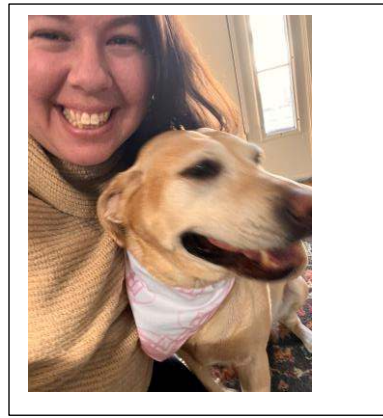




Mid-Shore Board of REALTORS®



MSBR President Megan Rosendale and Stevie

Animal House: Pets in your Home Buying and Selling Process

Traditionally, the real estate business has not shown much love for pets during the home selling. The conventional wisdom was sellers should conceal all traces of their pets—the toys, bowls, beds, even the animals themselves—when prepping a home for sale. The industry is softening, as pets are becoming a plus in the marketing of homes.

The reason for the shift has a lot to do with the numbers: Pet power is rising. Approximately 56 percent of U.S. households own a pet and 83 percent of these pet owners consider their pet to be a member of the family. Those numbers are probably even higher on the Eastern Shore. While dogs make up 40% of pet ownership, cats come in second with 25% and birds and fish are also popular.

For Mid-Shore REALTORS, focusing this pet love means helping buyers look for homes that also meet the needs of their pets or working with sellers to leverage their home’s pet appeal. “I think the days of hiding that your pet’s existence are over,” says Megan Rosendale, president of Mid-Shore Board of REALTORS. “You may not want your energetic Labrador running to the door to greet a home buyer, but quite honestly, a home that is pet-friendly is an advantage for a house nowadays.”

Many agents work with their sellers to create videos of the home; but have you thought about a video from the vantage point of the family pet? This happened for a \$5 million listing in Corona Del Mar, Calif. where the home was showcased from the perspective of a French bulldog. Rosendale, noted that she has not created a pet video, but has clients tell her they have their pets in mind when touring a home. The most important feature for clients in terms of their animals’

living situation is a fenced yard, followed by a large enough home for the household and the pet, and the flooring.

How to handle the pet during showings is a concern and should be addressed. Rosendale said, “There are still some home buyers who take a negative view on pets, especially if they have allergies.” She noted your pet maybe a member of the household, but just as you want the kids socks off the floor during a showing, you will need to put away the kitty litter box and the pet toys and beds.” Often pets leave a scent so you will want to address this with candles or plug-ins. “I still prefer to have all pets out of the house during showings if possible”, says Rosendale. It is less stressful for both the REALTOR and the buyer. Not having to worry about if the cat or dog gets out, biting, or barking, makes the home showing go smoother.

With Eighty-one percent of REALTORS® considering themselves animal lovers, buyers and sellers should not have a hard time explaining why the home needs to work for their pets as well as the entire family. REALTORS® know the Eastern Shore is a great place for pets, lots of open space, parks, parades, and festivals where pets are included.

The Mid-Shore Board of Realtors has over 600 Realtors and Affiliates from Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot counties. The mission of the Mid-Shore Board of Realtors is to advocate for its members and the public to preserve the right to own, transfer and utilize real property. See www.midshoreboardofrealtors.com for more resources and information.

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Stevie loves this house.