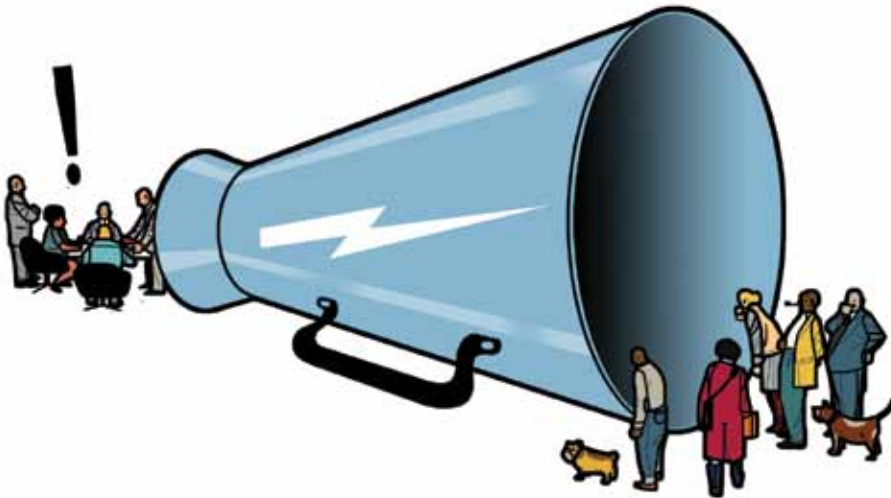




Importance of Communication in Condominium Corporations

Why Can't We Communicate Effectively Within our Condominium Community?



Condo directors often get the short end of the stick when dealing with issues relating to communicating effectively. Communication challenges can take place in many forms and often end up with the perception that Boards and Property Management are working together and no one is representing the owners.

The position of being a condo board director is typically a volunteer position with expectations that can far exceed full time paid positions. In addition to this, there is also a responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interest of the entire community without impacting the livelihood of the owners. To add to this, there is also a risk of being liable for questionable decisions, or decisions made without incurring

the cost of professional guidance.

There can be immense pressure on board members to keep costs down while improving services. Board members are often confronted by owners in corridors, elevators, while grocery shopping, etc. I can say this with confidence because it has happened to me! No matter what positive changes are made in a condominium corporation, there will always be someone who is not happy. Chances are those unhappy people go around saying things to other owners in the community that may not be accurate or are misleading.

Communication is an effective way to educate residents and can give them the tools to think for themselves rather than getting

sidetracked by the opinion of others. What some owners do not realize is that one of the highest priorities for board members should be to ensure that condominium corporations are not neglected while working collaboratively with the corporation's staff and looking out for the best interest of all the owners. Most owners don't realize how much behind the scenes work is involved to help save costs for the corporation.

The challenge is that while the board in my corporation did everything it could to be transparent, owners were not finding out what was happening. What I find lacking in condominium corporations is communication and education. While notices go up saying that maintenance will be done, how many notices go up addressing challenges that owners have? How many notices go up which outline the responsibilities of Board Members? There is often a serious disconnect between expectations of board members and what the board is responsible for doing.

The board is there to govern, and property management is in place to implement. Directors give up their time for the greater good. In return, they can find themselves defamed, abused and even harassed by owners who are not even sure as to what the role of the directors entail.

Communication challenges come in many

forms, and in almost every case they impact the relationship between the board and residents. Whether it is challenges with contractors or residents not being notified of issues or boards not agreeing on what needs to be done. The frustration will always be with the residents.

The world is changing. Today anything that happens at home can become known all over the world almost instantly. So why is it that we cannot communicate effectively within our condominium community?

There can be great transiency within communities – both those who make it up and those who serve it - I can tell you that if you do not want all your efforts to go to waste, then it is important to implement sustainable solutions relating to communication.

The implementation of sustainable solutions will hold future boards and management companies accountable for not communicating. However, in order to achieve this you have to sustain a solution first. You need to choose communication as your

fight and make sure that it happens for a prolonged period of time, so that future boards and property management companies have no choice but to ensure that effective communication continues to take place.

Where does all the email correspondence go when board members or management companies change? All that information in many cases ends up getting lost. I can also tell you from experience, correspondence relating to different suites is not always filed within the corporations archives. This continues to add to the frustration that residents are already feeling as they have to constantly repeat themselves because there are no processes in place to ensure continuity. As a result, the hostility between condo boards and residents continues to intensify.

When interviewing property management companies, do boards put any weight on communication? Do management companies advertise how effective they are with communication? If the answer to these questions are “No”, then challenges will continue for boards that have every intention of being transparent, but have no support in achieving this objective.

Every condominium building will get old and every condominium building will need to do extensive repairs at some point. Through effective communication, condo boards can be transparent and work in partnership with residents and property management on taking care of their homes.

Boards are there to represent the owners. With the right partnerships in place, they can be very effective. Take the time to get to know the people in your building, ask them what their concerns are and feel free to engage them in conversation. Do not be confrontational. Be humble, honest and hard working so that when people engage you in conversation they do not do it out of obligation but out of respect and admiration.

Always remember that directors represent the owners and property management must facilitate a positive relationship between you as a board member and the residents in the building.

Good luck! 



FRAUD

PREVENTION • DETECTION • INVESTIGATION

www.EagleAudit.ca 416.599.1212

CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINER: Judy Sue CFE CPA CGA



CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINER

CONDOMINIUM FRAUD SPECIALISTS
EMBEZZLEMENT • KICKBACKS • CASH LARCENY • FORGERY • THEFT
CONTRACTOR FRAUD • INVOICE FRAUD • PAYROLL FRAUD
EXPERT SUPPORT IN CIVIL & CRIMINAL LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

OUR SKILLS IN CONDO FRAUD FORENSICS AND LOSS RECOVERY ARE UNMATCHED