

# real estate

## **Condo-Ology®: A former front line condo manager's perspective**

### *Mandatory education for volunteer condominium board members*

In previous articles, I have written about the on-going Provincial Condominium Act Review. In the below article, I will address the question of mandatory education for all Ontario condominium board members.

There is a high probability that the modernization of the current Condominium Act of Ontario (Act) will include some form of mandatory education for all board members. In my opinion, these educational requirements could do more harm than good.

Two of the most influential stakeholders reviewing the Act are the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario (ACMO) and the Canadian Condominium Institute (CCI). Both associations have indicated in their legislative brief that newly elected directors should be mandated to attend an introductory director's course.

I disagree with the position of ACMO and CCI with respect to education and I have expressed my opinion in my submission for Stage 1 of the review,

*“On first glance this may seem very logical and beneficial, but I am suggesting this implementation will immediately eliminate qualified owners (desperately needed – Ontario needs approximately 25,000 director volunteers annually) who may wish to assist with the affairs of their condominium corporation.”*

According to the 'Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating', the primary reasons individuals give for not volunteering is lack of time (76%) and the inability to make a long term commitment (52%).

The majority of front line condominium managers will agree that the best directors are those busy with work and other volunteer positions, who volunteer for director out of a sense of obligation. These are people who know how to delegate, work with others, and create solid evaluations by listening to expert opinions. They will make decisions based on common sense and what is in the best, long term, interest for all condominium owners.

These individuals are essential to the future of condominium communities and the industry as a whole. Additional time requirements placed on these volunteers, such as mandatory education, would be counter-productive. Minimizing the time requirements for the position of director would serve to attract owners who would be willing to volunteer.

It is also important to note that directors of long-term successful condominium operations also believe in the simple, but necessary adage, "Directors direct (via Board of Directors), Managers manage".

The Resident Panel, a body of thirty six condominium residents randomly selected, who serve as representatives for the province's condominium population, have acknowledged this concern and in their Final Report for Stage 1 made the below recommendation:

*"Panellists believe that board members, as volunteers taking on what are sometimes multimillion-dollar operations, deserve greater support. Panellists did not go so far as to recommend placing further requirements on board members, fearful that this would make it even more difficult to recruit new directors. Accessible (likely online) training modules, on the other hand, were seen as a way to begin training board members, to orient them to available resources, and to attract new directors with the promise of support."*

A recommendation such as this is an encouraging sign towards a successful public engagement process aimed at modernizing the Act.

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Tom is locally best known as being on the incredible development team for Lighthouse Point Yacht and Tennis Club led by the visionary Rupert Bronson from start to finish (1987 – 2008). Tom, through his company was Lighthouse Point Community's Condominium Management and Grounds Maintenance Provider from 1989 to 2010

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