

# HABITAT

JULY/AUGUST 2016 \$3.95

## How to

*Solve Absolutely  
Any Problem that  
Could Possibly  
Arise at Any  
Co-op or Any  
Condo at Any  
Time Anywhere  
in the World.*

THE 2016 MANAGEMENT LEADERS REPORT



# How to Referee Noise Disputes

## THE CHALLENGE

We were managing a small co-op on the Lower East Side, next door to a cultural and private events center. There was a long-standing feud between the co-op and the owner of this venue. People were constantly calling 311 with complaints about noise: loud music and people on the street loading and unloading equipment.

## THE SOLUTION

I knew the neighbor who ran the events venue, and he was a reasonable guy. He was upset about all the complaints and the violations that he was getting. I said, "Look, I know you have this longstanding problem, and I know that this is not something that you really want. Would you like me to set up some sort of meet-and-greet with the neighbors so they can voice their concerns and maybe we can resolve some of these issues?"

We recommended that the board stage a barbecue. The building had a nice back yard with a barbecue setup,

and we invited the neighbors over with their staff, and said, "Let's sit down and talk this out." Everyone was able to voice concerns, and come up with parameters, guidelines, and ideas to keep a friendly relation going on. That actually worked out really well. They exchanged phone numbers, and the board members started getting invites to every opening that was happening at the space next door. They kept the peace after that.

## THE LESSON

The first course of action should probably be diplomacy. I think people often shoot first and ask questions later. Then they want to try to resolve things after things have already escalated. But by putting those two groups together, we were able to solve a problem and create friends between two neighbors. We reached an understanding in which they were able to work together. ■

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