

Preparing for a Condominium General Meeting - A Checklist

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Strata corporation councillors often receive information about how to prepare for a general meeting. I've chaired many meetings and often wonder how much information the owners receive about their role and how to prepare. What should they do, read or get ready? The following information and checklists can be useful guides for owners preparing to go to a general meeting.

Two Types of Meetings

The corporation's annual general meeting ("AGM") is the guaranteed annual opportunity for owners to be active in their condominium community. All owners receive notice of this meeting and are entitled to attend, speak, and, if qualified, vote.

From time to time the council or owners want to have other general meetings to conduct business in between AGMs. These meetings are called special general meetings ("SGM").

When To Hold

An AGM must be held annually and not more than 2 months after the corporation's fiscal year end. Section 40 of the Strata Property Act (SPA) sets these time limits, but the corporation's bylaws may be even more specific on the date. SGMs can be held any time the council calls the meeting, per SPA Section 42, or when enough owners ask the council to call a meeting, per SPA Section 43.

Business at the Meeting

The order of business to be conducted (called the agenda) at the AGM is normally set out in the bylaws. If not the council will normally follow a fairly standard agenda that includes:

Call the meeting to order	Committee reports
Determine that there is a quorum	Financial report
Elect a chair, if required	Budget
Proof of notice of meeting	New business (often includes owners' questions and comments)
Approve the agenda	Election of council
Approve minutes of the previous Meeting	Termination
Old Business	Voting
Officers report	

The SPA Section 53 and the corporation's bylaws determine an owner's voting rights. An owner's right to vote can only be negated if, pursuant to SPA Section 53(2) and the corporation's bylaws, the strata corporation is entitled to register a lien against the owner's strata lot under SPA Section 116(1). Owners need to understand that they must be current with the SPA Section 116(1) specified financial obligations to the corporation to enable them to vote. Owners cannot bring money or a cheque to the meeting and hope to get a voting card. They must have dealt with any outstanding amounts utilizing one of the methods set out in SPA Section 116(3) at least the day before the meeting.

How to Prepare

Just as the council prepares, so must owners prepare for the AGM. Consider the following steps:

Watch the council minutes for information about the upcoming meeting (usually sent out well before the actual notice of the meeting).

Think about any items you want discussed at the AGM. Write the items in a letter and send it to the council.

Read the bylaws, meeting notice, agenda and any information sent with the meeting notice. Prepare your comments and questions. Get ready to discuss, motion and vote on motions.

Think about the members on your council. What do you know about their roles? What do the bylaws say about the qualifications for councillors? Are you satisfied with the current councillors' governance of the corporation? Do you know who else is interested in being on the council? What do you know about these people? Are you interested in being a councilor? Do you have the time and the energy to commit to the role? Are you willing to learn and to work hard for all the owners?

Pay your strata fees and any other money owed to the corporation by the day before the meeting.

Arrange to attend the meeting or complete, sign and give your proxy to someone on your behalf. If you choose a proxy, inform that person of your questions or comments to pass on.

If you choose to attend the meeting, plan to arrive 1/2 hour early for registration and take all your documents with you (bylaws, meeting notice, documents sent with the meeting notice, budget, financial statements, etc.).

At the Meeting

At the meeting, register at the door and pick up your voting card and any new information that is being handed out. Find a chair and read any new information. Follow the agenda for the meeting. The Chair of the meeting controls the order in the meeting and makes sure everyone follows the agenda.

When you want to speak at the meeting, raise your hand and wait until the Chair recognizes you. Identify yourself by name and unit number and then state your comments or your motion. If you are unsure and have questions, ask the Chair to help you.

Speak to motions if you have something to add. Ask questions to learn more. Make informed decisions when you vote. Be courteous to other owners and the councillors. Everyone is a volunteer and wants the best for the corporation, even if they hold different views than you do.