

WHAT CONDO DWELLERS ARE READING



MASTERING E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

For those who understand how to utilize it properly, e-mail has become the most powerful non-media form of communication of our lifetime. Businesses, organizations, groups and individuals that make effective use of it get results.

For condominium communities, this means communicating information to residents both individually and as a group.

CONTINUED PAGE 5 ...

FROM THE EDITOR

E-mail has become the most powerful and effective form of communication of our lifetime.

The publisher of **Toronto Condo News** was one of the first to embrace e-mail when it became available. This month in **Mastering E-mail Communication**, our feature article, he shares insights into this communication medium and how condominium communications can make the best use of it.

In **Navigating Condo Consultants**, page 2, we look at how successful condo boards effectively utilize condo consultants to obtain useful knowledge rather than as an easy way to avoid undesirable or uninteresting tasks.

Baby Boomers on Condo Boards and **Wedded Directors** both look more closely at the composition of condo boards and its impact on decision making.

A PEEK

<i>Navigating Condo Consultants</i>	Page 4
<i>The Condo Budget</i>	Page 8
<i>Operating a Home-Based Business</i>	Page 9
<i>Wedded Directors</i>	Page 10
<i>Reserve Funds now Mandatory in BC</i>	Page 11
<i>Baby Boomers on Condo Boards</i>	Page 14
<i>When your Building Leaks, Act Immediately</i>	Page 15
<i>The Board-Management-Owner Relationship</i>	Page 16
<i>Working With and Interpreting a Status Certificate</i>	Page 19
<i>One Condo Manager Perspective</i>	Page 20
<i>Amenity Must Haves</i>	Page 21
<i>Higher Building Benefits</i>	Page 22
<i>It's Hard Being a Plant in the City</i>	Page 23

1-905-515-5879
info@hcts.ca
www.hcts.ca



**Heavy Cooling Tower
Industrial Services Inc.**



We have been empowering industries across Ontario with unmatched expertise in cooling towers for over 10 years.



Cleaning & Inspection



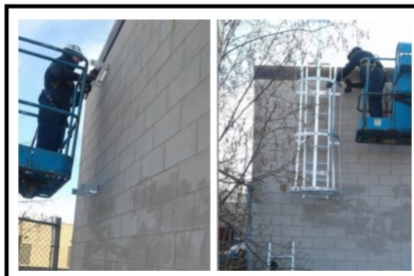
Refurbishment



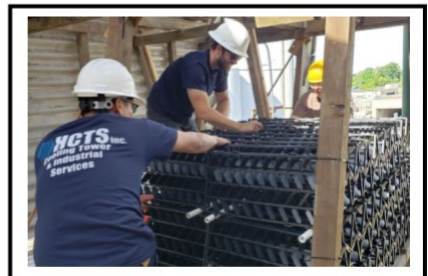
Repairs



Industrial Coatings



Safe Access Equipment



Parts Supply & more

From the largest restoration, repair or maintenance project, to the sale of the smallest part, HCTS always delivers quality at competitive rates.

TORONTO CONDO NEWS IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

TORONTO CONDO NEWS IS DELIVERED TO CONDO RESIDENTS, BOARD MEMBERS AND MANAGEMENT IN MORE THAN 1,500 CONDO BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT TORONTO AND THE GTA.

To receive your free subscription to Toronto Condo News via e-mail, inquire about advertising or submit an article for publication, visit our website at TOcondonews.com or contact us at TOcondonews@gmail.com.

CONTACT US

TOcondonews.com

TOcondonews@gmail.com

Publisher/Editor - P. Shoom

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

NAVIGATING CONDO CONSULTANTS

The Condo Act encourages condo directors to rely on consultants to obtain necessary expertise. This approach is wholly endorsed by the condo consulting industry which includes accountants, engineers, lawyers and other specialists. All serve an important role in condominium management and governance.



Yet there is danger in placing too much reliance on consultants while failing to understand the inner workings of the community and property you manage.

Too many condominium directors accept the word of a consultant or service provider without asking questions to better understand what is provided or will be delivered. Directors, focused on protection against litigation for their decisions and failing to do the necessary work, are more likely to make poorer decisions. Specialists and consultants have a narrow area of expertise. They are unlikely to understand your building and community as well as long-serving directors and management.

The fiascos we all know as ArriveCan and McKinsey & Company are textbook examples of laziness and incompetence.

Two of three companies working on the ArriveCan system for customs and health information came in dramatically over budget. Each had only two employees and outsourced the work. They billed nearly \$60 million (estimated) for a software application that should not have cost anything close to this amount. This business strategy worked well for the consulting companies but not so well for the government that failed to provide reasonable oversight over the

CONTINUED PAGE 4 ...

CONDO BOARDS & MANAGEMENT

NAVIGATING CONDO CONSULTANTS... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



project.

McKinsey & Company has billed the federal government \$200 million and is

reported to have shown a disregard for contracting rules. This could only have been possible because the government failed to uphold these rules. A government unable to manage the more basic task of managing consultants and failing to explain why so much is being spent on them appear to be hiding their own inability to make decisions. It is easier to follow the advice of consultants than to develop internal expertise and knowledge.

Condo boards should take care not to fall into the same trap.

While there is a need for condo consultants and service providers, some condo boards lean too heavily on them to avoid tasks they may have to learn or find uninteresting. This allows condo boards to avoid the hard work and trial that needs to be undertaken in-house to develop expertise and experience. Condo boards more focused on protecting against litigation fail to exercise their own judgement in evaluating the advice of consultants and service providers, and applying or evaluating recommendations in light of their situation and community.

Condominium corporations, like other companies, require certain skills and expertise to be successful. An overreliance on consultants tends to detract from quality. It increases the likelihood that a condominium corporation will be cheated or

scammed by improperly vetted consultants offering something that is not needed, delivering poor work that costs extra to fix, or providing an inappropriate solution. While the Condo Act encourages the use of consultants, it does not require condo boards to accept their advice without proper consideration.

Gaining knowledge through research, study or firsthand experience pays dividends. This education is missed when unnecessary work gets outsourced and insights are never communicated to condo boards and management.

Delving into projects, rules, financials, budgets and reserve fund studies teaches condo boards which ideas, policies or projects are worth pursuing and spending money on. These are skills never learned if there is a tendency to rely on the advice of consultants without asking detailed questions and understanding the answers.

In immersing themselves in the work needed to maintain and build a condominium community, condo boards learn to identify problems, manage risk, and find new ways to better the community and its infrastructure. They develop a depth of knowledge that helps them to be more effective. They become more open to ideas, critique and exploration, which is less likely to occur when a final product is delivered by an outside consultant or vendor.



MASTERING E-MAIL COMMUNICATION ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Toronto Condo News relies on e-mail technology not only for magazine distribution but to stay in touch with its advertisers and contributors. Its publisher has been at the forefront of e-mail communication since the 1990s and has agreed to share his insights for readers of **Toronto Condo News**.

A Brief History of E-mail



Personal computing devices as we have come to know them began in the 1980s. These were, initially, stand-alone devices primarily

for use in business. Early software applications were developed for word processing and spreadsheets.

The graphical display now used on all personal computing devices first appeared in 1992. This was the beginning of mass adoption of computers by consumers. Early efforts to connect these personal computing devices also began in the 1990s. E-mail was one of many applications that began to develop. It started with the first online services, America Online and CompuServe, available to consumers. The internet was in its infancy and few individuals had access to a personal computing device, let alone any access to the internet. Among those utilizing e-mail, it was necessary to purchase specialized software for accessing, preparing and sending messages.

One of the earliest business uses for e-mail, other than general communications, was by Canadian Corporate News, a major newswire service at the time. E-mail became a way to efficiently circumvent traditional media by delivering business news directly to those interested in receiving it. There was no longer a dependence on media to selectively report business news. Investors receiving this information could improve their investment returns over those waiting to obtain information from television, newspaper or magazines.

Three things started changing by the early 2000s. Computers dropped in price and were purchased by more consumers. The internet became more advanced making it easier for computers to communicate with each other. Finally, the browser became easier to use and more powerful. People and businesses began experimenting with what could be done using the computer and internet. One of the earliest combined uses of the internet and e-mail was to track shipped packages. UPS and Federal Express assigned tracking numbers to each shipped package. Packages were scanned during shipment until reaching their final destination. This allowed shipments to be tracked for those in possession of a tracking number frequently sent to them via e-mail.

As internet applications developed, e-mail became a "free" service. Anyone with internet access could obtain an e-mail account and software allowing them to communicate with others. This worked and continues to work well for individuals. It has proven inadequate for those requiring more professional communications reaching larger numbers of people while requiring more sophisticated systems for building distribution lists, searching and record keeping for electronic communications.

CONTINUED PAGE 6

MASTERING E-MAIL COMMUNICATION ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Internet access to information of all types, including e-mail, has become so pervasive it has disrupted, changed or destroyed many businesses, industries and communication methods faster than most thought possible.

Toronto Condo News' immense success is partially due to its ability to communicate with readers, condo vendors and its advertisers professionally and effectively through e-mail. It is not uncommon for the company to send more than 10,000 messages in a single day with targeted and relevant information reaching those requesting it.

Condominium Corporation E-mail Communications Today

With both personal electronic devices and private e-mail accounts so common, the vast majority of condo residents in a community can receive and likely prefer e-mail communication. This creates efficiencies and cost savings for a condominium corporation that learns how to make effective use of this medium.



Anyone can easily send an e-mail. It is much harder to put out a communication that is coherent, makes sense and motivates

a recipient to take action. For businesses, taking action may mean getting the recipient to make a purchase. For a condominium corporation, taking action is more likely to mean getting residents

acting in an agreeable manner, attending a meeting or social event, or curtailing certain undesirable actions. This requires writing and formatting skills to make messaging easy to read and understand. Too many words bunched together using a small text size tends not to be read let alone understood. Messages require concise wording, headings, proper formatting and use of colour if they are to have their desired effect.

While the cost of a Gmail and other e-mail services is ideal (free), they are inadequate for the needs and requirements of a condominium community. They are practical for communicating with vendors, service providers and others that do not own or reside in the community.

Condominium management has business and governance requirements requiring that communications among residents, owners, directors and management not only be sent and received but also retained and relied on. Finding a specific communication from five years ago, out of the many thousands sent and received each and every year, is next to impossible using free e-mail services if it even continues to exist when needed. A condo board wanting to know how many noise complaints originate from a specific unit over the past three years may not be possible, or practical, without a proper system in place to manage what can easily be tens of thousands of communications. Free e-mail accounts are not designed to accommodate these requirements.

Condominium corporation e-mail accounts should be under the control of the corporation. Any free e-mail account provided by a management company or condominium manager is even worse than relying on one established by the corporation.

CONTINUED PAGE 7

MASTERING E-MAIL COMMUNICATION ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Not only is it a poor tool for the task but whatever records retained in the account are not owned or accessible to the corporation. At such time as a new manager or management company is retained, these records may not be transferrable to the corporation.

Condominium communities are fortunate to have available to them many effective and economical solutions to not only e-mail communication but owner and resident records, and records of the corporation. Condo Management Software offers a great many benefits including connecting all communications to specific owners and tenants for

easy access even years into the future.

E-mail is perhaps the greatest advancement in communication of our lifetime. Making the most of this powerful medium benefits everyone in a community.



THE MOST POWERFUL SUITE OF ACCOUNTING AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APP



IN PERSON & ONLINE OWNERS MEETINGS & VOTING



ONLINE ACCOUNTING



AUTOMATED CONDO & HOA FEES AND RENT COLLECTIONS



AI POWERED AP PROCESS AUTOMATION

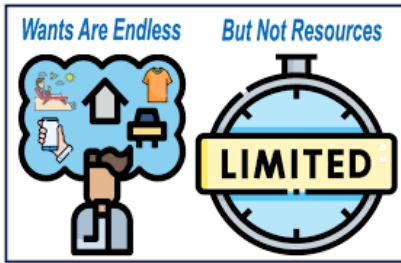


ELECTRONIC SUPPLIER PAYMENT PROCESSING



BUILDING OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE





THE CONDO BUDGET

The condo budget is a plan to help manage your corporation finances by figuring out how much money you get, spend and save. It helps to balance income with savings and expenses, and is a guide to future plans. Individuals, condominium corporations and cities all rely on budgets for financial planning.

The want is limitless. The money is not!

Condominium corporations should have their budgets finalized prior to commencement of their fiscal year. Failing in this, condo boards operate without fiscal discipline. There is no plan for how condo fees are to be spent, and no way to ensure condo boards are acting prudently. Without a budget, a condo board does not have measurable benchmarks and is not held accountable for their spending.

Toronto has a similar process. The city is required to have presented, and ideally approved by council, their annual budget prior to January 1. If there is no budget by this date, the city is taxing and spending without proper scrutiny and approval from elected representatives and voters. Toronto failed to complete their budget on time so started 2023 with no fiscal plan. Condominium corporations should not be following the example of city officials.

Everyone is financially stretched. Budgets are essential to understand how much money is available and what it is to be spent on.

Condominium corporations, like the city, have tax and spend authority. Without a budget to control

overzealous spending, and as a measurement tool, the system breaks down. There can be no trust in spending practices of the corporation without a budget to compare intentions with actual results.

Condo boards deliver their budget before the fiscal year commences. This is a detailed plan on how they intend to spend money entrusted to them by condo owners. At the end of the fiscal year, actual spending is compared with the budget. A deficit exists when

spending exceeds revenues and must be financed by a prior surplus or revenues from the next year. Condo fees can be increased to pay a deficit. In extreme cases, a special assessment may be implemented or a loan taken.

Budgeting is not an exact science so there will be deviations because nobody can accurately predict the future. Boards and management unable to end their year close to their budget without explanation have a problem. Those unable to do so for consecutive years lack financial skills essential to the continued success of their community.

**The want is limitless ...
The money is not!**

OPERATING A HOME-BASED BUSINESS



The transition to remote work has been taxing on high-rise communities.



Home Business

It is reasonable for condo communities to allow commercial activities in units while restricting what type of commercial activities are

acceptable. One approach would be to restrict activities that involve client visitations, displays visible from the outside, deliveries of merchandise, resale of manufactured items, structural alterations to the suite and those that cause noise, vibration, smoke, odours, heat, humidity or glare.

More are cooking at home with some operating a restaurant or bakery business. People stop by to pick up their orders and neighbours are forced to deal with distasteful odours. Heavier traffic in the parking area becomes a danger to pedestrians and visitor parking becomes unavailable.

Not all home-based businesses are suitable for condominium buildings.

Consulting businesses work well. These include computer-based businesses, writing and research services, and counselling or therapy services. These businesses tend not to have a significant number of clients visiting the "office". While some commercial activity may be prohibited, working from home on behalf of an employer or operating a business that

does not involve customer traffic or employees may be acceptable.

Businesses that have clients/guests/patients waiting in condo lobbies or common areas may contravene condo rules.

Residential condominium corporation declarations typically have provisions stating that the unit can only be used or occupied as a private single-family residence. Working from home or running a business is allowed so long as the business activity is quiet, does not have many visitors, and does not negatively impact on common areas. Certain activities may be restricted if they increase liability or costs for the corporation, or cause a nuisance for other residents.

Operating a business from home without proper insurance is risky. Residential insurance policies do not anticipate the risks inherent in operating a business. Activities that can impact on or potentially result in cancellation of residential insurance may be prohibited in a condominium building. If a fire is caused when cooking for family or friends, this would be covered under a residential insurance policy. This same policy is unlikely to be valid for a fire caused by cooking for paying clients including take-out deliveries. There would be no coverage if someone sues for food poisoning.

Any resident injured while exercising in common areas would likely be covered under their personal insurance policy. When a class is sanctioned by the

CONTINUED PAGE 10



WEDDED DIRECTORS



Having a husband and wife both serve on the condo board may not be the best idea in an ideal world. The world is not ideal so this can

be acceptable in some communities.

Who can serve as a condo director is determined by the corporation's governing documents. Unless specifically prohibited, both husband and wife may be allowed to serve as condo directors at the same time.

There is nothing wrong with husband and wife both serving as condo directors, although some may view

this as one household having excessive influence over the affairs of the corporation. So long as directors recuse themselves on matters directly affecting them, this does not need to be a problem.

Communities that find it difficult to find individuals, or qualified and capable individuals, to serve as condo directors may find that allowing husband and wife to both serve as condo directors is the only way to find a sufficient number of qualified and capable candidates.



OPERATING A HOME-BASED BUSINESS... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

condominium corporation and potential injuries are covered by the corporation policy there could be higher premiums, separate insurance coverage required by the provider of the class, or a liability form making participants responsible for injuries or accidents that arise.

Condominium corporation documents limiting the use of suites for residential purposes are generally intended to discourage nuisance behaviour, activities that utilize common areas for commercial purposes or which negatively impact on condo

residents.

Businesses that do not undertake activities noticeable by management and neighbours are generally not a problem. Those that negatively affect neighbours are likely to be frowned upon.



RESERVE FUNDS NOW MANDATORY IN BC



Ridiculous as it sounds to those who live in Ontario, British Columbia has finally made reserve fund studies mandatory as of July 1, 2024.

That province now requires depreciation reports every five years for strata (condo) corporations, as compared to Ontario's requirement that mandates reserve fund studies every three years with the intent of preventing budget shortfalls and unexpected costs.

Strata owners can no longer waive rules that otherwise require them to obtain a depreciation report. Prior to this date, the requirement to obtain a depreciation report could be waived by an annual 75 percent vote of owners.

Reserve funds, or depreciation reports as they are called in BC, can and frequently are underfunded because of the latitude afforded the condo board in their preparation. Construction or renovation costs are often greater than estimated in these reports,

CONTINUED PAGE 12...

IMAGINE
CREATE
ACHIEVE

a sustainable future

We've encountered almost every possible building-related issue!

Egis, formerly known as McIntosh Perry, provides a full range of consulting engineering and technical solutions that encompasses every stage of a project.

Our services includes :

- Reserve Fund Studies
- Rehabilitation/Restoration
- Hazardous Materials - Environmental Health and Safety
- Performance Audits
- Roofing

info.north-america@egis-group.com



egis

RESERVE FUNDS NOW MANDATORY IN BC... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

and there is considerable flexibility in deciding which reserve fund items actually get undertaken and when. The result is that far too many condominium corporations require special assessments to rectify the problems and costs created by these failures.

Some Ontario condominium corporations choose to have their reserve fund studies updated annually. This gives them a better understanding of actual vs. expected spend, and allows them to better understand their current and future financial situation.

Jon Juffs of [Egis Canada](#) prepares reserve fund studies in both Ontario and British Columbia and explains differences between the two provinces. "One difference between Ontario and BC condominium laws is that BC strata corporations can't use their reserve fund to pay for expenditures unless they are recommended in a depreciation report except for certain stated exceptions such as expenditures relating to electric vehicle charging infrastructure and safety. All other expenditures require approval of 75 percent of strata owners."

This is a stronger protection than in Ontario which, in contrast, allows condominium boards to spend reserve fund amounts on anything considered to be a "major repair or replacement".

For too many years, strata owners in BC have suffered and paid the cost of failing to require a reserve fund study. Ontario, despite requiring a more practical approach, allows too much flexibility in how the fund can be used which leads to its misuse. Neither province has found a way to require condo/strata boards to contribute sufficient funds to ensure that special assessments are unnecessary.

A blending of both Ontario and BC approaches, combined with establishing adequate minimum contributions, could lead to stronger reserve funds for stratas and condominium corporations.



**Selling to the Toronto & GTA Condo Community?
Condo Resource Guide 2025 is where you need to be!**

Condo Resource Guide 2025

Toronto's #1 source for Condo Professionals to the Toronto & GTA Condo Community!



Click here for rates and information

Reserve your spot today - deadline is October 31

CONDOLAND IN 2023

A Snapshot of the Condominium Industry in Ontario in 2023

CONDOLAND
A Snapshot of the Condominium Industry in Ontario in 2023

ACMO
Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario

1.7 MILLION Ontarians Live in a Condo

987,302 Condominium Units

There are a total of **12,690 condo corporations** registered in the province with **43,630 active condo directors**. There are **2,075 self-managed** condominiums, and **401 Licensed Condominium Management Providers**.

63% of condo corporations have less than 75 units
12% of condo corporations have between 76-115 units
25% of condo corporations have more than 116 units

Year	Units
2001	270,000+ units
2006	360,000+ units
2015	750,000+ units
2020	820,000+ units
2022	953,000+ units
2023	987,000+ units

825 Registered Condominium Managers (RCM)

31% of condo managers have committed to delivering a higher level of professionalism by earning and maintaining their **RCM designation**.

37 ACMO 2000 Certified Condo Management Firms

Over 9% of condominium management providers pursue a higher standard by having achieved the ACMO 2000 Certification, the only quality management system designed for condo management firms.

4555 Licenced Condo Managers in Ontario including:

- 2667 General License holders**
- 1884 Limited License holders**

Sources: Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario (ACMO), April 2024; Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO) 2022-23 Annual Report; Condominium Management Regulatory Authority of Ontario (CMRAO) April 2024; Stats Canada Quarterly Population Estimates, 2024.

This infographic - a snapshot of the condominium industry in Ontario in 2023 - is created by the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario (ACMO).

Information in the infographic comes from ACMO, Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO), Condominium Management Regulatory Authority of Ontario (CMRAO) and Statistics Canada.

BABY BOOMERS ON CONDO BOARDS



Too many baby boomers never learned to manage money. This may partially explain why so many condominium communities are dependent on special

assessments.

Baby boomers are the first generation addicted to easy money and debt. They lived in a world that was safer and more stable. There was no world war. Most never served in the army and failed to develop the discipline this entails. During much of this time there was easy credit which made it easier to earn a comfortable living, own a car and buy a house.

Unlike prior generations, baby boomers willingly took on debt to buy what they could not afford. They then passed this habit to their children and grandchildren who took self-gratification to a new level. We now live in a world where few know how to support a normal life without credit or being in debt. Nobody seems content to live within their means.

Baby boomers are now in their retirement years. They sit on and often dominate condo boards. Having created a world dependent on debt and borrowing, and passing their financial habits to their children and grandchildren, condo boards they volunteer to sit on are increasingly dependent on special assessments to pay for their inability to set condo fees at a level sufficient to maintain their home and community.

HOARDING A FIRE RISK



The fire started when a light bulb made contact with another item in the room, likely a pillow case or box, while residents were out of the room. It spread to other units in the building. The fire caused \$500,000 in damage

and started in a unit containing "a large amount of household possessions packed densely throughout the unit" according to a judge who required residents to pay for damages.

According to the presiding judge, the residents "created an objectively foreseeable and unreasonable risk of harm" to other residents by keeping the unit in a "near-hoarding state." The resident did not maintain insurance despite being required to do so.

Hoarding in condo units occur after people downsize to a condominium, or when hoarders accumulate excessive amounts of items they are unwilling to dispose of. While building management is unlikely to proactively check units for hoarding or other dangerous situations, they authorize others to periodically check units to ensure working fire safety systems, undertake repairs or other purposes. These are opportunities for management to obtain reports on unit conditions. These reports should be reviewed and action taken when potential hazards are identified.

WHEN YOUR BUILDING LEAKS, ACT IMMEDIATELY



Delaying water-related building repairs is dangerous and can cause costs to increase exponentially.

When something is leaking in a condominium or high-rise building, repairs should be immediate. Water leaking into a building from outside, or from pipes inside the building, rarely remains a localized problem. Water travels from unit-to-unit often through common areas causing damage, accelerating deterioration, and supporting microbial growth. Until leaks are fixed and damage repaired, these conditions can damage personal valuables, put common property at risk of premature repair, and create air quality problems that adversely affect otherwise healthy individuals. Metals rust, weaken and eventually collapse. Walls and finishings get damaged.

“The condo board is responsible for any water penetration coming in from the facade or roof, and making necessary repairs” explains Jon Juffs of [Egis](#)

[Canada](#). “They may need to hire an engineer to determine the cause of water infiltration which may be a leaking wall, window, door, latent construction defect, faulty pipes, bad drains, condensate formation or mismanagement of water, or a roof that needs replacing.”

Once the source is identified, the corporation needs to hire a company to undertake repairs, conduct regular maintenance, or train staff to be alert to the symptoms for early intervention.

“Flooding in a unit always impacts other units or common areas” is a reminder by Lee Hopwood of [RespondPlus Restoration Services](#) that should not be forgotten. While unit owners are responsible for water damage occurring in their unit which damages common areas and other units, the board has a responsibility to repair common areas. They need to understand where water is coming from and ensure unit repairs are done correctly.”



LEAKY PIPES?

WWW.LEACSHIELD.COM
WWW.WATER-SHIELD.CA

ELIMINATE PINHOLE LEAKS FOR GOOD

Save on urgent pipe repairs, no plumber calls
Reduce operating costs & condo fees, save reserve funds
Continue using existing piping, never replace it

PREVENT NASTY FLOOD DAMAGE

Real-time flood detection & notification
Avoid extensive flood damage

1-855-946-1783

INFO@LEACSHIELD.COM

See recent case studies on our website





THE BOARD-MANAGEMENT- OWNER RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between a condo board and management is unique. In most residential and commercial buildings not governed by a condo board, the manager is the landlord or a representative acting on their behalf.

In a condominium community, the role of management is to support the board of directors, which is generally composed of volunteers having little or no formal training in or knowledge of condominium governance. The manager handles day-to-day operations of the corporation, supports the board in their efforts to enhance resident living standards, manages financial operations, and is responsible for initiatives or projects undertaken by the board. This requires a more collaborative working relationship.

The success of this relationship between the board and manager can enhance or undermine a residential community. A good manager will compensate for a board's inexperience in day-to-day residential building management. They rarely receive recognition for this because it is a basic expectation of owners. Poor performance will nearly always be blamed on management despite failures of the condo board.

The condo board is elected by owners who otherwise have little or no involvement in the management of their building. They do have high expectations and demand greater input by virtue of ownership. Maintaining a harmonious relationship between owners and the condo board requires a degree of ongoing communication that can be challenging.

The working relationship is one where the condo board is responsible for the operation of a condominium community. They make decisions, recommend projects or changes, and establish priorities. The condominium manager's job is to handle day-to-day functions and provide their management expertise in all operational areas. This can include administrative tasks, communication with residents and the board, financial management, vendor management, property maintenance and board guidance. They can be required to manage projects and work with professionals such as accountants, lawyers and engineers. A good manager will inform the board when they are not performing their fiduciary responsibilities, or when out of compliance with local laws or the Condo Act.

An experienced board improves the relationship. They have a better understanding of how the property needs to be managed, and facilitate the decision-making process. They provide support and resources to the manager. An inexperienced board struggles to make decisions and can be less able to see the "big picture."

The most effective boards are those with a mix of skills and experience, and able to work toward a common goal.

The unique relationship between condo board and condominium manager determines the success of a community. A healthy and trusting relationship is best.

CARJACKING PREVENTION



Carjacking incidents are on the rise. You can reduce your risk by being aware of your surroundings and having a safety plan in

place. Crime prevention and personal safety strategies outlined by **Toronto Police Services** can help you protect yourself against carjackings.

HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF CARJACKING

GETTING INTO YOUR VEHICLE

- Be alert to any activity near your vehicle and pay attention to your surroundings.
- Stay off your cellphone.
- When approaching your car, have your keys or remote in hand.
- Check the back seat before getting in.
- If someone is loitering near your unoccupied car as you approach it, keep walking until the person leaves.
- Trust your instincts. If something makes you feel uneasy, get into the car quickly, lock the doors and drive away.

ONCE YOU'RE IN YOUR VEHICLE

- Keep your doors locked, no matter how short the distance or how "safe" the neighborhood.
- Have another adult in the vehicle whenever possible, especially at night as this may act as a deterrent.
- When you're coming to a stop, leave enough space to see the back tires of the car in front of you. If you sense trouble, this will allow you the room needed to drive away.
- If you are arriving home and notice someone you don't recognize on your property, drive around the block and come back after the person has left.

GETTING OUT OF YOUR VEHICLE

- When possible, reverse into parking spots to make it easier to drive away.
- Park in well-lit areas, near sidewalks or walkways. Avoid parking near dumpsters, wooded areas, large vans or trucks, or anything else that limits your visibility.
- Never leave valuables in plain view, even if the car is locked. Put them in the trunk or out of sight.
- Try to park in a garage with an attendant. If you are leaving your vehicle with a valet, leave only the ignition key, with no personal identification.
- Even if you're rushed, look around before you get out and stay alert to your surroundings. Trust your instincts.

CONTINUED PAGE 18

CARJACKING PREVENTION... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

IF YOU GET CARJACKED

- If you are being robbed of your vehicle, don't argue. Give up your vehicle and get away as quickly as possible.
- If there is a child in the vehicle, let the carjacker know, "my child is in the car." This may be a deterrent to taking the vehicle.
- Notice and remember what the carjacker looked like: sex, race, age, hair and eye colour, tattoos, special features, clothes and anything specific like an accent.
- Report the crime immediately to the police.

WHY ARE CARJACKINGS ON THE RISE?

- Carjacking is a crime of opportunity and can take place anywhere.
- It can potentially be part of another crime.
- Vehicle thieves find it easier to steal a car while the driver is there with the keys in the ignition rather than to break into a vehicle, especially if the vehicle has an alarm.
- Vehicles equipped with sophisticated, built-in alarm systems and theft-deterrent devices are harder to steal.
- Vehicles, especially luxury models, provide quick

cash for criminals.

- Carjacking may be a rite of passage, initiation act, or just a thrill for some.

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY THAT CARJACKERS LOOK FOR

- Intersections controlled by traffic lights or stop signs
- Parking garages, shopping malls and grocery stores
- Self-service gas stations and car washes.
- ATMs (automated teller machines)
- Residential driveways and streets as people get in and out of their cars
- Highway exit and entry ramps, or other places where drivers slow down or stop

For more information on crime prevention, visit the [Toronto Police website](https://www.toronto.ca/police).



Thank you to **Toronto Police Services** for providing this information which is available on their website or in pdf and brochure form.

Be an educated Condo Resident

Stay current with *Toronto Condo News*

Need condo expertise?
Find it in *Condo Resource Guide*

Condo-related questions?
Find answers in *Condo Archives*



www.TOcondonews.com

WORKING WITH AND INTERPRETING A STATUS CERTIFICATE

The management perspective



Status certificates deserve respect. They are consumer protection documents. Inaccurate information and poorly considered replies to inquires can create problems for everyone involved including a condominium corporation and management.

The role of condominium management does not include supporting or facilitating the sale of units. Their role is to provide disclosures in the status certificate under Section 76(1) of the Condominium Act. Inevitably, questions will arise from a buyer, seller or lawyer. When they do, it is best for the corporation to conduct inquiries or discussions in writing.

As a condominium manager, it is best to remain impartial and not get involved in the selling process. If someone calls asking questions about the content of a status certificate, remain uninvolved to the greatest extent possible. An unhappy buyer may want to hold the corporation or management accountable for anything they may say.

If someone asks for details about a current lawsuit or possible special assessment, discussing this on the telephone, in person or by e-mail is probably not a good idea. There can be misunderstandings. That conversation could involve management or the

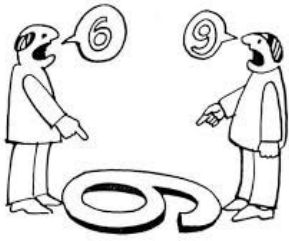
corporation in a dispute between the purchaser and seller of a condo unit. If a conversation is necessary or seems innocuous, maintain a record of what transpired.

Buyers or their lawyers may desire an update on the status certificate prior to closing on a sale. They may desire a quick conversation rather than requesting and receiving documents which can delay a sale. From the management perspective, these conversations can involve interpretations that differ from what is provided on the certificate. These are matters best addressed between buyer and seller, or their lawyers.

If someone calls asking questions about the content of a status certificate, remain uninvolved to the greatest extent possible

If specific records are requested, a Request for Records form is provided by the Condominium Authority of Ontario. This process formalizes and provides a record of the request. The Condo Board can then take time to consider the request and to consult a lawyer, if necessary, before deciding to approve or deny the request. The buyer or seller's desire for a faster response should not be a consideration.

Taking the time to get a status certificate right and responding to inquiries in an appropriate manner is the best approach to supporting your condominium corporation.



ONE CONDO MANAGER PERSPECTIVE

As a condo manager I've worked with my share of personalities. Misogynistic, Maniacal, Narcissistic, Bullies, Complainers, Social Climbers, Aristocratic... and that doesn't even capture what we have met head on with boards. But condo managers are not allowed to talk about that.

When Vaughan happened it triggered my own PTSD about a board who didn't care when a resident was coming after me or the staff. They only cared who was going to pay for legal fees and questioned if it would help if the manager was moved. Never once did they care about me. Not what I was going through, my fear, staff fear, police visits, court stuff... nope. Didn't care. They couldn't have cared less that I was terrified. That my personal world was being invaded and frankly, they became as offensive to me as person X who was making my life hell because they knew and evaluated what I was dealing with up against their finances and contractual responsibilities. I was supposed behave each day like I wasn't scared to be there. It was supposed be business as usual while I was being personally attacked. And this was led by the chair.

We as managers take abuse on many fronts and it's a risk we take and it's still never changed how much I love my career, because I do, but what many forget is that we managers are treated as expendable. Some board chairs forget that their whims, their insane demands and secretive manipulative behaviors actually impact a human's career. Their voluntary position, for which no education is required, gets to decide the contracts and finances of some of the largest assets in the city with zero

accountability.

There truly needs to be more education for board members and some sort of accountability metric.

We as managers are the ones who care for, operate, financially manage and maintain mechanical operations on condos, some of which are worth hundreds of millions of dollars and it's our hard work the profit is made on.

Its time managers are valued. Our salaries stop being low balled. We are supported. We are recognized as being pivotal in the health of a major industry sector.

I've been lucky to land at a site where my board understands and supports positive mental health, that they respect the work of a property manager and absolutely value expertise in all areas.

Career wise, I love what I do but that doesn't mean that reform and dynamic change isn't necessary. I look forward to seeing how we evolve and seeing an evolution in how boards should be created.

It's important the industry recognize the abuse managers deal with not just by residents but by boards which hold our careers on the stroke of their pens.

Posted on LinkedIn by a Toronto area Condominium Manager. This post was edited for grammar with no impact on its content. There has been no change to the overall tone.

AMENITY MUST HAVES



Condominium communities are more than places to live. Their amenities are designed to keep residents busy. Amenities help build a sense of community, provide places for people to congregate, and are an important part of why so many want to live in a high-rise condominium.

Increasingly underutilized tennis courts, volleyball courts and movie theater rooms are getting repurposed as pickleball courts, co-working spaces, dog parks and entertainment or socialization spaces.

Social areas with cooking equipment. Fitness facilities that rival what can be found at a private club. Arts and crafts as daily activities. What was once considered luxury is now available as standard features.



Amenities evolve to meet changing resident preferences. Big common area rooms lacking in co-working space, large lobbies, and fitness rooms hidden in a basement are no longer popular.

A lounge for relaxation, exercise room, some outdoor space, and a pet-washing station is standard in many mid-level communities. All are enhanced for communities with a higher standard. An exercise room may have been replaced with a fitness studio including spin bikes and yoga space. That pet washing station may now be a salon where animals (and people) can socialize.

With people more frequently working from home, shared kitchens and TV rooms are growing in popularity. Outdoor barbecue and sitting/eating areas remain popular. Increasingly, those who work at home require shared work space so they can get out of their unit. There may be space for conducting virtual meetings known as “Zoom rooms”.



TORONTO CONDO NEWS
OUR READERS ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS!
OVER 50% OF TORONTONIANS CHOOSE CONDOMINIUMS OVER OTHER HOUSING
What condo dwellers are reading
TOcondonews.com



HIGHER BUILDING BENEFITS

How high is the building you live in – 12 floors? 24 floors? 50 floors? 80 floors? Some are now reaching 100 floors!

When a building is approved for development, it is allowed to contain a maximum number of floors. The developer may have negotiated with the city to exceed this limit in return for certain benefits.

Opposition to building height is often not logical. It can be emotional and irrational. Politicians cater to development opposition for votes rather than explaining what benefits a community will obtain.

Height reductions can be touted as victories for a community seeking to maintain its “character” or reducing gridlock. This short-sighted view ignores what is received in return for exceeding height restrictions.

Section 37 of the Planning Act allows developers to exceed some zoning regulations in return for cash or in-kind benefits. Bercy Park, costing about \$8 million, was partially paid for with Section 37 funds thus allowing developers to exceed height and density zoning regulations. Developers are also required to provide parkland, or cash to pay for parks, under Section 42 of the Planning Act.

Since the early 1980s Section 37 money has been used to pay for community centres, playgrounds, splash pads, and even affordable housing. Funds are intended to compensate for the local impact of allowing developments that fail to comply with height and density zoning regulations.

Higher buildings provide more housing and creates greater density. More people living in an area means more stores, restaurants, entertainment and services. It creates more choices and conveniences for those residing in an area.

Some complain about shadows, wind tunnels and other negative impacts of high buildings without considering benefits that attract people and money to a community. Others may not want to lose the current view from their windows.

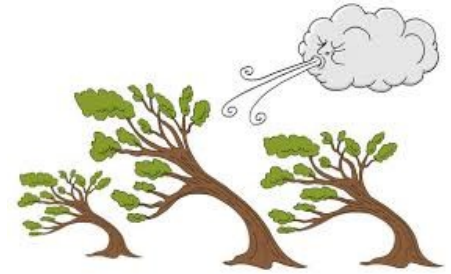
An additional ten storeys can mean \$20 million or more in revenue for the City. This is money that can be used to fund community spaces, infrastructure projects and parks. It may be used to keep the area clean or clear of snow.

In return for greater density, a development may have agreed to include more public areas or daycare spaces.

These additional homes generate more taxes that are used to support libraries, community centers and local programs.



IT'S HARD BEING A PLANT IN THE CITY



Urban life is hard on plants which have to deal with pollution, lack of sun and limited room to grow.

Survival in the urban desert of a high-rise building requires selecting the right species, placing in the proper location and providing the necessary care.

That rooftop location or courtyard may be a great common space. To a plant it can be like a mountain top or desert subject to high winds and insufficient water. Rooftops can be colder than ground level and much hotter when the sun is shining. Soil can get too hot, cool, dry or wet.



Irrigation is important. Is there protection from the weather? Plants that are resistant to drought, able to withstand hot and dry summers, and cold winters are more likely to thrive.

Climate change is causing more dramatic temperature changes dangerous to plants. Warmer temperatures allow pests and fungus to thrive and

cause more damage.

For landscapers and gardeners, the logistics of transporting supplies, equipment and people to a rooftop can be a challenge. This ties up elevators and can require protection for floors and walls as everything is transported through a building. This can nearly double the time and cost of similar plantings at ground level.

Rooftop plants need to be hardier and fertilized more frequently. Smaller trees and those with smaller leaf surfaces work better. Trees with needles can better survive strong winds. Most plants don't survive longer than about five years.

Nature requires the assistance of gardeners and landscapers if it is to survive the harsher climate of urban condominium and high-rise buildings.





NEWSLETTERS AND MEETING MINUTES

I was elected to the Board on a platform of transparency. Currently the only modes of community communications are a newsletter twice annually and a website used to post minutes. The Property Manager sends e-mail blasts about to-do's and new rules but there is no form of community engagement. The manager is recommending that we no longer post board minutes because of the issues outlined in your June 2022 article.

How can we become more transparent? What I hear from residents is that they don't know what's going on.

N. L.

Response from Toronto Condo News

Congratulations on your election to the board. Focusing on transparency in your community is commendable. It is our belief that this approach offers many benefits.

We do not support the view that board minutes should not be posted. Restricting access to meeting minutes is a secretive approach to governance and communication that serves no practical purpose. If your property manager got the impression that meeting minutes should not be posted from one of our articles, I would appreciate your sharing with me the specific article that leads to this opinion. We have published many articles supporting the importance of taking proper meeting minutes and making them available to owners.

As for a newsletter, a quarterly or more frequent publication by owners or the board (not management) is common. It allows the board to communicate with owners, share plans and identify concerns. When prepared by owners, it enhances community engagement and allows owners to "speak" to the board in a less formal and non-confrontational manner.

Consider a quarterly town hall meeting where owners can engage with one or more board members. The board can share information with owners. Owners can ask questions and articulate concerns. Combine this with an after-meeting gathering allowing owners to socialize. Include snacks and beverages.

Committees can be a great way to improve community and extend effectiveness of the board. [Committees in Condo Communities](#), [Condo Committees - An extension of the Condo Board](#) and [Establishing Condo Committees](#) are just a few of the articles we have published about committees. All can be found in the [Condo Archives](#),

Transparency comes in many forms. While a condo board has no obligation to be transparent or communicate with owners, failing to do so leads to many undesirable outcomes.

Good luck in your efforts.



DEALING WITH INCREASED COSTS

I help with writing our condo's quarterly newsletter and seek to know more about the financial challenges caused by increasing costs of labour, material and interest rates.

I would be interested to learn how other condominiums are dealing with the increased costs. It is difficult for condo boards to keep costs under control and avoid excessive fee increases. What measures are or can be taken to deal with these costs including keeping our residents well informed?

Can you advise if there were any news items related to the current financial challenge?

I. E.

Response from Toronto Condo News

Wow – what you ask is a tall order. We have published so many articles on this topic that it is difficult to suggest just a few.

No doubt that many condominium corporations are

struggling to address these same questions you pose. Communities that have begun addressing these concerns are in a stronger position than those that quietly bear these costs without preparing their finances for what appear to be permanently higher costs.

Toronto Condo News addressed many of these concerns in a series of articles during the first half of 2023. Practically speaking, the only options are to increase condo fees to pay these higher expenses, make efforts to improve efficiency so that more can be done with less, or reduce expenditures which means degradation in service or maintenance which leads to future problems that will likely be even more expensive to address.

Communities failing to recognize the new cost structure in their budget will have greater challenges, prolonged internal conflict and difficulty in paying bills. Opportunities to identify cost savings and where waste can be trimmed will be missed.

Here are a select few articles that present an overview of the topic.

- [Condo Fee Increases in 2023 – Lessons from 2022](#)
- [Insurance Crisis in Condoland – Part 2](#)
- [Special Assessment – Consider the Alternatives](#)
- [Practices to Reduce Insurance Costs](#)
- [Reserve Fund Adequacy](#)
- [Time to Pay Up](#)
- [Catching Up with Inflation](#)
- [Business of Condo Business](#)

You have taken an important step in trying to understand the extent of this challenge. At some point, your board will have to make some hard decisions that will impact your community for years to come. Ignoring this reality is ill-advised.

Best of luck.



Information and resources for the Toronto and GTA condo community

Serving Condominium Residents, Directors and Management



Toronto Condo News Our monthly magazine is what condo dwellers are reading.

Condo Archives Comprehensive condo-focused library you can search for answers to your questions about condo living and condo management.

Condo Resource Guide Vendors and service providers for condominium managers, condominium directors and condominium residents. Condo Resource Guide is Toronto's #1 source for the Condo Professionals you need.

All resources available at
www.TOcondonews.com

Subscribe (free) to Toronto Condo News on the Contact Us page