
Strata Living

Headline: Verify the Source

Topics: Strata Council; Bulletins

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Dear Tony: We had a letter that was issued to our owners this week that claims an upcoming renovation project is unnecessary and that the strata is being pressured into spending money needlessly. The letter talks about the job being premature and that the work could be delayed for another 5 years. The letter was signed by the strata council, or so we thought. We contacted the council who knew nothing about the letter. A special general meeting has been called to address this letter and the misinformation that attempted to derail our project. The project is to replace piping and we have already had 8 leaks in the past 6 months, so a delay is not an option. We often see information posted on our bulletin board for weeks that is never signed and assume it is reliable because no one has taken it down, but now this campaign of misinformation has created a serious problem for our building.

Celia F.

Dear Celia: While it has often been known that if something isn't in writing it probably isn't reliable, the same can be said for written documents. Unless you can identify the author, documents may be just as unreliable. Misinformation campaigns occur in every level of government from time to time, and strata is the simplest form of government. Your strata is taking the right steps. Address the issues, clarify misinformation and provide the most accurate and reliable resources for your owners to make informed decisions. Formality in council minutes, minutes of general meetings and correspondence to the owners is the best prevention against misinformation. The more information the strata corporation provides the less confusion for the owners. For anyone likely to lose their homes when there is a significant special levy, they will take any

action to delay the inevitable. In part it is easy to understand the funding dilemma many home owners faced in strata buildings face. They moved into a strata likely because it was affordable or provided a simple life style where they were not responsible for cutting the grass, the gutters and managing the maintenance of their homes. Before depreciation reports were introduced the greatest involvement many owners had in their strata was possibly attending the annual general meeting. Their main concern was whether strata fees would increase. As a result, many owners were never aware of the looming costs of building renewals or when they would occur. Strata owners are entering a new era of competent planning and funding for building operations in BC. There is not much you can do about misinformation besides correcting what is wrong, but your strata can provide valuable long term information to owners to avoid a crisis. Include an update to your planning from your depreciation report every year as part of your AGM notice. If owners are well informed of the next 10 years, they will be able to plan, fund and support implementation of the projects.