



Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association
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STRATA BULLETIN – FEBRUARY 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ☞ Message from Your President
- ☞ You Asked: About Standpipes
Harvey Williams, Board Member
- ☞ The Depreciation Report
John Grubb, Unity Services Corporation
- ☞ The Commerce of Clutter
Florence Walker, President
- ☞ A Persistent Lady
Janet Remmer, President VIS3174
- ☞ VISOA NEEDS YOU!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Florence Walker
Vice-President	Harvey Williams
Sec/Treasurer	Linda Thompson
Webmaster/Editor	Allen Walker
Board Members	Helen Sheane Barbara Zimmer

MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT FEBRUARY 2005

This is the last Bulletin before our Annual General Meeting on February 20, 2005 at the Trafalgar-Pro Patria Legion at 411 Gorge Road East. Registration will be at 12:30pm and the meeting will begin at 1:30pm. This will give us all time to have a cup of coffee; to meet new members and perhaps most of the proposed slate of new Board members.

At this meeting we will vote on a new budget that will seek a much-needed increase in membership fees as well as on the election of a full, nine-member Board of Directors. We will introduce a slate of six potentially new Board members that have expressed an interest in the activities of the Association. There will also be an introduction and explanation of the need for and the design of a new organization for the Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association.

Our Association is at an impasse in that we must raise new funds or reduce the services that we provide. A form was distributed at the last seminar requesting input on a number of options and the results indicated 2:1 for an increase in membership fees until such time as a full re-organization can take place at the AGM in February of 2006. Your Board of today does want to continue with the number of educational seminars that we now supply - two in Victoria and two in Parksville - as

membership is increasing every day and the new members in both locations will need the existing format for education and questions to be answered.

The first seminar of the year will be held in Victoria on March 27, 2005, with one confirmed topic [title not yet decided] on bare land stratas. The numbers of this type of strata on Vancouver Island is increasing in all areas of the Island. The first seminar in Parksville, the topics and location yet to be decided, will be on May 15 or 29, 2005. This date will be confirmed by the new Board of Directors.

The proposed slate for the Board of Directors [as of today, January 26, 2005] includes: Bruce Billings, Strata Plan #1100; Jack Dakus, Strata Plan #4892; Bill Fraich, Strata Plan #1190; Felicia Oliver, Strata Plan #3782; Allen Walker, Strata Plan #3969; Florence Walker, Strata Plan #1229; Mowe Warwick, Strata Plan #1731 and Harvey Williams, Strata Plan #933. We are short one member at this time but hope to fill that position prior to or at the AGM. [See the advertisement on a following page.]

You will be receiving your complete package of Minutes, Financial Reports and Budget for the year 2005 with this bulletin. **PLEASE BE SURE TO BRING THIS PACKAGE WITH YOU TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AS EXTRA COPIES WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE.**

I do hope to see you all at the Trafalgar-Pro Patria Legion, 411 Gorge Road East between 12:30 and 1:00pm for our very important Annual General Meeting.

BRING YOUR FINANCIAL PACKAGE WITH YOU!!

Florence Walker, President

YOU ASKED: About Standpipes

Harvey Williams, VISOA Board Member

Have a question about managing your strata corporation? Ask us, we've had a lot of experience helping strata corporations solve problems, perhaps we can help you. Questions may be re-phrased to conceal the identity of the questioner and to improve clarity when necessary. We do not provide legal advice and our answers should not be construed as such. However, we may, and often will advise you to seek legal advice.

We've had several questions about the fire hoses in the glass cases on the walls in the halls of most buildings. I checked with several municipal fire departments and surfed the WEB and here's what I found out. I'm especially grateful to the various fire safety officers who assisted in providing information for this article. While the information provided was, in general, consistent, there were some differences in detail and nuance. You should call your own fire department for specific information about your building.

The fire hoses behind the glass are attached to standpipes. Standpipe systems are important components of the fire protection systems of apartment blocks, especially older blocks that are not fully equipped with fire sprinkler systems. Three or more inches in diameter, a standpipe may be, as the name implies, a single large pipe, extending from the basement up to the attic or, in larger buildings, may be branched. Fire hoses, suspended on a special rack from which they can be easily removed, are attached to the standpipes on each floor of the building to provide an immediate source of water with which to fight a fire. In buildings without sprinkler systems, standpipes are especially important.

Standpipe systems are often connected directly to the water mains rather than through a building's domestic water supply system. The minimum stand-pipe pressure at the top floor is 65 psi and the minimum water-flow rate for a 1 ½" pipe is 100 gallons per minute. Hoses must be flow and pressure tested after having been in use for five years then every three years thereafter. Hoses must withstand a pressure of 65 psi and deliver 100 gallons per minutes. Because pressure and flow testing hoses can be expensive if hoses must be sent off the Island, some strata corporations replace them every five years instead of testing them. Firefighters will normally replace the building hoses and attach their own hoses when fighting a fire.

The first rule of standpipes is don't use them. They are for the use of firefighters. Here's a scenario sketched by Miles Anderson of the Victoria Fire Department: A chesterfield has caught fire in a suite. The owner rushes out, grabs a standpipe hose and returns to the suite to fight the fire. In his haste, he has forgotten to turn on the valve and there is no water. By the time he discovers his mistake, the door has closed and he's in his smoke-filled suite, choking and unable to see and with no protective gear. When the firefighters arrive, fire hose is strung out in the hallway, which has by now also filled with smoke. In case of fire, all residents should evacuate the building in the prescribed manner and leave the firefighting to the professionals.

Standpipes and their attached firehoses are a part of your strata's annual fire safety inspection. The tags attached to the firehoses and standpipes should be signed by your fire inspector whenever they are inspected.

The Depreciation Report

What is it and Why do Owners Need One?

John Grubb, Unity Services Corporation

Section 72 of the Strata Property Act requires strata corporations to take responsibility for the repair and maintenance of all common property and common assets... But you know that.

Section 94 suggests that corporations "may" want to prepare a Depreciation Report that will help to develop the information necessary to decide each owner's annual contribution to the Contingency Reserve Fund. Pretty vague... and so??

Under Part 6.2 of the Regulation, the definition of the Depreciation Report is fleshed out to the extent that a corporation is given some guidelines as to what should be included... OK, but... What is it !?!?

Simply put, our legislators are suggesting that strata owners should have a long term Maintenance Plan for the structures, systems and property that are common to you all. As noted in the Regulation, the list can include heating, electrical, plumbing, envelope (including roof), elevators, carpeting and a number of other common systems. What they don't tell you is how to develop a plan.

VISOA has put together an informative pamphlet on Budget Preparation, and has included a section on Depreciation Reports that gives members a much clearer understanding. There is, however, a question left unanswered still. Where does this information come from ..??

In order to know where you're going, you must first know where you are, and in order to develop a long term Maintenance Plan, a strata corporation needs a clear understanding of the property's present

condition.

No slight is intended to those of you who, due to unfortunate circumstances, are all too aware of the building's condition, and are reminded every day by the wet carpets and scaffolding. We remind you, however, that there are many other common building systems that are unaffected by those conditions and still must be considered within Maintenance Plans and Contingency Reserve Funds.

Those of you with the good fortune to live in properties without those problems, particularly strata corporations 20 years and older, are now at a point when major systems will need replacement (roof, common heating) or upgrading (Fire Alarm). If the costs for these projects have not been included with the CRF contributions for 10 years or more, it is more than likely that a Special Assessment will be necessary, placing a heavy financial burden on the owners for something that could have been anticipated.

In all cases, it is our position that strata corporations must gain a clear understanding of the current conditions of their property, and the systems that make them whole. Without this knowledge, they cannot develop clear priorities and plans for the major repair, replacement and/or upgrade projects that are inevitable as their buildings age. More than what it **is**, this what a Depreciation Report **does** for the corporation.

For those corporations using Property/Strata Management companies, their Property Manager(s) may have the broad based knowledge requirements and experience needed to assist in the development of such a report. For those companies that provide basic repair services and administration support to their strata clients, this is far

beyond their typical capacity or experience.

Engineers can provide some of this information but only in their own areas of expertise, and often at great expense. Competent contractors are also a source of information specific to their trades, but the strata owners must appreciate that these businesses will only make a living by selling you products and services, not information.

It is the business of Unity Services Corporation to provide our clients just such a broad-based knowledge and information service. With more than 25 years' experience in commercial and residential Facilities Maintenance and Management, we offer comprehensive Condition Assessments and Depreciation Reports from a professional Maintenance Manager's perspective.

Our reports provide commentary on all of the pertinent systems in a building, their age, condition and replacement/repair priority. We also provide suggestions and recommendations to help you manage your property for the long term and to help maintain the highest value for each owner.

As a new Business Member of VISOA, Unity Services Corporation is offering special rates to Association members. Please feel free to contact us at 250-616-9298 (Nanaimo), or visit our Website at www.unityservices.ca for further information.

Most of us ask for advice when we know the answer but we want a different one.

– *Ivern Ball*



THE COMMERCE OF CLUTTER

A recent article in the VANCOUVER SUN said that "professional organizing was voted one of the 10 best businesses to be in 2004". One out of 5 people accessed a website for assistance in ridding their closets and storage areas of the clutter that seems to grow with a life of its own! Several burgeoning young companies in the Greater Victoria area have been set up with the sole purpose of getting you organized. [Note: One such company is owned by a member of VISOA.]

A PERSISTENT LADY!

Janet Remmer, President, Strata Council VIS 3174

Our building is just over ten and one half years old and once in a while after heavy wind and rain, water would find its way into and through my kitchen ceiling - about eight feet in from the nearest outside wall. As this happened infrequently, maybe every couple of years, council discussed the problem and 'Leak Experts' repaired what they thought was the problem - TWICE. However, this did not solve anything!

As it was my living space that it was affecting, I spent time thinking and worrying about when the next inflow of water would

occur. I also started standing outside the building looking at the design of the roof trying to figure out why this was happening.

After a couple of months I came to the conclusion the design placing of the down spouts was incorrect. Water coming off the large expanses of sloping roof was being channeled into small areas of approximately three feet to four feet at the side of a bay window.

It was impossible for a large amount of water to get down the pipe without the water being pushed up the side of the wall to flow over and between the top of the wall and the roof line.

To cut the story short, LARGER DOWN SPOUTS were installed without screens at the top which were getting plugged all the time even though we had the gutters cleaned yearly.

ALL THE NEW DOWN SPOUTS HAVE A CLEAN OUT HOPPER at about three feet off the ground that acts like a SIEVE.

You would not believe, unless you saw it yourself, how much rubbish - moss, feathers, sticks and leaves - that we clean out of these wonderful little sieves after a rainfall. It gives all of the owners much satisfaction to see what once used to clog up our gutters is now being cleaned out at the bottom of the drain pipe!

DISCLAIMER

The material in this publication is intended for informational purposes only, and cannot replace consultations with qualified Strata professionals.

Legal advice or other expert assistance should be sought as appropriate.



VISOA NEEDS YOU!

We need one more Board Member for our proposed slate. Can you commit to nine Tuesday evenings each year plus four Sundays for Seminars? We will be reviewing our requirements for a CEO as we move to a new management structure. It should be interesting!

Florence Walker,
VISOA President

Also, we are always looking for content for the Bulletin. As you may have noticed the last 2 bulletins have been a little "thin", 6 pages instead of 8. If we are to bring in money for the Association, we need to fill this bulletin with timely, interesting, readable articles. Do you have some ideas for articles that you would like to see? Email them to me or call the helpline. Do you have an article that you think would fit the bill? Send it in and we'll take a look!

Allen Walker
Webmaster / Editor

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