

**UP 3259 CAPITAL HILL APARTMENTS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING No 75  
7<sup>th</sup> March, 2016**

**Minutes**

**Venue:** Apartment 118/23

**Present:** David Campbell (DC), Chairman & Secretary, 205/19; Peter Ford (PF), Treasurer 115/21;  
Horace Saducas (HS), 118/23; Terry Gassner (TG), 12/19.

1. **WHS Matters.**

No incidents or hazards were reported for the month of February.

2. **Treasurer's Report.**

PF reported Funds on hand as of 29 February total \$545,579.29, comprising Administrative Fund \$ 86,535.45 and Sinking Fund \$459,043.84. Outstanding debtors include one levy of \$2401.43 that is in excess of 90 days; appropriate recovery action is being taken. Outlays are always closely scrutinised by the Committee with a view to containing costs and keeping our levies as low as possible. During February, expenditure was a routine \$24,945.69 with *pro rata* expenditure in the year to date running at 102%. Expenditure from the Sinking Fund remains \$25,977.61 for contract supervision of the remedial works. Our financial position continues to be very sound.

3. **Landscape Report.**

Damage to the lawns in front of all four buildings caused by the current remedial works is, of course, a concern. Repairs will be effected beginning in March when, it is to be hoped, the weather will be cooler.

4. **Remedial Insurance Work.**

Work continues at a satisfactory rate but a continuing irritation is the lack of cleanliness of the site in both common and private spaces. The contractor has been repeatedly reminded of his contractual obligations in this regard but it does seem that untidiness is in the very nature of the building industry beast. Arrangements for a building-by-building process of inspection and touch-up are being made.

5. **Correspondence.**

Routine correspondence only.

6. **Web Site and Lift Notices.**

Visitor statistics for February (with January's in brackets) are:

Unique Visitors	226	(290)
Number of Visits	291	(298)
News	49	(79)
Information	47	(62)
Community N/B	45	(57)
Owners log in	33	(43)

This last figure is disappointing because it is in the owners' pages that so much valuable information is to be found: these Minutes, for instance. In reality, the figures are much lower because members of the Committee are each in the habit of making several visits a month; the true number may therefore be as low as ten or twelve. All owners and agents are encouraged to visit the web site regularly and frequently. The web site has again been tidied up with old items being archived and new ones added. Lift notices have been routinely renewed with the recent one about garbage disposal exciting some strong reactions. See also item 8.g below.

7. **Business Arising from Previous Minutes.**

a. **ACT Building Regulatory System Survey.**

On 13<sup>th</sup> February, PF attended the 'Community Forum' jointly organised by the ACT Government and the Owners Corporation Network to discuss the Survey. There were about 50 apartments represented and the session took the form of a presentation on the Discussion Paper followed by an open forum for questions and answers and comments. The thrust of our written submission was that: while we have now reached a position where our defects are being remedied, the ACT regulation and inspection system has been of no help; we received no assistance from the ACT Government; and getting to our current position had cost us a lot of money and imposed very severe burdens on the Executive Committee that should have been unnecessary and, if the system had worked properly, would have been unnecessary.

As burdensome as our problems are, they are as nothing compared to others' and there were some horror stories and very angry owners.

b. **Sinking Fund.**

A meeting was held with Alex Feng, Director, Donald Cant Watts (DCWC) on 18<sup>th</sup> February to discuss the necessary revision of the current Sinking Fund plan. Experience gained from the current remedial and other works shows that some of the projected budgetary provisions do not reflect current market realities. Further, there are significant gaps in the overall scope of work, e.g., replacement of the garbage bins and basement fire doors. Some timings need revision, too, e.g., interior painting (see item 8.e below). A revised proposal has yet to be received.

c. **Extraordinary General Meeting.**

Until the Sinking Fund and related matters are resolved, we are unable to set a date for the EGM.

d. **Rain Head Boxes.**

A quote has yet to be received from Six Star Plumbing for a revised quotation to re-seal the rain head boxes and to install mesh to keep out leaves and other detritus. Because of the expense, it was thought to schedule one building a year. Building 17's were done last year but there was a hiatus with the subcontractor, hence the need for revised quotations.

e. **Skirting Boards.**

When funds permit, the skirting boards in the corridors will be replaced. As yet, there is no such provision in the Sinking Fund. It is clear the original choice of

timber was the wrong one and should have been something like a marine ply or even metal that would cope with physical damage and water a lot better.

f. **QBE**

The question about Builders Warranty Insurance with the current remedial work has been resolved. No certificates specifically for common property are issued. Instead, following the usual industry practice, any payout over common property is spread across all our 63 individual apartment covers. In lodging a common property claim, it's sufficient to refer to only one individual certificate.

g. **Police Report.**

At long last, the police report of the disturbance here on 3<sup>rd</sup> November has been received but it is so heavily redacted as to be virtually useless other than to confirm the date and place of the incident. The owner of the apartment concerned has been warned that any repetition of the behaviour will lead to enforcement action in the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

8. **New Business.**

a. **Balcony Tidiness.**

The Committee has long been troubled by the dirty and untidy state of some of the ground floor court yards. It is a touchy issue to regulate but the fact remains that some courtyards have not been thoroughly cleaned in years. These areas are very visible to others - residents and visitors alike - and do nothing to enhance the appearance of Capital Hill Apartments.

The Rules make specific mention of how balconies (which term includes terraces and courtyards) are to be used, including Rule 6.5 (g): "Balconies are to be kept neat and tidy at all times."

The Committee believe we have the authority, under s.129 of the *Unit Titles (Management) Act* to seek an order to clean up a balcony, but we would prefer residents to take the hint and do it themselves without having to be forced.

What is needed in many cases is the vigorous application of a Kärcher pressure washer or similar device to get rid of the ingrained dirt from the tiles.

In addition, balconies must be kept clear of leaves and other rubbish that can block the drains and cause flooding, as has already happened in a couple of cases.

b. **Common Property Keys.**

Arrangements have been to make available to residents common property keys when the Managing Agent is away from Canberra. Such keys would be that of a lift or the basement storage cage where the lift blankets are kept for use in removals. Details are available from the Managing Agent as the need arises.

c. **Awning 117/21.**

Out-of-session approval was given on 10<sup>th</sup> February for a balcony awning of the same type and colour as three previous installations.

d. **Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.**

Despite the voluminous and detailed information available to owners, agents, residents and tenants on our website and elsewhere, a significant demand on the

time and patience of the Committee and the Managing Agent relates to frequently asked questions, the answers to many of which are already on clear display.

Thought has been given to these Q&As and how these might better be brought to general awareness. They could be included in the web site, but the answers generally are already there - if only the questioner would look! They could be included with the Welcome Letter that is sent to each newcomer, and that might help. Other ideas would be welcome.

**e. Interior Painting.**

The Sinking Fund provides for the corridors and stairwells, etc, to be repainted every eight years. This is demonstrably inadequate and it was necessary to have a major touch-up in 2013. Despite that, the walls are grubby; of course, more care by residents and their removalists would help. But while we have painters on site with the remedial work, the Committee decided to bring forward the planned eight year program and has awarded a contract to Joe Nikoletic for \$13,800 + GST. Painting will commence shortly. Arrangements will need to be made with individual residents to have their doors opened so that the work can be done properly. The doors will be painted with semi-gloss enamel.

**f. Nature Strip.**

TG will draw up a roster for members of the Committee to water the nature strip which has been recently weeded and seeded.

**g. Garbage Collection.**

Not only the Committee but also many individual residents are concerned with the state of the garbage rooms; complaints are plentiful. The situation, in a word, is disgraceful. It is commonplace now for the bins to be filled to overflowing simply because some residents are too lazy or too thoughtless to crush or cut up cardboard cartons or polystyrene boxes. Kitchen waste is all too often not bagged and tied off. Kitchen waste frequently oozes onto the floors of the lifts and is then tracked through the basement to the floor of the garbage rooms. Not only is this disgusting, it represents a health hazard.

Short of putting a guard on the doors, there is little the Committee can do other than repeatedly exhort residents to do the right thing. Of course CCTV has been used successfully in the past to catch and charge offenders, but it would be so much better if we did not have to resort to this unpleasant measure. A letter has been drafted for the Managing Agent to send to all owners, agents and residents yet again calling attention to the Rules.

**Next Meeting:** Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2016, in Apartment 115/21.

D.J. Campbell  
Chairman

8<sup>th</sup> March, 2016

