impossible for an outsider to know a region, but the hometown Realtor has a decided advantage.

"If someone asks how are the schools, I can say I have four children and they all went through Garden City schools and they are all working and productive."

Scott added she also has grandchildren in Garden City Schools.

Fourteen of 18 Realtors in her office live in Garden City, she said and while she doesn't make it a condition of employment, their residency is no accident.

John Hannett, president of John Hannett Inc., said the hometown Realtor has a distinct competitive advantage over other Realtors.

"(Hometown Realtors) know the nuances of their own area."

House values change from one block to the next; there are little areas within an area that command more money than others," he said.

A hometown Realtor also has an advantage when it comes to list-

ing a particular house. Through social connections and word of mouth, a hometown Realtor is much more likely to know when a homeowner is considering selling.

A lot of real estate listings are based on referrals, Hannett added.

Betsy Lassanske, Prudential Great Lakes Realty vice president of corporate and associate services, said when she holds orientation for people considering real estate as a career, she tells them out front it's best to work near your home.

"That doesn't necessarily mean in your own city," she added. A "community" may span city bor-

ders to encompass areas where similar people live.

The reason for this is simple: A person who is just starting in the real estate business is learning a new career and can't afford the additional worry of learning a new community.

"It's easier to translate your enthusiasm for a community if you live there," she said.

Prospective buyers constantly probe Realtors for information on businesses, entertainment, recreational opportunities and other points of interest to help them decide if they want to buy a certain house.

A hometown Realtor can more

readily answer such questions, she said.

Lassanske said not being a hometown Realtor is not necessarily bad, however.

"I wouldn't say you shouldn't list your house with a Realtor because they don't live there."

The passion and boosterism that a hometown Realtor brings to a job is always good, but it can be duplicated by a Realtor from another town, she said.

"If a home buyer is sold on a person's professionalism, where the Realtor lives will not matter as much."

What can you do when condo developer abuses power?

CONDO QUERIES



ROBERT M. MEISNER

Our condominium association is in a bind because the developer has sold just enough units to keep him in control of our hotel condo. Thus, we the purchasers have no effective administrative authority over

the operation of the association. Plus, we are paying an unreasonable management fee to the developer's affiliate company and we're paying a 50-percent fee for rentals of the units to the developer, who threatens to create problems for any co-owner who does not use his company. What recourse do we have?

Apparently this is a widespread abuse among developers of hotel and other resort condos in northern Michigan. You have to assess

the legal and political aspects of the condo project and find out why the developer has been able to maintain control of the association.

The developer may be abusing his contractual obligations to the co-owners, which, presumably, were to sell the condominium out to purchasers who were not controlled by the developer. There may be other management companies prepared to lease out units at the condo for a smaller fee.

The developer's threat to seek

reprints against co-owners who do not use him are both illegal and unethical. The co-owners who are being affected by the developer's abuses should band together, retain counsel and, if necessary, pursue the developer with all legal and administrative remedies available.

Someone in our subdivision wants to open a garage business within the sub. The member claims that our restrictions are not enforceable because other residents have similar

businesses. Can we legally stop this person?

Changes are you can stop the garage business even though other businesses are being conducted in the sub, as long as the other businesses are service-related and not noticeable to passers-by. Courts don't seem to have a problem with businesses that are conducted from within the confines of the condo or home without any detriment to the rest of the sub.

It would be a good idea to

amend your documents to specifically define the kinds of service-related businesses that can be conducted from the home without breaching the single-family residence requirement.

Robert M. Meisner is a Birmingham attorney concentrating his practice in the areas of condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit questions by writing Robert M. Meisner at 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 467, Bingham Farms 48025.

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