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All You Need is Love

The Board as a Band

Consider a Condo Board as a Band
and The Collective Owners/Residents
They Serve as Their Audience...



Dr. Linda Ippolito has undertaken some ground breaking work in the field of dispute resolution. When speaking of mediation and other collaborative processes where people work together to find solutions, she is trying to move away from traditional metaphors based in the world of sports and combat. These processes do not exist to create winners and losers and too often such metaphors fail to recognize this, as they embrace an “us vs. them” mentality.

Military-based metaphors, such as suggesting condominium disputes involve “battles” that are “fought” ... “in the trenches” promote not just violent depictions but a notion that seems to forget that, in context, these issues involve our neighbours, who are fellow human beings with whom we exist in community. Instead, what has been proposed are metaphors based in music, like a group of musicians performing together in concert.

While music metaphors can be applied across a variety of situations, there is

something about their application to a condominium Board of Directors that works really well. After all, the directors that comprise a Board often feel as though they are performing - as they interact with residents and owners while wearing a political hat and certainly at the Annual General Meeting when they report on their accomplishments and accept feedback. Perhaps there is something to considering a condo Board like a band and the collective owners/residents they serve as their audience...

Regardless of how long they have been around, every good band needs to practice. For condo directors, this takes the form of studying meeting materials and attending Board meetings prepared to make informed decisions. It extends to being and staying educated through the required mandatory training and beyond through participation at advanced level courses, reading resources (such as this magazine) and making use of Google and other information available at their fingertips to better understand what their

community is facing. This includes establishing rapport with fellow directors - both those who tend to share the same views with them and those who do not. The Rolling Stones attribute much of their success to maintaining open communication, a trait shared by many successful condominium Boards.

That said, there is not a simple, one size fits all formula for the successful operation of a condominium or interactions amongst a condo Board. Not every condominium community has a Mick Jagger and Keith Richards to lead them. However, this does not mean that they cannot succeed.

The Roots are a legendary hip-hop group (and also Jimmy Fallon’s house band). What makes them notable in applying the music metaphor to the successful operation of a condominium Board is that, despite their long-term success, a complicated relationship exists between the group’s leaders. Questlove and Black Thought have travelled in different buses

when touring and recorded in separate studios – each making their own contribution to the success of the band without necessarily always getting along or being the best of friends. If The Roots can find success amidst conflict by letting each member comfortably make their own contribution, surely condominium board members with different ideas can do the same. Remember, it is not about winning or losing. It is about the performance.

Perhaps my favourite aspect of the music metaphor is the concept that performing is not an option, it is inevitable. The show must go on. This definitely applies to the operation of a condominium. If nothing else, it needs to be appreciated when a director does not get their way when it comes to a particular Board decision, as the condominium’s operation cannot come to a standstill... the Board must move on and address other business.

All of the directors on the Board, like members of a band, have a role to play and can make a contribution to success. I will leave the musical genre to you – you can consider your Board to be anything from an orchestra to a garage band to the California Raisins, the key concept surrounds working together to make music and perform, with how you choose to interact with each other making all the difference on your ultimate success.

The film *Almost Famous* will be celebrating its 20th anniversary later this year.

When they are all singing together, it is clear the band’s relationship has been preserved and, once again, everyone is connected. The music brought them together

There is a classic scene in it where the band that is the focus of the film is not getting along while on their tour bus. No one is speaking and there is clearly tension between the bandmates. The Elton John song, *Tiny Dancer*, then starts to play and each member of the band eventually joins in singing along to it. When they are all singing together, it is clear the band’s relationship has been preserved and, once again, everyone is connected. The music brought them together.

In reflecting on that scene, it is interesting that *Tiny Dancer* was used, as that particular song is also famous for containing one of the most popularly misheard lyrics in music. The line “Hold me closer, tiny dancer” has been misunderstood to include a reference to actor Tony Danza (“Hold me closer, Tony Danza”). This helps demonstrate how misunderstand-

ings between Board members can create issues, albeit with less humorous results. To that end, the music metaphor also offers insight as to the importance of everyone on the Board knowing the lyrics – that is, being clear on the Board’s position on matters – before presenting themselves publicly to members of the community. It is important for a Board to present united.

The purpose of sharing this metaphor and suggesting that a condominium Board should look at itself as a band working together to make music and perform is intended to encourage a shift in mindset from the traditional combative metaphors that neglect collaboration and instead fuel conflict by their very nature. Move away from looking at what takes place in your Board Room as a battle and instead view it as a studio. Consider all that work that you do leading up to each AGM as rehearsal and the owners’ meeting itself as your concert. New Business is the encore! This may change your perspective. Help everyone on your Board understand that they have a role to play and must work together to truly give your community their best... whether they are the lead singer or shaking a tambourine in the background. **CV**

Sources:

Linda M. Ippolito, Music, Leadership and Conflict: The art of ensemble negotiation and problem solving (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)

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