

## **Board Address to Owners at AGM**

Good evening Owners,

Thank you for joining us this evening for our AGM. A lot has happened this year so I will just dive right in.

The Board had three (3) primary focuses this year:

- The first two are *quality and accountability* to all aspects of condo business, including contractors, Board members, property management and owners alike. If the Board felt that the condo was not getting the service they deserved from anyone, we strived to rectify the situation and make it right.
- The third focus was on communication with owners. We felt it was important to keep owners in the loop as much as possible with Board and community activities, but also for the owners to have a way to reach the Board directly when needed.

As a result, behind the scenes, the Board has had an incredibly busy and, to be frank, a very frustrating year. To capture all the unforeseen struggles we faced would be impossible; however, we feel it is important for owners to understand what we were dealt with this year.

The first action we took as a Board was to look for a new property manager. The results of the survey of owners from August 2021 showed that many owners were dissatisfied with various aspects of property management at that time. We undertook the tremendous task of sourcing a new property manager. Steps taken included (but were not limited to):

- Developing a list of expectations and requirements from a property manager (and company).
- Preliminary discussions with three (3) property management companies: CMG (who was our property management company at the time), CIPM and Sentinel
- Interviews with a property manager from each company
- Each Board member was given the opportunity to provide feedback on each candidate. Feedback was summarized and distributed to each Board member for further discussion.
- Analysis of the costs associated with each company (and subsequent negotiations as required)
- Once the decision was made, working with CMG to ensure the smoothest transition possible for both the Board and owners alike.

CIPM was chosen because the property manager we interviewed, Sarah St. Pierre, was considered to be by far the best candidate of those provided by the three companies. Board members rated her as the most experienced and seemingly the most eager and motivated to help. Also, CIPM's cost was reasonable, and the technology and support systems they use are modern and efficient. They understood our expectations as a client and reassured us that many of the items we noted as required would be handled, such as responses to owners within 24 hours, obtaining multiple quotes for repairs, and more.

Unfortunately, the transition to a new property management company has been much more difficult than we anticipated. We expected to spend a lot of time and effort bringing Sarah and CIPM up to speed (including their finance team). However, so many more issues presented themselves as the process went on.

Sarah and a number of directors started a spring inspection in May, but then the Derecho storm in May pushed everything back by 3-4 weeks due to clean-up and immediate repairs to units as needed. While this was happening, in other areas it became evident to us that Sarah was not able to meet our condo's needs. While discussing our concerns with CIPM management, Sarah suddenly went on a leave of absence.

We were then assigned Anna Opara as our property manager. We again had to spend time familiarizing her with our condo. All the while, in the background, we were working with CIPM's admin team to organize the large number of outstanding owner requests that were transferred over from CMG, plus many new ones that were rapidly being reported. Our goal with owner requests was to gather a list and group them together by type of work so that we could coordinate multiple similar issues being addressed at once, which is cheaper than having one issue addressed at a time.

In the meantime, the spring inspection still wasn't complete. On advice from CIPM, we decided to hire a professional engineering firm, IRC, to inspect and report on their findings. The inspection was finally complete by end of July. Although CIPM had warned us that their initial, general assessment of our property showed many maintenance deficiencies, we were shocked by what was presented to us.

The inspection showed years of maintenance deficiencies and projected approximately \$2.5 million in repairs (to be looked at over many years – not all immediate repairs). The board spent many hours reviewing the inspection report and meeting with IRC. We went through the exercise of prioritization based on recommendations from IRC and CIPM: top priority items were health/safety (such as concrete steps) and possible areas of water infiltration into units. However, other items were clearly deficient, such as brickwork and siding repairs. Eventually it was decided to go to tender for all priority 1 items to have them completed before the winter.

Unfortunately, the tender document for repair services that was sent to the Board for review did not meet the Board's requirements. We spent even more time going back and forth with IRC and CIPM to attempt to get the document completed. As a result, we were unable to release the tender in time to get service contracts in place to get work done before winter.

Since IRC had been rushed with the first inspection as we were aiming to get work done prior to winter, the board noticed some errors in their inspection report. The board requested that IRC redo the entire inspection, and IRC did do so earlier this month. They just sent us an updated inspection report, which CIPM and the Board are in the process of reviewing.

In the meantime, Anna left CIPM, therefore leaving our property as well. Yawar Khan, who is a co-owner and CEO of CIPM, stepped in to manage our property as he recognized we were not getting the service we were promised or are paying for. So far, we have been pleased with Yawar's attention to our condo and he has made every effort to rectify the outstanding issues with owners and the condo generally. We know that many owners did not have their requests actioned (or in some cases, no explanation given as to why it wasn't being actioned). Yawar has recently attempted to contact owners with more serious outstanding issues directly while we work to get as many items completed as possible before winter.

While all this was happening, we had many issues with contractors to deal with.

- The fence end post repairs by FenceMasters has been an ongoing issue. We have been in contact with them since March and as of today, they are scheduled to come to site next week.

to fix the end posts that were not installed correctly. We also plan to have them fix some holes and other issues that have arisen with fences when they come to fix the end posts.

- The installation of the front exterior lights has proven to be challenging as well. After installation was complete, it was observed that caulking on several light fixtures and photocells was unsatisfactory to the Board, and some lights were not working properly due to faulty lights from the manufacturer. The corporation requested that the installer return to redo some installation work, which is on-going. In the meantime, Yawar will provide updates to owners on the remaining lights to be repaired/replaced.
- Telecon, the contractor for Bell who installed the Bell Fibre lines, left a considerable mess and a lot of damage around the condo. The Board has been working closely with CIPM to have the community returned to the condition it was in prior to Telecon starting their work. Unfortunately, several issues remain unresolved. Holes, and possibly stones, from Telecon remain, despite CIPM following up with Telecon continuously for months to have the holes filled and stones removed. Also, some of the damage repairs could not wait for Telecon to fix so we hired other contractors to fix it. CIPM is in contact with Telecon to recover those costs of repairs.

As most owners are aware, we also had some turnover this year on the Board level as well. The Board has been as upfront as possible as to why these changes have occurred, while being careful to protect the privacy of those involved at the same time. There have been many rumours circulating in Castlebrook Village regarding this turnover, to which the Board wishes to address tonight so that the community can move forward.

We cannot speak to the specifics about why each board member left the board beyond what was already reported to owners in previous communications. However I would like to clarify one point: The Board does not have the authority to remove a Director from the Board for any reason. Therefore, rumours that Directors were “kicked off the board” are false, and frankly, very disheartening to hear. In order for a Director to be removed from the Board, they are removed by either the Condominium Authority of Ontario (also known as CAO) or by owners of the condo. These situations occur if:

1. A Director does not meet the requirements as governed by the CAO, therefore are automatically no longer considered Directors per the CAO, or
2. A meeting of owners would be called to discuss the issues at hand, and a vote would take place among owners as to whether or not they would like the Director in question to remain on the Board.

Each time a Director position on the Board was vacated, we looked to appoint one of the candidates who had run for the Board in the previous AGM but did not have enough votes to get elected. We felt this was the fairest approach. The first vacancy was filled by Edmundo Nunes, who received the highest number of votes at the last AGM of those who were not voted in. The next vacancy was filled by Eva Kwiatkowski, who ran for the Board as well. When the last position became vacant, we approached Florent Labourie, who had also run for the Board, but he was not able to join due to other commitments at the time. We are pleased to see Florent running again. Since we had run out of options from candidates who ran for the Board at the AGM, we put a notice out to owners in the following newsletter, calling for volunteers to fill the position. We did not receive any interest. Instead of leaving

the position vacant, the Board reached out to owners we knew had been on the Board in the past or had shown interest in volunteering in other ways. This is when Debbie Cecil joined the Board.

The rumours that the Board has done anything underhanded or not permitted by the CAO is disappointing and damaging to our reputations. To summarize, please be mindful that so much happens behind the scenes that owners do not see, and spreading unsubstantiated rumours about what takes place is not appropriate or productive. If owners have questions, they can always reach out to CIPM or the Board directly.

We also struggled greatly when contemplating the budget for this fiscal year and went back and forth on it many times. There seems to be a misconception that the new property management company was the reason for such a high increase in condo fees this year. That is not the case at all. There was only about a \$4000 difference between CIPM and what CMG quoted us for their services for this fiscal year. That \$4000 difference spread among all units is only \$25 more per unit for the YEAR and the board believed the added expense was well worth it. In reality, the budget increase was largely due to increased costs of labour and materials related to repairs and maintenance.

Despite all the challenges faced this year, the Board did manage to get some great work done:

- First, 38 garage doors were replaced. These replacements were mostly older doors that did not match in colour and/or were damaged.
- All front exterior lights and photocells (which are automated dusk-to-dawn sensors) were replaced.
- Power washing of all units was completed, removing years of mold and dirt on many units.
- Storm damage cleanup was completed quickly and efficiently.
- A tree assessment and inspection by the Garden Coach Program by Peter Knippel Nursery was completed in June. Great suggestions were provided for replacement trees that will be considered next spring.
- Eavestrough/downspout cleaning was completed in mid-November on all units.
- The board created a document to properly record the replacement and condition status of each garage door in our community with their respective pictures. This kind of recordkeeping was not done in the past with garage doors, so it will enable future boards to have a full breakdown of when garage doors were replaced, what damage is on them (if any), etc. CIPM has started gathering information about driveways so we can create proper documentation for that as well.
- Increased communication with owners – this was achieved by the introduction of a condo board email address so owners can communicate with Directors directly. The purpose of the email address is two-fold: one, so that the board can send newsletters and other updates directly to owners, and two, so that owners can let us know if they are not getting satisfactory service from our property management. If we were made aware of an unsatisfactory situation with CIPM, we did our best to rectify the situation immediately.
- Finally, we hired Clayton Ducharme, a resident in the community, to do our weekly clean up after garbage and recycling collection. Clayton has been doing a great job!

Lastly, the Board would like to say a huge THANK YOU to those who have volunteered their time and talents this year:

- Chris Klerian assisted with editing and professionalizing Board communications

- Rita Paterson and the rest of the Garden Club who strive to keep our community beautiful with flowers and the like
- Also thank you to Rita for organizing the community BBQ in August, and to the others who helped by bringing food, cooking the meat, running the scavenger hunt for the kids, and more. There was a great turnout from the community, so thank you to all those who showed up!
- Florent and Elisa Labourie keep our website updated frequently and have been working on a new website in the background, which we hope to be able to roll out next year.
- Thank you to anyone else who offered to help but we may not have used your services.
- As I conclude, I want to say thank you to the rest of the Board members who have put in so much time and effort to make improvements to the community. As volunteers who all have other commitments, such as family, work, etc., you have stretched yourselves as much as possible to do what you felt is best for the community. The hours spent each week on Board items is intense, but you all rise to the occasion every time. The time commitment is the reason I personally will not be running for the Board again this year, however I have no doubt you will continue to push hard and do amazing things for the community.
- Finally, to the owners, we thank you. The Board asked for your patience while we transitioned to a new property management company and you gave it, time and time again. That has not gone unnoticed and for that we are truly grateful.

Thank you for listening. I look forward to seeing what the Board is able to achieve this coming year!