

**Condo Smarts**

Headline: A Volunteer Crisis  
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**Dear Tony:** Our strata corporation is only 36 units and our problems seem small compared to big strata corporations. We have run into a huge problem in getting people to sit on strata council. We are not self managed, and have a good management relationship, but the manager only does our accounting and meetings for us. We take care of minutes and correspondence, and the general operations and maintenance of the strata corporation. Our community is aging and no one wants to be on council any more. We have a law suit two years ago that involved bylaw enforcement and a nasty owner, and now he's the only person willing to sit on council. If he is a council member, no one else wants to be on council. If he isn't we don't have enough to constitute a minimum of three. What are our choices?  
*Kelly Wong*

**Dear Kelly:** Strata council members are volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to the benefit of their communities, property, assets and safety. It is always awkward to be the decision maker, the judge and the enforcer all at the same time, but that is the nature of being on strata council. A strata council first should take an academic approach to applying bylaws, rules, and general operations. Smaller strata corporations can often be more contentious because issues become personal, and owners attempt to manipulate personal relationships so they may gain an advantage. A consistent level of formality with owners and fellow council members will make a council member's life easier. Strata corporations may also consider permitting additional persons to be elected to council if they amend their bylaws. Those other council members may be a family member such as a spouse of an owner, parent or child who is not registered on title. That additional support may be invaluable, especially if the family member has valuable experience in property operations.

boards, work for non-profit associations, government services or foundations, there will always be individuals who find it is easier to attack and be destructive as opposed to working constructively to improve the operations and conditions of their organizations.

It is difficult for a strata corporation to be constantly wrapped up in the cycle of bylaw enforcement, knowing how difficult and costly it is to collect fines or apply to the courts for enforcement orders with complicated results. The development of the Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) and the ongoing changes to Strata Legislation will provide strata corporations with the essential tools they need to resolve disputes in a timely and cost effective manner. While changes are still needed to the legislation to compel both the strata corporation and the owners and tenants of strata units into a tribunal dispute, the development of the Tool Box on line self help program, and the development of the Rules of the CRT that will enable all of us to resolve our disputes in a simple on manner, will be a remarkable asset to strata corporations and strata living in general. Disputes that once percolated for months and years because of the barriers of cost and time, will now be able to be remedied with much less complication, affordable, and timely. In the face of significant opposition, Minister Rich Coleman, the Minister responsible for Housing, and the Attorney General Suzanne Anton both need to be commended for their continuing support of the development of the CRT and amendments to Strata legislation that continue to improve housing and access to justice. Our elected strata councils also need to be supported and respected for agreeing to represent our investments. Even though strata councils are volunteers, their obligations are often just as complicated. After all, a strata corporation and council, is just the simplest form of government.

Volunteers and people who serve the public are constant targets. Whether we volunteer on

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