
Condo Smarts

Headline: Social Media Accounts

Topic: Social Media

Publication / Date: Province, February 8, 2024

Written by: Tony Gioventu

Dear Tony: Our strata corporation is struggling with a Facebook page created by an owner that is publishing incorrect information about our major construction project. It has resulted in several potential purchasers walking away from our strata, and a supplier has demanded we pay 50% of our material cost before they will agree to supply products. The owner has included claims that the project is over budget, many owners have not paid their special levies and also claims we are in a lawsuit over construction agreements. Absolutely none of this is true and it's intended to destabilize our project with an attempt to overthrow our council. We have been unsuccessful in closing the Facebook account. How do we resolve this?

RTK Vancouver Island

Dear RTK: The use of social media has been a positive move for many strata corporations when it is well managed and the posting of information is closely moderated and approved by the corporation. When an individual creates a website or Facebook page, a strata corporation has limited options outside of the courts to remove or shut down these sites, but you can be proactive to ensure accurate information and communication is available to the owners and the public.

While it can be a fair amount of work, an official Facebook page that represents the corporation and is maintained by the strata corporation through an active council member, will at the very least provide a balance to the information and enable the strata corporation to post routine updates and activity reports. This can be for either routine strata corporation business or special projects. You can also restrict or limit posting to the site to reduce egregious comments, harassment or abusive postings.

It may be in the best interest of the strata corporation to consider legal advice on the implications of the unauthorized site, and possible options to respond. In some circumstances, a court order and applications for damages may be necessary to end the abusive behaviour.

Strata corporations must also be mindful of the applications of the *Personal Information Protection Act* and the BC Human Rights Code. Postings to either an unauthorized site or a strata corporation site are subject to these laws. Photographs, descriptions of personal behaviour, personal information, contact information, records and reports, vehicle information and surveillance records may all contain personal information that once posted are the result of a privacy violation.

Major projects are difficult to manage at the best of times. Designate who will be responsible for regular communications to your owners and what information will be published. It's the best solution to combat misinformation.