

Harmony in a Condominium Community

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A Presentation for Betty's Condo Owners Club

Days Inn, Calgary

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“Good Community, Good Property, Good Business = Good Condominium”

Ways to create harmony: (Describe, tips to implement - where to start, costs, time to implement, who needs to do it)

Get Organized - Get a Plan

- Strategic Planning works
- Renew it periodically

Be Predictable - Follow the Rules

- when you have bylaws, follow them
- don't allow predictability to overrule discretion and case by case review
- if you live by the sword

If it's Broke - Fix it!

- Bylaws
 - eliminate the unreasonable rules
 - get with the times
 - reflect the community
 - include ADR clauses
 - when you have them, follow them

Share what you should and when you can

- clarity of expectations
- Annual Reports
- disclosure (information is knowledge - he or she who holds it holds the power)



Educate Someone

- board, owners, tenants, structured and unstructured - what, when, how often, who does it?

Use Creative and Inclusive Approaches

- open houses
- community meetings
- forums
- working meetings
- nominal group workshops
- Owner Advisory Groups - owner buy-in and activity - owner directed projects
- annual and special meetings
- coffee parties - owner appeal mechanisms
- the golden rule - what got you involved?

An Ounce of Prevention

- is it better to react or to anticipate?
- new neighbours, existing owners
 - getting to know each other [“the old fashioned way”]
 - sharing the successes [“good new looney”]

Addressing Disputes quickly

- informal contact, overreactions, consistent, flexible, due process, timely response,

Is there a place for:

- ❖ a grievance committee?
- ❖ a dispute resolution process?
- ❖ fines?
- ❖ making exceptions?
- ❖ make special arrangements?
- ❖ owner appeal mechanisms?
- ❖ non-directors to carry the message (eg. Managers or other agencies)?

The Act allows them - do you use them?

Mediation

How it works - description / video

Why it works -

When it works - examples

Arbitration

- how and why it's an alternative to court action

Informal Mechanisms

-to encourage compliance with the bylaws

- ❖ The Board should look to education as the first step – arrange for informal sessions (coffee and donuts) to learn about the bylaws and discuss how they are enforced and what they mean.
- ❖ Include regular items in the newsletter about bylaws that people frequently overlook or forget to comply with.
- ❖ Consider speaking personally to every owner who has a bylaw breach to explain the bylaw, get the owner's side of the story, get the owner's commitment to comply, explain how much extra time and money it takes to follow up on bylaw enforcement - hold a "hearing" - use FAIR PROCESS.
- ❖ Consider showing the bylaw enforcement costs on a graph or as a percentage of the total budget or the condominium fees paid by an owner.
- ❖ Consider using outside agencies where possible to enforce the same obligations but in another Act or bylaw – municipal bylaw officer, police, health region, dog pound, etc.

List of other resources

- CCI publications
- Government Tipsheets - "they're free"
- Community Association Institute publications
- CMHC publications

