



Tribe♥

Strata Council – The Guide To Success.

[Strata 101 Series]



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Introduction.

Serving on Council can be a rewarding opportunity to make a difference in your home and your strata community. Whether you are new to Council or are considering volunteering, it is important to know what is involved, where responsibility lies and how to set yourself and your Council up for success.

This is more than a Strata Council 101 doc, it is a survival guide and best practice checklist all rolled into one.

We've collaborated with some of our top Community Managers to prepare these “must-know” tips about Strata Councils to help get you on your way.



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Tip: Don't forget to share this guide with your fellow Strata Council Members!

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1. What is a Strata Council?

They are the key members in the community who are responsible for ensuring the Strata Corporation is being properly managed and give the management company direction with respect to the day-to-day operations including financial management, bylaw enforcement and acting within the guidelines of the regulations the Strata Property Act (Learn more about the Act by reading our [What is a Strata? article, part of our Strata 101 Series.](#))

If you think of a football team (Go Lions Go), this role would be like playing the position of a quarterback...that is, if there were multiple quarterbacks of course. They coordinate the meetings, plan the plays and ultimately lead the group in scoring points – or in our case, a happier and healthier community.

1.1. What is a Strata Council in charge of?

Short answer – lots! From participating in meetings to reviewing the financial statements, approving proposals with regards to maintenance requirements and reviewing insurance renewal terms, Council works with their Community Manager (if they have one) to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Strata Corporation.

Here at Tribe, we refer to our Property and Strata Managers as Community Managers. We believe that this term better reflects our people-forward approach.

While we hope that being on Council is always smooth sailing, there are times when a Council can run into challenges. Learn [3 Common Issues Strata Councils Face and effective solutions for dealing with these issues.](#)

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2. What is the relationship between a Strata Council and a Community Manager or Property Management company?

Clearly, serving on Council comes with the responsibility of supervising the operations of your strata, but you don't have to be in this alone. [Your Strata Corporation may choose to hire a Community Manager](#) to help take care of your financials, administration, building maintenance, and most importantly, help you build community. Having someone who is an expert in the industry can make all the difference!

It is important to note that while Community Managers are a great source of information and advice, the ultimate responsibility of decision-making is done by Council.

Think of the role of a Community Manager as a trusted advisor. They provide industry best practices, speak about prior experiences and share the ins and outs of running a successful community to help the Strata Council members and Owners make the best decisions for the community.



If you're considering hiring a Property Management Company, or are not satisfied with your current Property Manager (and want to hire a Community Manager), there are a few important points you need to consider before making a change. Find out what these are – [download your free checklist and learn how to Change Property Management Companies.](#)



Download your copy of the RFP Checklist

3. Strata Council Roles, Responsibilities and Tips for Success.

Strata Councils are comprised of five main positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Privacy Officer.

Once your Council has delegated roles through an election that takes place at the first Council Meeting post-AGM, it's time to establish clear responsibilities and the structure for Council operations.

Take a look below at a summary of each position, the areas of responsibility associated with each, and how to be successful.





3.1. Strata Council President

Important Responsibilities

As the face of the Strata Council, the President often represents the Strata Corporation when dealing with emergencies.

The President's mandate is to facilitate and delegate. They must ensure that the team has the tools they need to do the job well. Simultaneously, they must be a good listener to Council Members and Owners alike and be ready to make a tie-breaking vote in the case of a quick split decision.

How to be successful in this role

- Be the deciding vote. In times where there is a tie in votes for a decision, the President must become the decision maker.
- Chair effective Council Meetings. As the go-to chairperson for facilitating meetings, the President must be proactive and prepared for all meetings.



3.2. Strata Council Vice President

Important Responsibilities

As in politics, the Vice President role is often one of staying on the alert in the event the President is unable to perform their duties.

The role should also encompass an important community portfolio. It might mean chairing the Landscaping Committee if their community has acres of garden or chairing the Security Committee if their community is in the downtown core of a major city.

How to be successful in this role

- Be aware of the status of the Strata Council. As second in command, the Vice President must be ready to jump in and act as a Chair if the President is away or needs a second opinion.



3.3. Treasurer

Important Responsibilities

The Treasurer's mandate is to oversee the financial health of the community. This includes working with your Council and Community Manager to review the financial statements and create a budget when the time comes.

How to be successful in this role

- Work with your Property Management company's Accounting Team to understand the financial statements. It is important that the Treasurer reviews the financials monthly and brings up any questions to their Community Manager.
- In partnership with your Property Management Company, prepare to answer questions at AGM that may be financial in nature. Having the ability to stay organized and respond to questions about the financials prepared by your Property Management company are great skills to have when it comes to keeping your community informed.



3.4. Secretary

Important Responsibilities

Having a Secretary is also important for Council. The Secretary is often the contact person for your Property Management company to send over minutes taken during meetings.

The Secretary works with Council to approve the minutes and ensure that they are accurately transcribed. In the case of that the Community Manager is absent, the Secretary would be in charge of taking minutes.

How to be successful in this role

- Work with your Management company to ensure documents that should be made available to Owners are accessible. This includes answering any questions from Owners who may be unsure of where to find the minutes.
- Ensure communications hit the target. Communities are about people and the flow of information is key to keeping Council and residents in the loop.




3.5. Privacy Officer

Important Responsibilities

Last, but not least, especially for communities that have a CCTV system, is a Privacy Officer. This is the designated Council Member who works with the Community Manager to ensure adherence to the privacy constraints in the Strata Corporation.

How to be successful in this role

- Be prepared to work with the Personal Information Property Act (PIPA). This role is all about reminding your Council that it should comply with the PIPA principles. Don't worry if you haven't worked with this Act before, our Community Manager will be ready to help.
- Stay proactive and prepared to address any concerns. Help your Owners and Council with any privacy concerns brought to the attention of the Strata Council.



In addition to these positions, some Strata Corporations may choose to form Committees. This could include Landscaping Committees, Parking Committees, Exterior modifications Committees, Social Committees and more!

The purpose of establishing Committees is to assign a specific job to each Member and collaborate with other Owners in the Strata Corporation who may not be on Council to make a meaningful impact.



4. Strata Council FAQs.

4.1. How is a Strata Council formed?

Finding the right people to serve on Council is the most important aspect when it comes to running a successful community. As such, Council members are elected every year at the Annual General Meeting.

Some things to consider before making your vote are:

- Does the individual exhibit leadership, altruism and collaboration?
- Does the individual show care, diligence and the ability to communicate well?
- Does the individual have experience in a role similar to the one they are running for or the dedication to learn new skills?

According to the Strata Property Act, each Owner can vote for a maximum of 7 nominees.

Once the votes are collected and tallied, the 7 Owners who reach the “majority vote” and have the most votes, are welcomed to Council.

Typically, Strata Councils consist of 3-7 members according to Standard Bylaw 9.1, however, depending on your community’s bylaws, this number may differ.



**And what happens if no one volunteers to run for Strata Council?
Your Strata Council may be required to hire a government
administration...meaning extra costs to Owners.**



4.2. Who is eligible to sit on a Strata Council?

You may be wondering...who is permitted to run for a position on Strata Council? In short, all Owners (and in very rare cases, a Tenant who has received a landlord's right to do so) are eligible to run for a position on Council.


However, there are some exceptions. Here are two of the most common reasons why someone may be ineligible to sit on Council despite being an Owner or Tenant with the landlord's right:

- An individual whose strata lot may be lienied for unpaid fees. Depending on the bylaws of the Strata Corporation, an owner who is in a position where the Strata Corporation can file a lien against their strata lot may be ineligible to stand for Council.
- An individual whose Co-Owner(s) are also serving on Council. To maintain equal representation, only one Owner per strata lot is eligible to serve on Council.

If you have questions about your eligibility or want to learn more about how to sign up for a position on Strata Council, reach out to your Community Manager to ask.

4.3. Can Strata Council Members be paid?

While Strata Council Members can be paid if it is permitted in an individual community's bylaws and included in the annual budget...it is quite rare.



Note: Whether your Council Members are paid monetarily or compensated through other forms, it is important that this is brought up, shared in the budget and detailed in writing should any remuneration occur. This helps foster transparency within the community.



4.4. How long is a term on a Strata Council?

Each term on Council is one year unless your bylaws state otherwise. If the Council Member is re-elected, they will take on another one-year term from the date of the Annual General Meeting. If they are not re-elected; the turnover will take place at the Annual General Meeting.



A common question we get is whether Council Members can be terminated throughout the year...and indeed, it is a possibility. Council Members may be removed based on the bylaws of the Strata Corporation.



5. Survival Tips for Council Members.

If you've been elected to Council, don't panic! We've prepared some ways for you to prepare for the year ahead.

Here are some quick tips on how you can educate yourself and learn more about the world of strata:

- Have the necessary documents on hand to use for informed decisions. Trust us, we know that there's a lot to know when it comes to property management. When joining Council, the best thing to do if you don't have a Community Manager is to have documents such as the community bylaws for your Strata Corporation ready and to review agendas for Strata Council meetings in advance so you can make educated decisions.
- Establish your boundaries. As a Member of Council, the odds of a neighbour approaching you to ask about matters outside of an official Council Meeting are pretty high. When this happens, you should politely inform them that you don't have authority to speak for the Strata Council as a whole and that they should send a written submission to the Council via the Community Manager for review at upcoming meetings.
- Keep an open mind. When you commit to a vote before the meeting or discussion, your capacity to learn and make the best decision for the building is limited. That is why it's important to hear other opinions before making your vote. In addition, when you come into a meeting or an email discussion with a closed mind, it can create an argumentative, adversarial and ineffective dynamic on Council.



5. Survival Tips for Council Members. (Cont'd)


- Be ready to take action. It's time to roll up your sleeves and make sure meaningful work gets done in your community. As a Council Member, be prepared to stay proactive, involved, and willing to help out.
- Know when your meetings are. Because the times and dates of all Council Meetings are established well in advance, make sure that you keep your calendar free and inform your Council President or Community Manager if you are unable to make it. In the case that quorum is not met (there are not enough voting members present), the meeting may be rescheduled for another time.
- HAVE FUN! Being on a Strata Council can be a serious and challenging responsibility. Don't lose sight of the fact that maintaining your community is also about connecting with other humans and enjoying your time together as you work toward the common goals.

By following these quick and easy tips, we're confident that you will rock your role on Council. Remember: stay calm, level-headed and always use your best judgement.



6. Strata Council Bullies...a.k.a. Strata Council Harassment.

While we hope your Strata Council experience doesn't entail having to deal with "Strata Trolls" – you know... those characters who write offensive letters and monopolize every single conversation...it can happen (and we are sorry). But don't worry, [you can help identify and STOP those Strata Council Bullies by following these tips.](#)



Quick Tip: If you ever encounter bullying by a Council Member, the issue should be added to the agenda of the following Council meeting and the Council Member to which the complaint is referencing should be asked to excuse themselves while Council discusses.

On the other hand, if the bully is an Owner, your Council should review property bylaws and use them to address any issues from the Owner.

Conclusion.

Now that you've learned about what Strata Councils do, how they are formed and how they can succeed, we invite you to [talk with a Community Manager expert about how we can help you](#). At the end of the day, Councils exist to serve the best interest of the Strata Corporation...and we're ready to put you on the right track.

A community that develops and upholds its mission, values and strategy is a community prepared for success. A strong Council will create an environment where Owners – through the Community Manager, can have their interests heard and decided upon. Are you ready?



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