

SANDRA M. BONATO

PARTNER | BERDING & WEIL LLP

sbonato@berdingweil.com



AREAS OF PRACTICE

Sandra Bonato is a partner in Berding & Weil LLP. She is known for her practical legal advice to community associations in day-to-day operations and transactional matters. She has broad experience in working with community associations, their boards of directors and managers and in applying California's highly regulated statutory scheme for common interest developments. Her practice includes contract drafting, working with associations to de-escalate and resolve disputes, counseling boards on effective governance, statutory compliance and fiduciary duty, advising in the financing of large renovation projects, engendering member support and helping communities through difficult passages, assisting clients in land use issues with government entities, title analyses, in-depth studies of fair housing laws and federal telecommunications regulations, and legislative analysis on both the state and federal levels. Ms. Bonato has successfully advocated for individual clients in the Legislature and written bills to help her clients achieve goals through statutory change. She has served as an expert witness in litigation and arbitration of association disputes.

Ms. Bonato has drafted many revisions of original documents for communities wishing to keep their documents updated and reflective of the evolving needs of their members. She has also drafted original governing documents for common interest developments, developer subsidy agreements, and purchase contracts and assisted in processing these documents and related submittals to and through the Subdivisions division of the California Bureau of Real Estate.

Before joining Berding & Weil, Ms. Bonato worked as a community association manager for condominium and townhome properties. She is a member of the California Association of Community Managers, holds the Certified Community Association Manager (CCAM) professional designation, is a member of CACM's statewide manager certification faculty focusing on teaching ethics and advanced certification courses to community managers, and received CACM's 2007 Vision Award for Excellence in Education. She served several years on the Board of Directors of the Educational Community of Home Owners headquartered in San Jose, chaired ECHO's Legislative Committee for seven years, and was named ECHO Volunteer of the Year in 2001. Ms. Bonato has served on the Board of Directors of the Community Associations Institute's California North chapter and has spoken at CAI's National Law Seminar on topics ranging from major reconstruction projects to effectively seeking loans for community associations. She has spoken at CAI, ECHO, CACM and State Bar educational programs on subjects affecting common interest developments and has written many articles and materials for these organizations, as well as for the electronic newsletter of the Real Property Law Section of the California State Bar. She has lectured for the Continuing Education of the Bar as well.

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Ms. Bonato has served on the Executive Committee of the Real Property Law Section of the State Bar of California and participated in the education of attorneys throughout the state in common interest development legal concepts.

In 2010, Ms. Bonato was publicly elected to the board of directors of the Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District, a special district / local government agency serving the recreational, park and open space needs of 40,000 residents in her community. She was re-elected in November 2014 and November 2018 and currently chairs the District board for the third time. She is very familiar with the workings of local government, including working with clients whose issues require interfacing with local planning departments and legal staff.

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Ms. Bonato received her *Juris Doctor* in December 1998 from John F. Kennedy University School of Law in Walnut Creek and her Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1970 from the University of San Francisco.