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Effective Meetings

Series: Effective Governance for Executive Bodies of Strata Communities

Part 4 of 12: Effective Meetings

Owners corporations are renowned for meetings that seem to lack purpose, or drag on too long.

This is one of the reasons why it is hard to get people involved. A well-run owners corporation should pride itself on purposeful meetings that run to the prescribed time and never for more than two hours.

The basic ingredients for this are:

1. A well thought through agenda;
2. Papers provided in advance;
3. An understanding of what decisions are needed;
4. An appropriate balance between monitoring what has been done and strategising about what needs to be done; and
5. Active debate (more about this and how the chairperson can promote active debate next week).
A well thought through agenda will pace the group by suggesting time frames for certain business. For example:
 - First 15 minutes – agree additional agenda items (if any), confirm previous minutes and identify outstanding matters from previous meetings.
 - Second 15 minutes – an update from the owners corporation manager on tasks completed and the progress of tasks outstanding.
 - One-hour discussion – the main matters requiring decisions at meetings.
 - Last 30 minutes - reviewing accounts, budgets and outstanding levies.

If a committee has only four meetings a year, then for the one-hour substantive discussion you might plan to deal with some predictable issues:

- First meeting after the AGM - spend one hour to induct new committee members and adopt the draft strategic plan for the committee (see part 2 in this series).
- Second meeting – spend one hour to review compliance issues.
- Third meeting – spend one hour on repairs and maintenance to ensure preservation of value.
- Fourth meeting – agree the budget for the forthcoming AGM.



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Purposeful Meetings

The most important thing that an owners corporation manager or chairperson can do to ensure a purposeful meeting, apart from preparing a meaningful agenda, is to ensure that the meeting starts on time and finishes on time – not more than two hours later. Everything expands to the available time so by publicising the time for the meeting to end, you will ensure a more purposeful meeting.

Next week: In the Chair - Chairing Meetings



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