Jim Harrison apologizes for op-ed on Inman

Jim Harrison sent Inman this apology for his op-ed article published last week.

Editor's note: MLSlistings voluntarily sent us the original oped piece by Jim with the clear understanding it was to be published, they even asked it to be embargoed for a specific time. We honored the embargo. We have indisputable documentation of that sequence. Along with a preserved record that Jim posted a link to the oped to his FB timeline from a tweet by Inman reporter Andrea Brambila, soon after his oped was published. Inman takes such stories very seriously and only publishes them when we have taken great care to confirm what is necessary.

When I stand corrected, I do so as publicly as any other statements bearing my name. The "opinion piece," while intended to prepare our leadership for the NAR meetings with new information, was in hindsight, not a fair presentation, nor was it truly reflective of my sentiment and an appropriate representation of MLSListings.

The letter was written by our consultant based upon inaccurate facts that he shared with our team who has since been dismissed. Let me say unequivocally, I have always worked well with NAR staff and leadership. The integrity of NAR and its leaders, volunteers and staff should not have been called into question.

I would like to take this opportunity to profusely apologize to the staff, leadership and volunteers of NAR for the impact and disruption this has caused with local and state associations and members during this open dues discussion. I also apologize for the implication that there should be long-term concern about the direction of NAR under the leadership of CEO Bob Goldberg.

He has guided, and we have applauded the new open transparency and direction we all enjoy now from NAR. Goldberg has our full support and any implication to the contrary was misleading and completely false.

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There are many considerations being undertaken by NAR, such as annual dues and a desire by membership to understand the organization's financial expenditures, and these are issues that those attending the upcoming NAR legislative meetings in Washington, D.C., should be attuned to, and they should participate by expressing their opinions. Again, the letter was intended to prepare MLSListings leadership for the NAR conference and the continuing dialogue about finances and member dues.

When it was shared, Inman got word of the letter and called my staff.

In the case of fee increases, they will never be liked and when fee raises are proposed, they inspire higher levels of scrutiny of organization spending. The same happens here at MLSListings. I will always take the position that we should be able to ask and answer tough questions when it comes to our fiduciary responsibilities — and make those answers known.

The original letter failed by questioning the transparency and integrity of NAR's use of the profits from the IPO without sharing this with NAR leaders. This was based on wholly inaccurate facts that were presented to us and ones we took at face value. We recognize the unfairness of this, and I want to express my deepest apologies for my words in this matter.

As NAR President Elizabeth Mendenhall has stated, "no members or staff have profited from the DocuSign IPO," and we stand by her statement.

We were also given a mischaracterization of remarks supposedly made at the NAR Finance Committee meeting and reactions to the presentations. Again, these were taken as fact, which was a grave mistake on our part. I regret this deeply and apologize to NAR leaders for these assumptions based upon false information.

Additionally, it failed to address the outreach, information and clarity that NAR has provided to all members, AEs and their Board of Directors to be able to have this informed conversation on the dues. This is hard work, and it's an unprecedented step for NAR.

The response to the "opinion piece" has been swift and in the case of NAR, justified in its rebuke. But it has also had the advantage of spurring what I hope is a productive dialogue. I hope these

words will help bring about an opportunity to have a dialogue — one that accurately reflects my sentiments in a tone that is more fair-minded and respectful.

My passion for organized real estate remains, and I will always be a devoted advocate for the tremendous work we all do and for the ability to make meaningful change that benefits our memberships.

My passion for protecting the members and customers in this industry remains. That passion may have been misplaced, but it remains focused on what is good for brokers and agents, and those who trust us with their business.

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