

## Strata Living

Headline: Who counts the AGM vote?

Topic: Voting

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Written by: Tony Gioventu

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**Dear Tony:** I am the newly elected vice president of our strata council. At our AGM last week we had 3 secret ballot votes on special levies and special projects. The votes were collected by the property manager around the room and then she left the room and counted the ballots while we were doing the budget. The result of the votes was announced at the end of the meeting, and all 3 had passed. No one questioned anything until we started talking to other owners, all of whom voted against the 3<sup>rd</sup> resolution. Needless to say we are suspicious and have started questioning the process. The past president and manager claim it is all done and there is nothing we can do about it now. The owners are petitioning for a Special General Meeting, challenging the third resolution. How do we prevent these problems in our strata?

*Kieren B. Port Coquitlam*

**Dear Kieren:** The *Schedule of Standard Bylaws of the Strata Property Act*, set out the basic voting procedures, whether by show of voting cards, ballot, secret ballot or poll.

Secret ballots not only require the secrecy of each owner casting their ballot, but the protection of that process. To avoid errors in counting, or the inevitable breach of secrecy here are some simple steps. For secret ballots the strata corporation must have a

secure voting station that protects privacy, and a ballot box for each owner to enter their ballots. No one should collect ballots. Each owner is responsible to place their ballot in the box once they have voted. Scrutineers, which may include council member or the manager, should be elected by the majority of owners at the meeting, and once the balloting is closed, the ballots should be counted in the room in the presence of the voting quorum. Those results are then reported to the chairperson, who reports them to the owners and whether the vote is passed or defeated. Protect the privacy of owners and eliminate secrecy around procedures. Because of the ability to reconsider three quarter votes under Section 51 of the Act, it is also important to record their accuracy. Record and report the total number of votes in favour, those opposed, and the result of the vote based on that total number.

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