

Condominium Home Owners' Association

Serving BC's Strata Property Owners since 1976

Bulletin: 300-172

Condo Smarts

Headline: What to do with our dogs?

Topic: Buying and Pets

Publication date: April 9, 2006

Publication: The Province

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Dear Condo Smarts: We have been looking for a retirement apartment or townhouse in Victoria for the last six months and we keep running into the same problem. No one will allow our two dogs. We finally found a condo in a quiet area, but once again the bylaws don't allow dogs. So we asked the strata council if they could give us an exemption, to which they replied no. We asked for a meeting but they wouldn't even grant us a hearing.

Did the laws not change that allowed for pets, including cats and dogs?

Our realtor told us we could just move in and then we could sort it out with the council.

-- *Jenny Davis, Saskatoon*

Dear Jenny: The most important issue you have to understand is that the council has the obligation to enforce the bylaws and not the authority to amend them or exempt them. There are some special circumstances, but they would apply to hardship exemptions for a rental bylaw, and in certified special needs conditions, such as a guide dog.

Pet bylaws are permitted by the *Strata Property Act* and they are enforceable.

A person who purchases into a strata knowing they are going to violate the bylaws just invests into a pricey conflict. Never invest hoping to sort out the conflict after you moved in.

Tips for Buying into a Strata:

- Make sure the strata you are buying to is right for you. Whether it's a new home or 25 years old, consider your lifestyle. A high rise doesn't have parking for RVs, boats, or oversized vehicles. A retirement complex will be unhappy surroundings for children.
- Do you have musical instruments and theatre equipment?
- How soundproof is the condo?
- Are there parks nearby for your pets?
- Are you absent for long periods and intend to rent your unit?
- Do the bylaws permit rentals?
- If you want to avoid garden work, don't invest into a townhouse with a large back yard area that is your responsibility.
- In addition to reviewing the records and maintenance conditions, a bit of lifestyle reflection on your current and future needs can make your real estate purchase a positive and successful venture.

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