



M E T R O P O L E

# Metropole Board Notes

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*Meeting of Wednesday, January 31, 2018*

## **Dear Owner(s) of 38 Metropole Private:**

Please find below the main topics discussed at the Board meeting held on January 31, 2018. Feel free to scroll through the document sequentially or click on a topic to go directly to the summary of that item. To return to the topics section, click on the title.

### **Topics:**

- [Elevator Modernization](#)
- [Management fees and responsibilities](#)
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## **Elevator Modernization**

In January the Board met again with Rooney Irving and Associates (RiA) for a briefing on their options and recommendations regarding the elevator operation.

Three options were presented. The first two, installing new gears or replacing the gears with new gearless machinery, were both judged to be only short term solutions that came with no guarantee. In addition, in each case the work performed now was unlikely to translate into savings when full elevator modernization is performed as scheduled in 2025.

In light of these considerations the Board opted for the third option, which is to advance the scheduled complete elevator modernization. To that end the Board has engaged RiA to act on our behalf and begin work immediately on the modernization project. . A communiqué explaining the process in more detail is attached as [Appendix C](#).

## **Management Fees and Responsibilities**

At the budget meeting last December some owners requested further information regarding the new charges imposed by management. The new Condo Act has imposed many new responsibilities on management and the Board. These new responsibilities come at a cost and our management company has passed on a portion of these added costs to the Corporation.

In response to the request at the budget meeting our Treasurer has written a letter explaining the changes. This letter can be found in [Appendix D](#).

## **Water Leaks and Ice Build-up**

There are still some leaks that require further testing from the exterior of the building. These will be dealt with in the spring.

Some owners are reporting ice build up on the windows, fearing it is a sign of water infiltration. The complaints merited investigation by a CLEB engineer.

Some build up of this nature is to be expected during cold weather in a building given the window configuration of the Metropole. In most cases the problem can be alleviated through proper humidity control. This is addressed in the handbook. The relevant passage is repeated below:

### ***Condensation and Relative Humidity***

*Humidity should be controlled so that little or no condensation appears on the inside surface of windows. As soon as condensation occurs on inside window surfaces, you should take steps to reduce the relative humidity level by controlling the moisture sources and/or by increasing ventilation. Remember that a small amount of condensation in the daytime can turn into significant condensation at night when temperatures are lower.*

*There are a number of steps that you can take to lower humidity levels.*

- *If you are operating a humidifier, turn it to a low setting or shut it off.*
- *Turn on exhaust fans in the bathrooms and kitchen.*
- *Always use exhaust fans when bathing, cooking, washing, etc.*
- *Turn the heating/cooling system fans from AUTO to the ON position to promote continuous internal air circulation through the suite.*
- *Open a window to introduce fresh, cooler air into the suite. In cold weather avoid leaving a window located right beside the fan coil open for any length of time as you run the risk of freezing the water in the air conditioning pipes thus causing a major leak when the pipe thaws.*
- *Open drapes, curtains and blinds that restrict air flow around the window. This encourages circulation and reduces condensation.*

## **Energy Savings Project: Water Booster Pumps**

The new cold water booster pumps have arrived in Ottawa and will be installed soon. While there is no guarantee, there is hope that the new pumps may improve the hot and cold water mix experienced by many in the building.

## **Electric vehicle charging**

Electric vehicles are the way of the future and from time-to-time we have had queries regarding plans for accommodating vehicle charging in the building. The Board has approved installation of a charging station in one of the corporate parking spots. This service will be managed much like the guest suites are now, at a price to be determined.

## **Lounge & Pool Doors**

Management is still trying to arrange for a meeting with Barry J. Hobin & Associates Architects to discuss the best approach to resolve water infiltration at the lounge and pool doors during periods of wind-driven rain.

## **Gym**

The new gym configuration, considered a good plan at the time, has not been well received by many users. Recall that after much research by the gym committee, the Board decided to follow the best practices set out by PreCor – the manufacturer of our gym equipment - respecting the layout of the gym equipment. The recommended layout was intended to maximize the safety of those using the equipment. One elliptical was removed and the two treadmills were turned around to provide the requisite spacing set out in the PreCor recommendations.

Alas, many users did not find this configuration satisfactory and communicated a firm preference for an open view facing the windows as providing a more aesthetically pleasing experience.

As a result, the equipment has been turned around and once again faces the open room.

However, some of the previous safety concerns remain and the Board is still looking for a solution that would be more appealing to users. In the meantime, for their own safety, users of the treadmills are reminded to attach the safety clip to clothing near their waistline to ensure the motor driving the belt will stop in the event they stumble or fall.

## **Vacations**

It's that time of year when many residents seek refuge from the winter and head to more moderate climates. The Board and Management would like to remind everyone of the procedures to follow when travelling for an extended period of time. Please read [Appendix A](#) for a description of the things you should see to before your departure.

## **Miscellaneous**

**Contacting the Board** - When you wish to make the Board aware of an issue or have the Board address a particular problem please follow the procedure outlined in [Appendix B](#) below.

**Board Directors Course**: In April the entire Board will be attending the Canadian Condominium Institute of Eastern Ontario (CCI) director's course. According to the recent Condo Act, Board director training has become mandatory.

John F. Mallon



Secretary

## Appendix A:

# Vacations and Absences Checklist

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When you plan to be away from your unit for more than five days:

- notify the Concierge and complete the appropriate form including information about how you can be contacted
- arrange to have your unit inspected at minimum every five days. (Note that your insurance company may require more frequent inspections). This precaution will forestall serious damage in the event of a failure such as a water leak in your unit. Residents not complying with this precaution will be considered liable for damages. If you plan to be away for an extended period, the inspection should include flushing toilets and running taps to ensure that the traps do not dry out.

The superintendent can conduct these inspections (and water plants) three times a week for a fee set by the Board of Directors. Prior to leaving, you will need to complete a Unit Inspection Request Form with the Concierge and attach to it a cheque. Your cheque will not be deposited until you return.

- turn off the water to the following appliances
  - the refrigerator
  - the dishwasher

**DO NOT** turn off water to the washing machine. The leak-proof hoses installed by the Corporation protect against leaks. Turning off the water triggers the shut-off valves in the hoses which complicates the process of turning on the water on your return.

- turn off the refrigerator icemaker (if you are not sure how ask the superintendent for assistance)
- put plants in one area of your unit if you want the superintendent to water them when doing inspections (see above).
- ensure that all windows are closed.
- leave all thermostats ON and
  - set the temperature to 18°C (65°F) in winter, 24 °C (75°F) in summer.
  - set the fan to AUTO
  - set the fan speed to "1"
- make arrangements for your mail and newspapers. You can have your mail and newspapers collected and retained here during your absence. There is no charge for this service. You will need to complete a form provided by the Concierge.
- if your car will remain in the garage, leave a set of car keys with your emergency contact person or on the kitchen counter if you've arranged for the superintendent to inspect your unit. Also, be sure to park your vehicle front out to allow for boosting if necessary.

## Appendix B: Contacting the Board and Management:

Often owners wish to convey a message to the Board or Management. This could be as simple as a suggestion for flowers or as complicated as a recommendation for improvements to the building. There are several methods available:

1. **Suggestion box:** All suggestions are reviewed by Management and if Board involvement is required the matter is put on the agenda for the next meeting. Suggestions related to management functions are usually handled by Management itself. The suggestion box is located near the mailboxes

2. **Direct communication with Management:** This is best for all issues related to the Management of the building. Contact is typically via email or written letter.

3. **Direct Communication with the Board:** You are always welcome to approach any member of the Board for an informal chat.

However, requests, suggestions or complaints requiring Board action or decision must be made formally in writing. In addition to ensuring that everyone involved has complete information this guards against the possibility of accidental misunderstandings. Further it ensures that the matter is not overlooked in the flurry of other business. These formal communications may be placed in the Suggestion Box or delivered or emailed to Management. Either route will ensure the matter is addressed by the Board at the next available opportunity.

## Elevator Modernization

### *Project Report #1*

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In April 2014, a site review of the elevator system at the Metropole was performed by Rooney Irving and Associates (RiA), a national elevator engineering firm independent of Thyssen Krupp (TKE), our elevator maintenance firm. The purpose of the review was to assess the technical aspects of the elevator system and provide opinion on probable issues likely to be experienced by the corporation over the next 25 years. The report was reviewed by the Board and also given to our elevator maintenance company TKE who were advised to implement the recommended maintenance actions to rectify deficiencies identified and improve the operations of the elevators.

In September 2016, RiA conducted another site review of the elevator system. The purpose of the review was to assess the technical aspects of the elevator system and comment on the preventive maintenance being provided. The report indicated that maintenance visits had been reduced and that deficiencies identified in 2014 had not been corrected. Additionally, new deficiencies had arisen that needed to be addressed. Once again, the Board forwarded these deficiencies to TKE for resolution.

Additionally in 2016, it was discovered that one of the gears serving elevator #2 had lost a tooth causing a regular slight bump in its operation. The cost of replacing the gear would be covered within the maintenance contract, however the job would result in significant downtime for the elevator. Rather than undertake the repair, TKE approached the Corporation with a proposal to replace our three geared elevator machines with gearless elevator machines. A gearless machine was purported to be more energy efficient, allowing the motor to work at lower capacity thereby increasing its life and providing a smoother ride.

There were meetings with TKE to discuss the pros and cons of the proposal. The Board expressed dissatisfaction with the level of service being provided and the operation of the elevators due to poor maintenance by TKE. The Board asked TKE to improve the maintenance and resolve the deficiencies identified by RiA in their latest report before any decision could be made on the change to gearless machines.

TKE adjusted their maintenance efforts resulting in some slight improvements and they also returned in 2017 with a better offer on the installation of gearless machines. The Board was hesitant to invest in a system without confirming that the results would be as promised. Furthermore, the Reserve Fund Study provided for a complete elevator modernization in 2025/26 and the Board wanted to be sure that the new gearless system if installed today could still be used after the modernization.

In late 2017, the Board commissioned RiA to conduct an audit of the elevator system and provide advice regarding the following options:

1. Status quo - do nothing other than continuing to pressure TKE to improve the maintenance to the elevators and replace the gear with the broken tooth.
2. New machines - proceed with the installation of new gearless machines
3. Full modernization - proceed immediately with the full modernization of the elevators

The report from RiA outlined the advantages and disadvantages of each option. The Board held a special meeting in January to discuss this report and decide upon a course of action as RIA had observed that the performance of the elevators was continuing to deteriorate. TKE were not moving quickly to improve elevator operations and owners were getting more and more frustrated with the functioning of the elevator systems.

After weighing the merits of each option, the Board decided to proceed with Option 3, a full modernization of the elevators. Although expensive, this was the best option to significantly improve the operations of the elevators. It would also allow us to go to tender on a new elevator maintenance contract. Option 2 required substantial investment by the condominium corporation and there was no guarantee the new gearless equipment would not have to be replaced during the full modernization that would continue to be required in the next few years.

Further it would not guarantee that our elevators would cease to vibrate as much as they do now and it would do nothing about problems with the electronics. The status quo, Option 1, was not considered as it was not acceptable to the Board that a luxury building such as ours have such poorly functioning elevators.

RiA has been retained to develop the specifications for the modernization project. Once the specifications are approved by the Board RiA will manage putting the project to tender. We will keep owners advised as to project cost, schedule and impacts to residents as we progress.

Thank you for your patience as the Board deals with the complexities of this important decision for the Metropole.

## Appendix D: Management Fees

February 5, 2018

At the meeting with owners held on December 4, 2017 to review the Metropole operating and reserve budgets for 2017/2018 additional information was requested on the reasons underlying the budgeted fee increase to Capital Integral our condominium manager.

Various requirements under the new condominium act ( The Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015 ) which came into effect November 1,2017 drive the increase in fees. There are significant additional reporting requirements to owners specified under the act that are completed on our behalf by the condominium manager. These include a new Periodic Information Certificate (PIC ) twice per year, Information Update Certificates required on changes in certain information and New owner Information Certificates for each new owner. Each of these requirements is in addition to reporting which has been completed in the past. I would note that the PIC includes twenty separate areas of disclosure. Meeting each of these additional requirements will take increased staff levels both to complete the work and insure compliance on a timely basis.

Further the new condominium act imposes annual registration fees on condominium management firms, specific educational requirements for property managers and ongoing training for all staff.

I would note that the full cost of meeting the requirements under the new act has not been passed on to the Metropole. Generally the costs for systems enhancement and training are borne by Capital Integral while the cost of additional working hours to comply with the new rules is passed on to the Metropole.

For those interested in a more extensive review of all the changes under the new condominium act I would refer them to the fall 2017 issue of Condo Contact the magazine of the Canadian Condominium Institute- Eastern Ontario Chapter available on line. <http://cci-easternontario.ca/members-only/condo-contact-magazine>

Des Clair

Treasurer OCSCC 687