

WMLAR Government Affairs Meeting
Wednesday January 21st, 2009 at 1:00pm

Call to Order, 1:04pm by Chair Sarah Hewitt
with an introduction of committee members

MAR Report, Doug Merriam

Merriam reviewed the legislative activities of last year's lame duck session including:
SB 1313-Commercial Broker Lien Act (stopped in House due to political games)
SB 1242-MBT surcharge (unable to pass due to large cost to budget)
SB 1038-MBT broad taxation (passed and helped foster passage of 5924)
HB 5924-MBT agent compensation (passed and now Public Act 472 of 2008)
HB 6122-RETT for LLCs (passed and now Public Act 473 of 2008)
HB 4141-Sinking Fund expansion (stopped potential property tax increase)

Then the group discussed the current political climate as we begin a new legislative session. The Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference indicates a \$1.4 billion deficit for the next fiscal year and the Governor's State of the State is being held February 3rd. Michigan is expected to see unemployment reach 11.3% by 2010 and lose close to 200,000 jobs. MAR is one of several business groups taking another long look at the MBT and how businesses are taxed in Michigan. Also, property taxes will be a major item of discussion in the coming weeks as taxable values will rise 4.4% this year even as property values fall. Our efforts will be strong on the Commercial Broker Lien legislation to get that done in 2009. The wishes by some in Lansing to create a statewide septic code will garner much attention by MAR as well.

Merriam also talked about NAR's efforts to expand the \$7,500 new homebuyer tax credit in the next bailout package to come from Washington.

Local Issues

Sales of foreclosures are not being used by assessors to lower SEV's on new sales and there are no other comparables.

Appraiser not hired by lender directly and concern of the quality of the appraisal.

Board of Directors Report, Brian Jones

The first Board meeting for WMLAR will be next week. Membership appears to be just below 800 for this year.

RPAC

The goal given to WMLAR from the MAR RPAC Trustees for 2009 is \$14,210. It was MOVED and SECONDED to have the committee goal for this year be \$17,000. The motion was withdrawn.

The committee reviewed our previous year's efforts and talked about ways to fundraise this year. The committee would like to see information about Government Affairs posted in the Lakeshore Waves on a regular basis for members to read and be educated on RPAC.

Merriam estimated that dues billing would bring in about \$8,000 this year. Hewitt suggested that the group explore an event that would help reach goal and that each committee member bring three ideas back to the next meeting for discussion.

Committee Goals

For 2009, the Committee has set these goals:

- Influence policy at local, state and national levels by communicating our positions on real estate issues to our governmental units
- Meet the MAR RPAC Trustees established goal for WMLAR
- Interview candidates for office and make election endorsements in local jurisdictions that are working on issues of importance to the committee
- Hold a legislative meeting with our elected leaders

Broker Involvement Program

Merriam explained that participating brokers in the NAR Broker Involvement Program utilize NAR's GetActive software to send NAR's Calls for Action (CFA) to their agents with the Broker's personal message. Messages from responding agents to Congress are then tracked and reported through NAR's GetActive database.

The results of broker involvement are very clear: response rates to broker messages are considerably higher than the response rates not involving brokers (ranging from several percent up to 6 times the national average). The same software can also be used by the broker to send RPAC appeals to targeted agents, making the software an important long term tool in building a strong REALTOR® political program. The NAR Broker Program is available to brokers at no cost and is easy for brokers to utilize. Through the Broker Program we will be able to boost REALTOR® CFA responses at the federal level by significant levels over the next couple of years. This will strengthen our effort to achieve NAR Leadership's goal of a 50% average for member response rates to NAR Calls for Action.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, February 18th at 1:00pm at the WMLAR office.