

**UP 3259 CAPITAL HILL APARTMENTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING No 76
4th April, 2016**

Minutes

Venue: Apartment 115/21

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.

A resident found herself locked herself in a lift; she had not taken the swipe with her. Enquiry revealed she had hit every button several times except the G, which would have taken her to Ground without the need for a swipe. This is the default position. She had pressed the emergency telephone button several times but without making the connection.

We had Schindler come out and check the phones. They're all fine. The trouble is that the emergency phone button has to be pressed down for five very long seconds. We have had this reduced to a less stressful two seconds.

In a second matter, our four steel garbage skips need some preventive maintenance. The hinge arrangement for the lids is simply a steel rod passed through a flange at either end of the skip. The trouble is that the flanges have been bent through (normal) rough handling when the skips get emptied into the garbage trucks and the risk is that they will snap off. Should this happen when a skip is being swung over a garbage truck for emptying, a serious WHS incident could well result. Arrangements have been made to repair and strengthen the flanges.

2. Treasurer's Report.

PF reported Funds on hand as of 31st March total \$514,367.75, comprising Administrative Fund \$67,695.69 and Sinking Fund \$446,672.06

During March, expenditure was by and large a routine \$36,431.58 with *pro rata* expenditure in the year to date creeping up to 105%. One item of particular concern was an ICON Water bill of \$11,980.00 reflecting increased water usage of 25% over March 2015, and doubtless the result of the many irrigation leakages (see 3. below) and to a lesser extent by consumption by the remedial works.

Expenditure from the Sinking Fund was \$38,975 for contract supervision of the remedial works. Immediate charges will be for external and internal painting. Our financial position continues to be sound but with unexpected costs such as the water bill, there is no room for complacency.

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 were begun in March when the autumn brought on cooler weather. (Hot weather simply bakes new grass.)

New and longer hoses have been bought for volunteers' use in watering the verge.

We are suffering a significant increase in leaks from the irrigation systems for the lawns and gardens. The subsurface drip lines are necessarily shallow –

about 10 cm underground – and are easily damaged. All irrigation breaks are repaired using commercial grade fittings but unfortunately, as with most irrigation systems, there is a lot of plastic used in the componentry and continued expanding and contracting due to environmental factors and other undesirable pedestrian and vehicle traffic ultimately result in failure at some point. A program is currently underway to inspect every irrigation control valve box in the lawns and garden beds.

Pruning of the crimson sentries between Buildings 21 and 23 is also underway.

The perennial problem of spillage onto the courtyard of 28/23 seems to have been fixed by further reducing the irrigation time by 50%.

4. Remedial Insurance Work.

Point Project Management is now known as RPS Project Management. This does not charge our arrangements.

Work continues ahead of schedule although the accumulating backlog of clean-up work is becoming a concern. Inspections of completed balconies, etc, in Buildings 17 and 19 are scheduled for Saturday 16th April. If owners or their agents can't be present, this puts a responsibility on tenants and if they do not report problems it would make any subsequent claim for damage or repair very doubtful. Responses to a letterbox drop have been disappointingly low so far. Absentee owners/agents have been written to separately.

Time was lost in March with three short weeks because of the holidays and whereas we had hoped to complete in May, it now looks like June, still ahead of the original September date.

Progress payments to both Remedial and Point were made during the month.

A revised program as of 1 April has been posted on the web and in the lifts of Buildings 21 & 23.

5. Correspondence.

There was routine correspondence only apart from the letter about garbage (item 7.g below), the addition to the Welcome Pack to include FAQs (item 7.a below) and letter box drops about painting and inspecting completed work in individual apartments.

6. Web Site and Lift Notices.

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

Unique Visitors	281	(226)
Number of Visits	344	(291)
News	75	(49)
Information	65	(47)
Community N/B	65	(45)
Owners log in	53	(33)

These latest figures show an agreeable improvement – encouraging to see.

7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes.

a. Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.

A sheet of common Q&A has been added to the Welcome pack sent to all newcomers.

b. Sinking Fund.

A meeting was held with Alex Feng, Director, Donald Cant Watts (DCWC) on 18th 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. **Action: HS**

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 been received from Six Star Plumbing for a revised quotation to re-seal the 35 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. The revised quote is \$14,315.00 including GST. The Committee decided to accept the quote with the work not to start until the remedial works are behind us.

The existing rain water heads were sealed with silicon when they were first installed. The silicon has since started to leak and is causing staining on the walls. We will completely seal the entire inside of the rain water heads using a primer then a flexible waterproofing membrane and a UV-stable top coat. The membrane will extend down into the outlet pipe. This will then last ten years at least.

We will also install a 10mm stainless steel mesh supported by a secured angle fixed to the inside of the rain water heads. The mesh will be level with the bottom of the overflow at the front of the rain water heads. This will help to reduce the amount of foreign matter that gets into the stormwater drains.

This time we will remove the rain water heads and do the work required at ground level and then refit them. Not only is this safer and more effective than working at heights on ladders but this ensures that we are not so dependent on the weather to complete the task. **Action: DC**

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.

Action: HS

f. Nature Strip.

TG has drawn up a roster for members of the Committee to water the nature strip. Volunteers from residents to assist would be most welcome.

The ACT Government recently circulated a draft guide on the use of nature strips which proposes to allow residents to utilise their nature strips for food

production or small gardens. These guidelines aim to reach a balance whereby residents can use the nature strip, but without causing amenity or public safety concerns. Comments from the community were sought and we responded from the viewpoint of a Designated Area i.e., having been identified as having the special characteristics of the National Capital. Our principal concerns revolve around watering and otherwise maintaining our nature strip.

g. Garbage Collection.

Letters have been sent to all owners, agents and residents yet again calling attention to the Rules. Whether this measure results in behavioural improvement has yet to be seen. **Action: All**

h. Balcony Tidiness.

Several owners have been approached about this concern.

i. Interior Painting.

Painting of walls, skirting boards and doors began in Building 19 on 10th March and in 19 and 21 on 18th. Three days after 19 was finished, removalists scuffed the new paintwork. Similar thoughtlessness occurred in Building 21. One wonders why we bother.

There are 56 corridor doors; only a couple remain to be painted – good co-operation from residents. Thank you. **Action: DC**

8. New Business.

a. Window Cleaning.

The routine six-monthly window cleaning has been deferred until the remedial work is behind us. **Action: MA**

b. Planter Box Irrigation.

Irrigation of the planter boxes on Level 2 of Building 17 has been troublesome for months. The problem has been traced to two causes: the solenoid in the water valve on Level 2 and the irrigation controller itself in the basement. Both have been replaced as they were beyond economical repair.

c. Rats.

Three sightings have been reported. Rentokil performed the regular scheduled pest management service on 2nd March. (There are quarterly services.) A thorough inspection revealed the site compliant in maintaining a pest-free environment. All serviced pest control devices were cleaned and locked on completion of the service. The premises' site plan was reviewed and confirmed. The Rentokil site folder was inspected and is up to date. The Committee is satisfied that there is nothing further that can be done. Clearly, these unwelcome visitors are rat cunning.

d. Parking.

The Committee considered an interesting notice at the entrance to Burbury Apartments parking area that warns of financial penalty if parking rules are broken. We may be able to work out some variation to this approach involving changes to our Rule 11 but will need to subject this idea to closer consideration.

e. Next Telecom and Strata Buildings.

Next Telecom is a provider of IP Telephony, NBN products in competition with Telstra and others. Under the name of Highrise Telecom, it is marketing packages for strata buildings with possible application to us and the prospect of reducing our lift and fireboard telephone charges by about 17%. We currently budget \$4000 a year for these services. We should test this against anything that Telstra might be able to offer. **PF** is investigating.

f. Actsmart Business Energy and Water Program.

In a similar vein, the ACT Government is trialling extending this program to residential owners' corporations. The trial is free and includes a site assessment with a report with estimated costs, savings and payback periods. Actsmart will rebate 50% of the cost of any recommendations that are implemented, up to \$5000. Such measures could mean adopting energy-efficient technologies in, for instance, lighting and air-conditioning, but we think there is little prospect of any significant savings. Nonetheless, we should have a look. And, likewise, Next Telecom's partner, **Highrise Energy**, is offering a competing product. **TG has this for action.**

g. Carpet Cleaning. With the fresh paintwork in the corridors and stairs, the stained state of the carpets becomes very apparent. The carpets were last steam-cleaned in February 2014. Three tenders were called and the contract for \$1,133 has again been awarded to Morgans Group. The cleaning should be carried out on Friday, 8th April. **Action: DC**

h. Courtyard Tiles. The Committee is concerned at the number of recently cracked or broken tiles in the courtyards near the letter boxes. It is easy to blame Remedial but proving that is another matter; this is under investigation. Once Remedial is off site, repairs will be made. The Committee, in its wisdom, some years ago purchased all the country's remaining stock of this particular tile but it won't last forever. A good number of tiles were recovered from the recent works in Building 19 and, once cleaned, are fully serviceable. These will be the first to be used. **Action: DC**

i. Security. The whereabouts and ownership of garage remotes and door/lift swipes are again becoming a concern. The Managing Agent, owners, agents and tenants all share in the responsibility of maintaining the integrity of our inventory of these devices. The guidelines for this will be reviewed and improved. **Action: MA, HS, DC**

Next Meeting: Monday 2nd May, 2016, in Apartment 205/19.

D.J. Campbell
Chairman

6th April, 2016