
Condo Smarts

Headline: Recycling

Topic: Recycling

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Written by: Tony Gioventu

Dear Tony: Does the strata council require the approval of the owners at a general meeting to expand our recycling and waste management? We are a large strata community over 200 units and have been approached to do fabric and clothing recycling. It would include carpeting from renovations and all types of fabrics, as well as clothing that can be repurposed. A council member has raised a number of objections to the recycling, and some have merit if we don't manage this properly, but the reduction and diversion from waste on our waste is considerable.

Jerry LV, Surrey

Dear Jerry: When the strata owners approve an annual budget, they essentially give the strata council both the authority and direction to implement the budget and manage the affairs of the strata corporation. The duties and obligations of the strata corporation are implemented by the strata council.

In your budget there is a line item that identifies "waste management". Provided your strata council acts within the scope of the budget, does not exceed your spending authority or any limitations within your bylaws, and have managed the recycling program in a responsible manner, then how waste management is implemented is a majority decision of council.

An implementation check list is essential to evaluate the benefits and risks:

- Is the installation of a bin(s) affecting the use and enjoyment of common property?
- Will the introduction of bins impact an owner's use of a parking space, or will it create a significant change in use or appearance to the common property?

- Are there any potential fire or safety hazards associated with the intended contents of the bins?
- Will the collection schedule eliminate the risk of pest infestations?
- Are there any costs associated with the collection service?
- Is this a long-term service or can it be installed for a short summer window during renovation season to encourage residents to maximize the benefits of the service?
- Are there any hidden contract details or is it a quick on-line booking system?

Waste diversion and recycling is an obligation we all share; however, it cannot be at the expense of an owner's use and enjoyment of their home. If there are doubts about owner support, put a majority resolution on the next annual general meeting agenda to direct council's implementation of a broader recycling program. Before you proceed, check your local government website for programs and initiatives that support multi-family communities on waste diversion.