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COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY VIA THE MINUTES OF THE STRATA COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Series: Effective Communication is the most important issue for lot owners

Part 9 of 12: Communicating Effectively via the minutes of the Strata Community Meetings

An experienced chairperson of a strata community once told a conference of strata managers to forget about newsletters and websites until such time as the industry was able to get the minutes right. This was tough but fair criticism. Here are some points about effective minute keeping.

Record decisions not debate

Minutes may be either “minutes of resolution” or “minutes of narration”. The former describes the decision but not the discussion or debate. We suggest that you prepare minutes of resolution to avoid subjectivity and bias. Otherwise, the views of the most outspoken member will dominate the minutes and create an impression that does not accurately record the views of the collective.

Note controversy only when agreed

Often a person with a strongly held view will want the minutes to note certain things. Again, to avoid the minutes being hijacked, these requests should only be adhered to when the meeting agrees. So, a person with strongly held views should move that the meeting note certain matters. The meeting can agree to note the matter without agreeing with the substance of the point. However, the note should only be made when the majority agrees that it is in the interest of better communication that the matter be noted.

Be brief

A motion is a proposed resolution before it is carried by the meeting. When carried, a motion becomes a resolution. Motions should not contain more than one sentence. If you adopt this rule motions will be clear and specific. The motion should be able to be read and made sense of without prior knowledge of the subject matter.

Record and circulate minutes early

Minutes should be written as soon as possible after the meeting so that matters discussed are fresh in the mind of the recorder. Similarly, minutes should be circulated early for the same reason but also to prompt action on the part of those with work to do following the meeting.



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Correctly note amendments

At the next meeting the minutes should be confirmed as a formal declaration of the facts recorded in the minutes. This is not ratification of the decisions made at the previous meeting. No such ratification is necessary. If the draft is incorrect, a motion to amend the minutes should be moved stating the amendments precisely. For example, the motion to amend the draft minutes might be "that the full stop in the second paragraph of the draft minutes be removed and the following words added – "but details of the proposal must be forwarded to all members". Then, a motion should be put that the minutes, as amended, be taken as read and confirmed.

Next week: Responding to Upset Owners or Tenants