

Condo Owners Speak



Medicine Hat Condo Owners Association by Ron Noël

Condo living can be very satisfying and rewarding whether or not one serves on the Board, a committee or helps out with social functions. It is really up to the residents!

I am the Chairman of the Medicine Hat Condo Association (MHCA) which is comprised of 26 individual Condo Corporations. I see many different personalities in condo owners and renters. Many of the Associations belonging to the MHCA are great communities. One I am aware of treats those who rent no different than they do owners. Renters are encouraged to get involved as much as possible, including participation in committees. Their views and opinions are listened to and considered important by the Board of Directors. This may not occur in a majority of condos throughout the province, however my experience is that the more involved residents, including renters are, the smoother the condo operates and the happier residents are. Board members and residents should be cognizant that their little part of the world operates much in the same fashion as a small town and therefore all residents should have a voice. Renters (unless via proxy) do not have a vote or say at an AGM therefore it is all the more important to involve them elsewhere whenever possible.

The Board of Directors of any condominium should take great pride in providing direction to management and good service to the residents. The Board and/or the management company should ensure preventive maintenance practices are followed, in large complexes with central heat and air they should ensure inspection and maintenance logs are maintained.

Self-Management

Another Condo here in the Hat, as are several, is “self-managed” by the Board. They have engaged the services (part-time) of an owner who for a small fee monitors all the mechanical systems (i.e. HVAC systems) in the building, keeps logs on the monitoring of systems and acts as a liaison with contractors to ensure work that is billed for is actually performed to an acceptable standard. This owner reports directly to the Board member whose area of responsibility is Building Operations.

Other members of the Board are responsible for other areas such as parking and security, building grounds, aquatic center/gym, finances and guest rooms. There is a group of owners at this condo who have formed a “Social Club” and they raise funds for charity and to subsidize some owner/resident functions like pot luck dinners and the annual Owners’ Christmas dinner. This condo has also engaged the service of a private contractor to provide administrative assistance such as Board and AGM minutes, other administrative or office duties and bookkeeping etc. Their way of doing things works well for them and has saved them thousands of dollars in management fees because they do most of the work themselves. Their way of doing things may not be the way for all condos however for most it will work provided Board members and owners have the will to make it so.

Condo Living Can Be Satisfying and Rewarding

If your condominium is well managed, by a Board of Directors or a professional manager or management company, life at your condo should be stress free. Getting involved in the “social” aspect of your condominium can also be challenging, build friendships and very satisfying as you see your efforts to better your community come to fruition. If you currently live in a condo or are planning to buy one in the near future, do some research into the condo you are interested in, don’t just ask to see Board Minutes and financials, ask for copies of their “newsletters” and try to talk to current residents; this way you will at least gather information to assist you in deciding if that particular condominium is the right fit for you! Once you buy and move in, get involved! You will find it most rewarding!

We would like to thank Ron for sharing his experiences. Ron may be contacted through his e-mail: ronnoel@telusplanet.net

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