
Strata Living

Headline: Ballots

Topics: Voting

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Written by: Tony Gioventu

Dear Tony: Can you explain how ballots are managed at a general meeting? Our meeting last night looked more like a WWE match than strata owners deciding on the annual budget. An owner demanded a secret ballot for the approval of the budget because there was so much intimidation at the meeting, and the property manager told us it was too late to ask for a secret ballot because that had to be requested at the beginning of the meeting. At that point the yelling started. The council president realized the potential risks and declared we would recess for 10 minutes while the ballots could be made. Turns out no one had ballots. The ballots were issued, and an owner with 11 proxies was given 1 ballot with the number 11 written on it, to which he objected because it was no longer confidential. When the ballots were counted in another room by the property manager and president, we ended up with 5 more votes than registered. The vote only passed by 1!

Donna M.

Dear Donna: Procedures at general meetings, especially when it comes to issuing and counting of ballots must be absolutely transparent. With a miscount of ballots and such a close result, it may be in the best interest of the strata to convene a special general meeting to: a) set up proper voting cards, ballots and voting procedures and b) appoint scrutineers to conduct the count. Unless your bylaws have been amended, a secret ballot must be held if it is requested by an eligible voter. There is nothing in the Act that requires this to be done at the beginning of a meeting. It is within the voting authority of the quorum present in person or by proxy to nominate and elect scrutineers to either watch over the voting procedures or to count and report the votes. A person who has a direct benefit or interest should not be independently

counting votes without any scrutiny, and it is not prudent for the ballot box or ballots to leave the room at any time until they are counted. Ballot tampering is an easy opportunity for voting fraud and occurs frequently. If anyone thought these irregularities no longer matter think again! These are exactly the types of disputes the Civil Resolution Tribunal was intended for.