

WHAT CONDO DWELLERS ARE READING



CAN CONDO OWNERS UNIONIZE?

This question was recently asked by a **Toronto Condo News** reader seeking a way to ensure condo boards comply with the Condo Act, by-laws and other governing documents. They go on to state that Condominium Authority of Ontario and Condominium Management Regulatory Authority of Ontario “only work for corporations.”

This is interesting in that it displays a fundamental lack of

CONTINUED PAGE 5 ...

FROM THE EDITOR

Toronto Condo News is highly biased, and that is a good thing.

Our interest is in improving condominium living and management. We identify best practices in what is Toronto's preferred form of home ownership, and share them with our readers. We seek to inform about what impacts on high-rise communities.

We are intolerant about bad condominium management and practices that are detrimental to those who reside in condominium buildings. We support adhering to the Condo Act and implementing practical improvements.

We are biased toward the truth as we understand it, and do not allow vendors or consultants to distort it for their personal benefit.

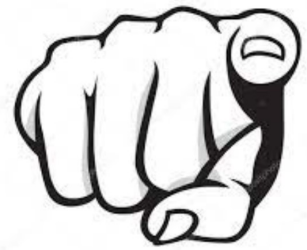
We take pride in our biases!

A PEEK

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with condominium living and management**



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OPEN LETTER TO THE ONTARIO CONDOMINIUM AUTHORITY TRIBUNAL

collective agreement

Solutions for Complex Situations

October 1, 2023

Condominium Authority Tribunal
C/O Condominium Authority of Ontario
P.O. Box 69038, RPO St. Clair Centre
Toronto, Ontario M4T 3A1

Attention: Ian Darling, Chair, Condominium Authority Tribunal

CC: Robin Dafoe, Chief Executive Officer & Registrar, Condominium
Authority of Ontario

Mr. Darling,

While Ontario's Condominium Authority Tribunal (CAT) was formed
in 2017 on best laid plans, regrettably, over its past five years of
operations, it has come with unintended consequences.

The commendable objective of our legislators was to create a more
effective and streamlined dispute resolution process for
condominium communities. To that goal CAT is clearly a success, in
large part by removing barriers for individuals to file claims without
legal representation.

However, unintentionally it's also enabled filing of frivolous and in
some cases vengeful claims against innocent respondents, requiring
them to defend themselves and leaving them with little or no
recourse for recovery of their costs when the matter is eventually
dismissed.

Recently, I heard about a condo resident who was dragged through a
clearly baseless claim that made it all the way to Stage 3 before being

CONTINUED PAGE 4 ...

OPEN LETTER TO THE ONTARIO CONDOMINIUM AUTHORITY TRIBUNAL... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

dismissed. They were added as a respondent along with the condominium corporation. As the legal nature of the CAT process was overwhelmingly stressful, the resident felt they had no choice but to hire a lawyer. In the end, the matter was dismissed as it should've been from the outset. However, CAT allowed the matter to proceed through each stage, failed to suss out the underlying issues nor sufficiently encouraged the parties to seek resolution at the outset, before allowing the claim to proceed. As a result, they incurred significant legal fees - that CAT ignored addressing at the end. It's unfair and unjust.

The flaw in this case and in general is that CAT protocols are too heavily weighted to the end of the process. It's not until Stage 3 that evidence is required and when matters get escalated to CAT's members that are lawyers, who typically are well versed at addressing outcomes.

To fix this flaw the CAT needs to be more diligent from the outset, during the intake process. Raise the bar for getting to Stage 1 by conducting a more rigorous assessment of the merits of a claim, establishing a minimum evidentiary threshold, and vetting out those (or the parts of a claim) that are not within CAT's jurisdiction.

Furthermore, CAT could enhance its guidance for claimants/respondents that are not lawyers or paralegals. Facilitating ease of access to CAT and removing barriers is a noble purpose – but it comes with a responsibility to shepherd those in the flock that don't know their way through judicial processes, protocols, and the onus of conducting themselves in good faith throughout.

Otherwise, CAT is prone to misuse by those who don't understand or respect its process, and rife for misuse by those who may look to weaponize CAT for their personal agenda.

To mitigate this risk and to deter those inclined to misuse the system, CAT needs to become more proficient at its front-end, vetting out frivolous claims and rejecting those outside of its jurisdiction.

By implementing a more rigorous intake process, CAT can ensure that it fulfills its objective of providing an efficient and accessible dispute resolution process for condominiums and owners/residents. As CAT expands its scope, Ontario condominium communities will be better served by a Tribunal that more effectively balances access with fairness.

Sincerely,



Bruce W. Young, CPA, CA, CEA
Disputes & Litigation Advisor & Condominium Owner
CollectiveAgreement.ca

CAN CONDO OWNERS UNIONIZE?... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

understanding regarding condominium corporation governance, the role of these organizations, and a feeling of hopelessness felt by many.

Condo owners are not able to organize as a union. A union is an organized association of workers formed to protect and further their rights and interests. Condo owners are not workers and each building has different interests. Owners have an obligation to maintain their home, and to other owners, in ways that employees do not.

Why would condo owners want to organize?



There is no reason for condo owners to organize in the form of a "union". They have more authority and power than any union could ever hope for. They can require the condo board to implement, revoke or update rules, by-laws and even possibly the declaration. They elect their directors. When dissatisfied with decisions, they can force a condo board to reverse them or have directors refusing to do so replaced.

Condo owners have an enormous amount of power and, as a general rule, choose not to exert their

authority. This requires a majority of condo owners to support something and be prepared to do the work necessary to enact change as spelled out in the Condo Act. When too many owners are apathetic, ignorant or unconcerned about an issue, it may not be possible to achieve the 50 percent support required to enact change.

There are only a few exceptions to this. One is when condo fees are increased to ensure funds available to maintain the corporation. Owners have an obligation to fund these necessary expenditures through condo fees or a special assessment, or to obtain a condo loan.

CAO and CMRAO

The Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO) and Condominium Management Regulatory Authority of Ontario (CMRAO) are government agencies.



CMRAO is the regulatory body that sets standards and enforces the mandatory

licensing of condominium managers and condominium management provider businesses. They have no involvement in addressing issues for or on behalf of condo owners.



CAO provides information with the goal of improving condo living by providing services and resources for condo communities. They have established the Condominium Authority

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CAN CONDO OWNERS UNIONIZE?... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Tribunal (CAT) to help people resolve their condo-related disputes conveniently, quickly and affordably. The Tribunal has authority to enforce provisions of the Condo Act on owners and condo boards.

Condo owners that comply with their governing documents and the Condo Act can utilize CAT as an efficient and economical way to ensure their condo boards are compliant.

Enacting Change

Most activities of the condo board occur without owners being aware. This is, for the most part, a satisfactory approach to condominium governance. From time to time, certain activities attract the attention of owners. There can be disagreements or concerns. The best way to address them is to maintain an ongoing dialog between condo owners and their condo board in the form of meetings, newsletters or other periodic communications. Condo boards present what they intend to do and reasons. Owners provide comment. When disagreements arise, a practical compromise is arrived at.

When ongoing and transparent dialog does not exist the system breaks down, trust disappears and conflict arises.

When condo owners disagree with their condo board and proposed or implemented solutions are unsatisfactory, owners have authority to requisition a meeting for virtually any purpose. When this purpose includes a vote of owners, a majority of owners can force the board to enact

changes or reverse decisions. Should a condo board refuse, a CAT decision in favour of owners can ensure compliance. This may include recovery of costs and penalties to a condo board failing to comply with the Condo Act.

Condo owners have all the power and authority they need to enact change.



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BUILDINGS ARE MAKING US SICK



Making indoor air safer to breathe is a growing issue in a country where wildfires are expected to increase by 25 per cent by 2030. Smoke over the city has caused a haze that enters buildings along with everything else carried in the air. More are affected by asthma and other ailments from the smoke.

Fine particles in the air, particulate matter, increases because of smoke. It can be the most harmful air pollutant causing the greatest damage. This particulate matter and other pollutants carried in the air enters buildings and circulates indoors.

The indoor air we breathe is our greatest environmental health risk. Better indoor air quality reduces the risk of getting sick from viruses and pollutants that enter from outside.

Health Canada recommends that public buildings and institutions utilize HVAC systems that can be equipped with a MERV-13 filter or higher to remove fine particulate matter. This recommendation does not extend to high-rise residential buildings.

Communities can choose to improve their ventilation systems. A simpler solution is

to use higher efficiency filters, known as MERV-13 or a higher designation. These finer filters restrict the amount of small particulate matter entering buildings and making us sick.

Current standards recommend a minimum level of filtration at MERV-8 which is effective for preventing dust and some air pollution. It is insufficient to keep out pollutants such as wildfire smoke.

High-quality filters are the simplest and most economical first step to improving indoor air quality.



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GROWING PACKAGE DELIVERIES

or

When Every Day is Black Friday



Package deliveries and online ordering continue to increase. This places a growing burden on condominium management trying to maintain operations while keeping condo fees under control and maintaining an expected level of service.

The growing flood of parcel deliveries is unlikely to slow down. A Google Canada survey suggests that 70 percent of adults look online for holiday gifts. Add to this the purchase of household items that include food from supermarkets, prepared food deliveries, household items and medication.

Much of this ends up in condominium lobbies poorly equipped to cope with the influx. They become mini-warehouses from the sheer volume of delivered packages. Once accepted, packages need to be stored and catalogued. Are measures in place to secure against theft by a resident or thief accessing the lobby? How do they get released or distributed to residents? And finally, who manages all of this?

Answers to these questions vary for each community and is dependent on expectations. Ignoring what is a growing issue is not practical.

Most high-rise buildings were never designed to accommodate package deliveries at current volumes. They contain neither storage rooms or parcel lockers. No thought was given to large numbers of deliveries and packages coming through the front door, or parking space for

delivery vehicles. Ensuring residents quickly retrieve their packages so more can be stored was never a consideration.

Solutions may require capital investments in dedicated secure storage spaces that can be locked or monitored along with a separate entrance and space for delivery vehicle parking. Personal parcel lockers, software for better management of packages, additional staffing and revised acceptance policies may all offer complete or partial solutions.

Temperature-controlled spaces may be necessary for frozen or cold food items and medication.

An increasing number are using meal delivery services with the expectation that food is delivered hot and ready to eat without delay which can only be achieved by direct delivery to the door, or immediate resident notification for them to retrieve in the lobby. Resident notification when a package is received may be sent via text or e-mail, or as a reminder before any package is to be returned.

The level of service and security desired should be reflected in any chosen solution.

White Glove Service

Delivered packages are accepted by the concierge and personally delivered to the door thus maximizing both service and security. Delivery people do not receive building access beyond the lobby. Additional staffing is required year-round to

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COMMON AREAS AND AMENITIES

GROWING PACKAGE DELIVERIES... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

maintain lobby security while items are delivered to a door. Additional staffing may be required during peak delivery periods to handle higher package volumes.

Concierge Service

Packages are received by the concierge and stored in a location that may or may not be secure. Residents retrieve their package(s) from the concierge after being informed of arrival via electronic or paper notification.

Self-Service

Packages are delivered inside to a predetermined location.

An unsecure location may be a parcel room accessible to all. Residents rely on package delivery tracking to know when an item has been delivered to the location.

A secure location may be a self-locking parcel locker combined with electronic notification of secure package arrival.


Non-Service

Packages are not accepted in the building.

Deliveries may be left outside, or residents make alternate retrieval or delivery arrangements.

Liability exists any time a package is accepted from a delivery service at a central location that is not the final delivery address and signed for as accepted. Once accepted by a concierge, the condominium corporation accepts liability for ensuring final delivery. To protect against this communities may implement loss prevention strategies, upgrade insurance coverage, and require residents to sign waivers protecting the corporation and its employees against liability.

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CONDO ACT REVISIONS FOR 2023 IN EFFECT



Two revisions to the Condominium Act are now in place.

Virtual and Hybrid Meetings Allowed

Virtual and hybrid meetings are allowed on a permanent basis. Condominium corporations no longer have to pass a by-law for this purpose.

Anyone casting an electronic vote prior to an owners' meeting is now considered present at the meeting even if choosing not to attend. This makes it easier for condominium corporations to achieve quorum while possibly eliminating any practical reason to require proxies.

Electronic Communications Now Allowed

Owners and mortgagees are no longer required to submit an Agreement to Receive Electronic Notices before a condominium corporation can send them e-mail communication

Owners and mortgagees are no longer required to submit an Agreement to Receive Electronic Notices before a condominium corporation can send them e-mail communication. Providing an e-mail address to the condominium corporation through other communications is sufficient authorization. Those desiring paper communication will be required to

make a specific request.

E-mail addresses are now available to owners on request as part of the Record of Owners and Mortgagees thereby making it easier for owners to communicate with each other

The Record of Owners and Mortgagees has been updated to include e-mail addresses for delivering documents. This is available to owners on request and should now include e-mail addresses thereby making it easier for owners to communicate with each other.

Changes came into effect on October 1, 2023.

Bill 91, which authorizes these changes, can be found [here](#).

Revisions to the Record of Owners and Mortgagees included in regulation 12.6.1 subsection 1 of Ontario Regulation 4801 can be found [here](#).



CONDO AUTHORITY OF ONTARIO IN TURMOIL ... AGAIN

This latest sign of turmoil came when the Ontario government recently removed the chair and treasurer from the board of the Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO).

Heather Zordel, chair of the Condominium Authority of Ontario since 2018, and Margaret Samuel recently had their appointments revoked.

It was under Ms. Zordel that four directors resigned citing "recent conflict of interest and governance concerns" as reported by [Toronto Condo News](#) in [Condominium Authority of Ontario in Disarray as Directors Resign](#) in May 2020. All new directors appointed in their place have since resigned or were removed.



Reasons for Ms. Zordel's departure are unclear.

THE THREAT OF SALT

Building failures are rare in North America. When Champlain Towers South in Surfside, Florida collapsed, one of contributing factors was salt.



Champlain Towers South was an oceanfront beach property always exposed to salt-spray. Salt causes corrosion in reinforced concrete structures. This in turn causes structural deterioration. Failure in repairing this deterioration eventually compromised the building structure which then collapsed.

While most buildings are not exposed to the same level of salt as an oceanfront beach property, all buildings are exposed to salt as de-icing chemicals enter underground areas through drainage and on vehicles. Prior to the late 1980s, salt was added to concrete during construction. Even buildings protected using waterproofing materials should be monitored for structural deterioration.

Protection measures include surfaces that do not allow water to pond and seep into a roadway or parking structure. This requires repair of damaged areas. Drains which divert water and salt away from the building structure need to be maintained to ensure they don't block up and fail to function. Parking areas should be regularly power washed to remove salt and damaging chemicals on the surface which are deposited through regular use. Balconies, parking garages, cladding, post-tensioning cables and even electrical systems should be monitored for corrosion and other defects as buildings age.

Avoiding building system failures requires effective condo board oversight, good governance, and proper funding of the reserve fund so that preventative maintenance is undertaken when necessary.

WEAPONIZING A VIDEO DOORBELL

Video doorbells are increasingly popular for good reason. They provide video footage of areas of your home that can be used to thwart vandals, thieves and others with bad intention. Their use in high-rise communities is not advised without direct approval of building management for equally good reason.

One condominium owner was concerned about an attempted break-in through patio doors. They installed a camera capturing video and audio from the patio. A smart doorbell was installed on the unit door facing the outer hallway. This device was connected to the internet, and captured audio and video recordings that were stored online. Recording systems were activated when triggered by a motion sensor. Recordings were saved for 60 days and could be viewed or seen from anywhere.

As with most condominium communities, by-laws prohibited owners from making additions or alterations to the exterior of a unit without first obtaining written consent of the corporation. Another by-law stated that owners could not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of common areas by other owners or their visitors.

No permission was received to install either the patio camera or video doorbell.

An owner across the hall was uncomfortable with the doorbell system. Its motion sensor was triggered when people entered and left their condominium unit. It captured audio and video of the owner and

guests. Video footage from the doorbell was posted on social media and used to support complaints about residents to various authorities.

The condominium corporation took the owner to court to enforce its by-laws. The owner was ordered to remove the front doorbell, and discontinue threatening communications and abusive conduct. The owner was required to pay the entire legal bill for the condominium corporation.

When a condominium corporation installs a video security system in hallways, no owner should feel the need to install an individual monitoring system in common areas near their doorway.

Recording of residents and guests in common areas is improper and incompatible with peaceful co-existence in a high-rise building.





DISTORTING THE SMOKING ISSUE

Should a building resident be allowed to smoke in their unit when that smoke leaves the unit and affects other residents in their units and hallways? That is one dispute currently before the Condominium Authority Tribunal (CAT) that captured the attention of long-time Toronto Star columnist Rose DiManno.

Many look forward to Rosie DiManno's perspective on issues of the day. She gets it right most of the time. Her July 11, 2023 column on smoking, however, presents a distorted view of one community struggling with the "rights" of one resident who is a serial smoker and danger to her neighbours.

As Ms. DiManno presents it, "A smoking gun is being held to the head of Diane Steen." The 87-year-old woman is being forced to "quit her filthy cigarette habit, or take it outside." She is in poor health, has limited mobility, and is unable to go downstairs or outside to smoke. Ms. Steen has diabetes, suffers from severe anxiety and depression, and exhibits signs of cognitive decline. The condo board adopted a new rule over a year ago prohibiting smoking in the building. There is a grandfathering clause allowing current residents who smoke to continue "as long as their smoking doesn't infringe on the enjoyment or health of anyone else around them." Ms. Steen wants to remain in her home and not move to a care facility.

Efforts to contain the smoke have apparently failed. This includes two industrial strength medical-grade HEPA filter systems at a cost of \$2,000 each.

Residents complained of smoke in hallways whenever the door was opened which includes taking out trash and doing laundry. The condo board undertook measures that include weekly air quality measurements, washing hallway walls, carpet cleaning and shampooing soft furniture. They offered to install sealant around the doors and windows which was refused. Legal costs to the corporation to deal with this matter have reached \$20,000.

This situation is more than dealing with the right to smoke. How safe are building residents when an elderly resident struggling with cognitive decline continues to be a danger to herself and others? Does she fall asleep when smoking, drop matches or a lighter? What about forgetting to turn off water or appliances?

A unit containing multiple air filtration systems and still unable to purify the air so that it does not impact neighbours who likely have health concerns or problems from being so near to her smoking is in itself a health concern.

Condominium living is not for everyone, and there comes a time when the safety and security concerns of the many outweigh the personal and bad habits of one individual.

Proceedings with CAT have been initiated and a final decision is pending.

EARLY DETECTION OF WATER LEAKS



Water leaks are the biggest headache for most condominium managers and condo boards. They come from outside through the building envelope or inside from pipes, toilets and faucets. Unlike most problems, water leaks where the flow of water is not contained quickly pass from one unit to another causing extensive damage.

The cost of water leaks that don't cause damage is substantial. A leaking toilet can waste up to 250 gallons of water per day costing over \$100 per month. A 300-unit condo building may have 500 toilets of which 100 may leak. This amounts to an estimated \$10,000 per month or \$120,000 per year wasted because of leaking toilets. Leaking showers and faucets add to this cost.



With so much money at stake it is surprising that more condo corporations don't take measures to stop the loss.

Most water leaks are preventable. Detecting and addressing visible leaks before they cause major problems can be as simple as an annual plumbing audit. Have a plumber visit each unit to identify and repair small leaks, suggest appropriate in-suite upgrades and repairs for owners to consider at their cost, and provide a report to management. Water leaks in units where leaks or problems are identified and not addressed place other units and common areas at risk. Owners can find they are financially responsible for

damage they cause outside their unit.

Then there are water leaks that start off hidden and cause damage until detected and repaired. A leaking pipe, pinhole leaks behind walls and water infiltrating from outside are all of ongoing concern.

Water sensors, two-inch cubes of plastic, provide an economical and practical solution. If water touches a sensor, a signal is sent out. In less than a minute, alerts can be sent to security and building management identifying the unit and location. The unit owner and tenant, if any, can also be informed. Sensors can be placed under sinks and near the dishwasher, clothes washing machine and by the toilet. Additional sensors can be located in elevator wells, underground parking, mechanical room and anywhere water has been known to seep or leak.

Water sensors allow water leaks to be detected and stopped before serious damage occurs. Water can be immediately turned off in minutes rather than hours, days, weeks or months later depending on the source.

Buildings with water sensors find their monthly water bills are lower. Water leaks cause less damage and fewer claims reduce insurance costs.

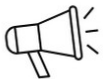


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EVOLUTION OF CONDO MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE



At one time, both websites and e-mail were believed to offer solutions to the many challenges of condominium building management. We have learned through experience that these electronic communication methods have limitations and fail to address the requirements of condominium and high-rise communities.

It was in 2014 that **Toronto Condo News** first brought condo management software to the attention of most condominium communities. Now, as then, the technology is used to ensure a property runs smoothly and efficiently in an economical and practical manner. It delivers a positive impact on overall lifestyle, communications, building upkeep and security while reducing administration costs and makes staff available for "other" tasks.

From its inception, condo management software has offered a comprehensive set of tools addressing most basic concerns. It replaces a web site, e-mail communications and most paper records; provides enhanced communications, improved security, management of service requests and comprehensive record keeping. It reduces administration and allows management to dedicate more time to quality-of-life issues.

The central or main product features are designed to automate administrative tasks, simplify submission and resolution of maintenance requests, manage amenities and improve communications. Powerful search capabilities,

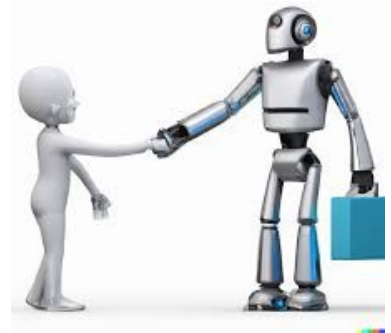
analytics and reporting are standard.

Condo management software provides a complete and efficient solution for the range of communications and tasks that occur within a condominium building. Paper documentation is virtually eliminated, employee productivity is increased and detailed historical information is readily accessible.

Condo Management Software - Essential Components

Unit Management -

Complete records on each unit including locker ownership, parking spaces, access devices and bicycle space management all of which can be accessed in seconds.



Portfolio, Building and Services Management -

Unit, owner and renter details are stored electronically and accessible only to authorized individuals through various screens and reports. Service requests submitted online from owners or tenants are managed through a Maintenance and/or Service Requests section. Vendors, projects, work orders and building maintenance can all be managed. Documents and forms can be stored online and accessible only to authorized individuals. Reports are available to help manage or analyze

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EVOLUTION OF CONDO MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

service requirements, concerns and amenity bookings.

Communication - Informational messages relating to building maintenance, meetings, social activities or other matters can be broadcast directly to e-mail addresses and/or posted so they are visible from each individual's private dashboard. Internal messaging allows residents and owners to submit amenity bookings and service requests. There is access to documents that can include building or condo rules, community information, unit plans and event calendars. Board members have a safe and secure area where they can share information, initiate discussion groups and store working papers or documents.

External communications allow for the listing of condos for sale or rent and items for sale.

Newsletters can be posted and distributed.

Building Security -

Records who has keyfobs, transmitters and/or access cards, and access limits for each. Residents can provide access instructions or information about visitors to

the concierge.

Amenity Booking - Common use areas - Elevator, Party Room, Billiard Room, Meeting Rooms - can all be reserved online. This reduces traffic at the concierge desk thereby allowing more time for attending to security or other matters.

Parking Management - Print parking and visitor permits, maintain records of visitors by unit.

Package Tracking - Received packages are entered as received with a notification printed for insertion in a mailbox or sent via e-mail.

CONTINUED PAGE 19



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EVOLUTION OF CONDO MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Condo Management Software - Enhanced Components

Enhancements to basic condo management software offer additional features and software integration which can vary by vendor. Inquire with your preferred condo management software provider about features of interest.

Accounting – Early condo management software did not include accounting features. It has since become clear that integration of accounting with condo management activities is highly desirable. When accessing any unit record, it is helpful to be aware of payments due or past due, and payment history. This knowledge provides insight in how to deal with any current unit, resident or owner concern. Complete accounting integration eliminates the need for external accounting software or services. Some applications will link your condo management software with QuickBooks for complete accounting functionality.

Parking Security - License plate recognition (ALPR) allows pre-approved resident and visitor vehicles to access parking facilities. A camera reads the license plate at the garage entrance and connects to your condo management software to determine if that vehicle has been approved. Gates remain closed and secure when an approaching vehicle does not have a digital parking permit.

Package Receipt Automation - Smartphone integration allows incoming packages to be scanned using the parcel barcode with automatic notification sent to the recipient along with your pick-up instructions.

Package Management – Smart parcel lockers offer a solution to communities seeking to streamline the

process of package receipt, storage and delivery of resident packages without the costs associated with using a concierge, security personnel or onsite staff. Integration with your condo management software ensures resident rosters are updated in real time, improves delivery accuracy and reliability, and eliminates confusion. Reporting is available to management on the smart locker's utilization rates, package volume and capacity. Electronic valet enhancement controls provide access to couriers with package deliveries using an entry console installed in the vestibule of the building. This system automatically unlocks the door to provide building and locker access for authorized couriers.

Meetings Management – Tools to assist directors in organizing and managing meetings for the board or those with owners from creating an agenda to signing official minutes in paper or paperless forms. Automation tools aid in distributing meeting notices, achieving quorum, obtaining proxies and board member votes.

Director and Management Transition – Transition between administrators and directors while providing education, familiarity and awareness of current or outstanding matters to those who have recently joined your management team.

Smart Home Integration – Systems can integrate with Amazon Alexa, Google Home and smart phones to simplify management of everyday activities and provide a more enjoyable living experience that includes the ability to verbally access building information or control lights, blinds, doors and thermostats.

A Word about Free Software

Some management and security companies offer a

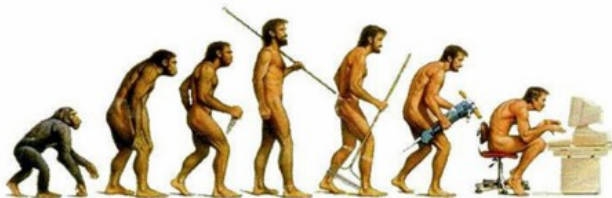
EVOLUTION OF CONDO MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

free version of condo management software. You get what you pay for. Free products offer limited functionality. They can only be used so long as the provider remains under contract for other services. It is difficult or impossible to transfer information to another system. Free products are a known way to get individuals to relinquish ownership or control of personal information for possible sale to a third-party. Free products may display advertising which cannot be turned off and typically offer very limited or no support.

Condo Act and Condominium Authority Tribunal

While use of condo management software is a best practice supported by legislation, the Condominium Authority Tribunal remains stuck in the last century. They have chosen to remain silent when presented with submissions that can involve inability to properly access or loss of electronic records. Decisions by the Tribunal can include fees for accessing records stored electronically as if they were stored in a paper-based system requiring extensive time to manually search, print, redact and rescan. High costs to access these supposedly electronic records appear to be successful ploys by condominium corporations that have failed to manage their electronic record systems or possibly have destroyed electronic records.

Condo management software is THE essential tool for ensuring smooth and efficient management of any community.



SELF-CLOSING FIRE DOORS



In high-rise communities, doors from units to hallways are required to be closed except when entering and exiting a unit.

While closed doors keep odours and smoke from entering common areas from units, their primary purpose is to ensure any fire and resulting smoke in a unit does not escape to hallways and other units thus putting more lives and property at risk.

The Ontario Building Code states that every door in a fire separation shall be equipped with a self-closing device designed to return the door to the closed position after each use. Condominium corporations are responsible for maintaining life safety features in their building.

Building residents may circumvent this important fire safety feature by using a wedge to hold the door open. They may choose to remove their door closer which makes the door look more aesthetically pleasing, facilitates adding design features such as trim, or makes it easier to enter or exit while carrying items or using a walker, cane or wheelchair.

Unit front doors are part of common areas and should be maintained by the corporation. Periodic door closing mechanism adjustments are necessary to ensure doors close properly without too much force.

DISQUALIFYING A BOARD MEMBER



What happens when an elected condo board member sells their property, no longer has a vested interest in the community and chooses not to resign their elected role as a director?

Condo directors do not have authority to remove a board member. Furthermore, it may be preferable that they remain a director to avoid risking loss of quorum.

Should there be a desire to remove a director from their elected position, start by checking the condominium's governing documents. There may be a condition requiring board members to own property or have an ownership interest in the property. If so, that individual may automatically be disqualified from serving as a board member. Remaining board members may have authority to appoint someone for the remainder of the term or call an election.

In the absence of an automatic disqualification, that individual may continue to serve out the remainder of their term. When it comes time for re-election, the position becomes available to anyone meeting the qualifications to serve as a director.

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EVOLVING HIGH-RISE TECHNOLOGIES

Technology is changing how people get around their buildings, park their cars and access services. 89 Avenue in Yorkville features technologies that may someday make their way into all high-rise buildings. The community will offer enhanced digital resources that are increasingly important for offering convenience.

A multi-level automated parking system designed to accommodate the largest of luxury vehicles is being installed in the building. A valet or owner drives the vehicle onto a pallet. A personal code is entered and the vehicle is lowered into the underground garage and stored in the first available space. The same code is used to retrieve the vehicle. The system learns personal habits and schedules. It moves vehicles closer to the "front" when it "anticipates" vehicles will be retrieved to reduce waiting. Parking pallets include charging stations for electric vehicles, and trickle chargers so car batteries do not die if unused for an extended period of time. Nobody needs to wander alone in an underground garage and feel unsafe. Security of vehicles is enhanced. Without residents accessing the garage, there is no need to provide heat and lighting.

Destination elevators will provide direct uninterrupted access going up and down. Technology will recognize when a resident enters the building and will bring the elevator to ground level. A separate elevator will be available for pets,

service people or for moving.

A customized mobile app will allow residents to connect directly to the building's concierge team including the porter, valet and security. It will also connect with local restaurants, salons, spas, gyms and other service providers. An online booking system is integrated for restaurant reservations and which will provide menus.

Other digital conveniences that have received more widespread adoption include keyless entry systems, upgraded security solutions and automated parcel systems. All are contactless solutions capitalizing on the widespread use of mobile phones for increased convenience and control over suite and building features.

It is now possible to unlock front and lobby doors, set your in-suite temperature, see who is calling from the lobby, receive notifications about package arrival, book amenities and more just by pushing buttons on your mobile phone.

It may not be long before metal keys for opening doors are obsolete.



WINTERIZING YOUR CONDO



When the weather starts to cool it's time to prepare your condominium for winter. Winterizing your home is essential to keeping it in good condition.

Protect Windows and Doors

The main source of temperature loss and external water leaks is cracking or peeling of weather stripping. Check the stripping and seals around your doors. If any are loose, have the condominium manager assess them to determine if they will continue to keep cold air out of your home during the winter.

Window Insulation

Adding insulation, or more insulation, to windows protects against cold air entering your home. Window insulation kits are available at local hardware stores. Typically, insulation is a clear plastic cover over your window that creates a barrier to retain heat.

HVAC Maintenance

Nobody wants heating to fail when it is cold outside. If your community does not provide annual maintenance of the system, contact a service provider. Change filters to improve air quality and air flow.

Air Conditioning Units

If your suite has air conditioning units in windows or on the balcony, they should be winterized. Use a cover or tarp over each unit to keep snow, ice and moisture out. Portable units should be removed from windows. Ensure windows are properly sealed to protect against cool air.

Outside Water Taps

If your balcony, terrace or outdoor wall has a water spigot, turn it off from inside your unit. Then open the outside tap to drain remaining water from the pipe to prevent residual water from freezing and causing damage.

Consider a Humidifier

If your unit gets overly dry in the winter, a humidifier will improve air quality. This can help combat dry skin and other minor ailments. A proper level of humidity is between 45 and 50 percent.

Ceiling Fans

If you have a ceiling fan, the blade rotation can be reversed in winter allowing warm air to circulate down.

When travelling in the winter, take measures to protect your home from damage.

- Keep your unit's fan coil and/or heat pump on
- Set your thermostat to provide heat at a reduced temperature
- Have someone check in on your unit for indications of problems every few days
- Ensure all doors and windows are closed and locked
- Unplug all appliances
- Turn off your unit's water supply unless it is necessary for your heating system

TECHNOLOGY AIDS FOR AGING IN PLACE

It can be hard to imagine what retirement years will look like when the time comes. One thing that is clear is that we'll want to "age in place" – that is, remain at home - for as long as we can.

Only about seven percent of Ontario seniors require long-term care. Many of the rest rely on aids to assist with daily tasks and activities. Well-designed technology plays a role in making aging in place as easy and comfortable as possible.

AGE-WELL, a national aging and technology network, has come up with some surprising tweaks to commercially available smart technology making them more helpful to seniors. One system relies on home security technology to prevent disoriented seniors from getting lost. Rather than working to prevent someone from breaking into a home, it protects against some escaping.

Wandering is a symptom of cognitive decline. It can be triggered in the middle of the night when going to the bathroom. Some become disoriented and don't know what time it is or where they are. The problem is worse for seniors who have recently relocated after living independently. They don't recognize their surroundings as home so leave to try to get back home. Using a motion sensor to turn on the bathroom light can help them to reorient. Sensors on front and back doors notify someone if they attempt to leave.

AGE-WELL offers resources, education and training to promote healthy aging in Canada. For more information, visit their website at <http://agewell-nce.ca>.

CONDO LIVING FOR THE SUCCESSFUL

They may be young people who've made big money in crypto, tech or a business venture, or multigenerational families. Some have retired after successful careers. All desire condo living with best of in-home features and amenities without the demands of owning a house.

Luxury buyers desire everything in the home - office, entertainment space, mud room, plus services and conveniences to make everyday living easier. They desire outdoor space larger than a typical balcony for entertaining and relaxation.

All of this is available in luxury properties from 2,000 to 6,000 square feet. They include large balconies with connections for gas barbecues and hoses for gardening. Concierge services operate as personal assistants for those who work from home. Building maintenance staff is available to deal with in-suite matters. Common areas include spaces for entertaining and business meetings plus health spa with top-of-line equipment, swimming pool and yoga studio.

Technology is important with remote or touchless security systems being essential. They want the ability to open doors and call the elevator using their smartphone. When at home, the same phone or electronic device of choice should be able to control heating, cooling and lighting.

For the wealthy and successful, condominium living offers a unique combination of luxury and convenience.



CONDO OWNER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RIGHTS

As a homeowner, I tried to put forth a motion in Other Business at an AGM and was told it wasn't allowed. Is this true?

The motion was;

Be it resolved that the Board of Directors have town hall meetings with members if a potential expense exceeds \$50k.

Your expertise is appreciated.

Response from Toronto Condo News

As a condominium owner, you have certain rights. When it comes to the Annual General Meeting, you have the right to propose items to be addressed or discussed at the meeting. The Board makes final decisions about what is to be addressed at the meeting and distributes an Agenda.

At the meeting, owners do not have the right to

change an agenda by putting forth a motion for the Condo Board to consider, discuss and vote on. These are matters solely determined by the Condo Board.

The motion you propose is problematic. Owners have the right to vote for and elect directors that serve on the Condo Board. Their role is to make decisions on behalf of the community. The Condo Board does not have the right to pass along their obligation to vote on motions relating to the management of the community. Condo owners do not have the right to restrict the Condo Board's authority in ways that are inconsistent with the Condo Act.

The motion you propose, to require the Condo Board to hold town hall meetings and to discuss expenses exceeding \$50,000 with owners, is inconsistent with the Condo Act and thus inappropriate based on our general understanding. While there are times where a town hall meeting or other form of communication is appropriate for the Condo Board to discuss matters with the community, these decisions are at their discretion.

From a practical perspective, what you propose is dangerous and can lead to gridlock. The building collapse in Surfside Florida where nearly 100 people lost their lives was a situation where owners were unwilling to approve necessary expenditures for building repairs. The Condo Act in Ontario prevents such a situation from occurring. Your proposed motion, if allowed, would create such a situation.

If there is lack of trust in the Condo Board to make such a decision, the best course of action is to elect directors that you do trust.

AGM
Annual General Meeting



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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
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