

## **COUNCIL OFFICERS DUTIES**

The following outlines the role and responsibility of the Strata Council. The purpose of this guide is to provide the frame work to build your Strata Council.

The role between the managing agent and the Strata Council is one of collaboration. The Managing Agent provides advice, guidance and carries out the Council's directives. The Strata Council makes the final decisions and may defer to the Agents recommendations. Some Council are very hands on and carry out their own directives. Others simply defer to the professional Property Manager and rarely meet. The dynamics and work loads of each Council Member and each Council as a whole, varies from corporation to corporation. This will depend on the preferences and abilities of Council Members and on requirements of the Strata Corporation.

Strata Property Managers at Quay Pacific Property Management Ltd. are employees and licensed and regulated by the Real Estate Council of British Columbia. It is important to understand that under Legislation of the Strata Property Act and Agency law, the Strata Manager cannot police the Council or the owners or require them to comply with the Strata Property Act or various other legislation.

We encourage you to review this guide to "Council Duties" prior to your first Council meeting. In accordance with the Strata Corporation's Bylaws, you will determine your officers. You may also consider having a discussion about your roles and how much of the responsibility you wish to take on. As mentioned, this is a guide to the framework of a Council. You may choose to take on more or less of the responsibilities and that will need to be communicated to your Strata Manager.

**President** – Chairs meetings, tie break vote, point person in emergencies. The president is the main contact between the council and management firm. Additionally, they are responsible for the following:

- for issues that do not get addressed by other members.
- for keeping track of the ongoing issues
- coordinate the updating of records that are not the responsibility of the management firm.
- ensure the remaining council members are fulfilling their roles.

**VP** – Same as president in his/her absence, and often shares the duties of the president. The vice president should be able to work closely with the president, and is often the "work horse" for the strata, keeping apprised of the corporation's activities. They will typically take on larger tasks and assist the president in organizing the council.

**Treasurer** – The treasurer reviews the financial statements, so they must be familiar with the Balance Sheet and Budget comparison reports. Each month, they will be looking for the following:

- ensure spending is allocated properly
- advise council on status of expenses and funds
- review invoices, ensuring all are correct.

In preparing the budget each year, the Treasurer should be able to advise the council on where spending has gone over/under, and why, and should further be able to explain the budget, in general terms, to the owners at an AGM.

When property/strata work is ordered directly by a member of council, the invoice must be mailed to the treasurer so a signature can be obtained from the appropriate delegate authorizing payment. It can then be submitted to the management firm for processing. This streamlines the accounting flow so vendors are paid on time.

Further, the Treasurer should assist in the collection of maintenance fees where possible. A phone call to an owner in arrears may save time later, as owners often do not know what they owe or why. When this is not addressed early on, it leads to late fees, collection letters, and lengthy discussions at council meetings.

**Secretary** – The secretary’s primary responsibility is communication. They must read all correspondence on a monthly basis so they are apprised of questions and issues raised by owners and management’s response. The secretary is also responsible for posting notices, proof reading minutes as required, and typing minutes if no manager is present at a council meeting. Additionally, they are responsible for revising the meeting agenda or minutes. It is their responsibility to ensure that the old business and new business are handled appropriately. If council does their own distribution of the minutes, the secretary coordinates this and ensures all copies are delivered as requested.

**Members at Large/Committees** – All remaining members should be designated as point persons for various contracts and on-site requirements, and should be delegated to any committees that are formed. Each committee should submit a report (written preferred) at each council meeting. In an effort to improve financial controls, spending authority can also be delegated to committees. Typical committee/liaison requirements are noted below:

**Landscaping** – The liaison to landscaping is responsible for monitoring the contract, as well as being the point person for dealing with the landscapers. This requires a review of the quality of work and ensures that areas are not missed.

**Janitorial** – The liaison to janitorial services is responsible for monitoring the contract, as well as being the point person for dealing with the janitors. This would require a review of the quality of cleaning, and looking for possible ways to improve the service.

**Maintenance** – General maintenance requires constant upkeep. The maintenance committee should be responsible in assisting management and council with meeting contractors for repair estimates, obtaining quotes, and overall monitoring of the general maintenance needs. Generally, the main maintenance contracts are divided up as follows:

- HVAC/Plumbing,
- Swimming Pool/Recreation Facility
- Locks/Doors/Garage Doors
- Pest Control
- Fire & Safety
- Garbage

They are also called upon to confirm or double check on reported maintenance needs, such as a Fire Trouble alarms or damage reported by an owner. This assists the management firm in verifying the need for a service call (thus reducing your costs). If an issue cannot wait for the next scheduled visit from the management firm, only then will a call be placed to dispatch the appropriate company for repairs and/or maintenance.

**Bylaws** – A bylaw committee is recommended to keep track of enforcement issues. The committee is not designed to walk around and take note of bylaws that need enforcement. Rather, a written complaint must be received prior to enforcement (this complaint can come from a council member). It is recommended that the bylaw committee be involved in discussing typical bylaw complaints with the reported offender prior to a formal letter being sent. This can free up time at council meetings, where minor infractions are dealt with before they become recurring issues. At each meeting, a report can be submitted outlining what bylaws have been enforced, the action taken, and any decision to order a fine that can be made by the council. *(Note: you cannot delegate the authority to place a fine. This must be decided by the council and recorded in the minutes).* Parking is a common subcommittee for bylaws, where owners at some buildings use visitor parking as an extra stall. This requires on-site members to ticket and tow vehicles that are in violation of the parking bylaws. Effective January 1, 2014 Strata Corporations will be required to identify how parking and storage lockers are allocated on Form B (Information Certificate). It is the Strata Council's responsibility to confirm the accuracy of the storage lockers and parking stall numbers on or before the above noted date.

**Security (Key Fobs/DVR)** – Distribution of fobs should take place on-site as opposed to off-site at the management firm. A master spreadsheet will record the fob(s) handed out to each owner, at which time the soft copy can be updated on-site without delay. Similarly, if there is a need to review the DVR (cameras), then an on-site member can save and record the footage right away. Once the footage is saved, the software can be exported to a private computer for review. If the strata have block watch, the security committee is responsible for security updates and break-in notification.

**Move Ins/Outs** – This is often handled by the Secretary. They are responsible for taking the move in/move out information provided by management firm, and coordinating the process. They will post a Notice regarding the move and co-ordinate the padding/locking of the Elevator. This person could also be trained to update the Enterphone for name changes.

**Legal** – In the event of an ongoing need for legal counsel, it is recommended that the President or V.P. be the contact for the lawyer. Management firms charges extra for any legal matters and therefore funnelling ongoing legal issues through management creates an additional expense.

**Management** – Typically the President or Vice President is responsible for monitoring the management firm contract. Since the President's role is largely to keep the council organized and to stay on top of tasks, they become familiar with how the management firm operates. Therefore, they are able to advise the council of the management firm's performance including whether or not the contract is being fulfilled. Quarterly update meetings outside the monthly meetings are a good way to review all the ongoing issues.

**Email** – One person should be designated as the liaison between council and the management firm. Typically, this role is assigned to the President or Vice President. In the decision making process (when done through email), they are responsible for gathering the council's feedback, and reporting the final directive to the management firm. Please do not copy the management firm on all 'discussion' emails. Rather, send a final directive to your manager when a decision has been made.

Please use a clear, concise description on the subject line when sending emails.

In order to clarify the communication protocol for owners, the following reminder will be included in copies of meeting minutes that are distributed.

**Preferred Communication Methods**

Owners are reminded that correspondence left in the on-site drop boxes is not deemed formal correspondence. The following are the accepted means of correspondence:

- **Mail** a letter to the management firm
- **Fax** a letter to the management firm
- **Email** to the management firm (email is not recommended as a reliable means of initial communication as it may be filtered out from an 'unknown sender', so please call to confirm that Management has received the email.)
- **Phone** calls are also accepted for basic account inquiries and for updates, but are not an appropriate method for making complaints or bringing matters to the attention of the strata council.

***Note: Emergencies should be reported by phone right away. If this occurs outside of regular office hours, phone 604-521-0876 and follow the prompts. Thank you!***