

CONDO OF THE YEAR

**Condo of the Year Award - Third Quarter Finalist
MTCC 1398 - Two Aberfoyle Crescent**

PURSUING OUR VISION AT TWO ABERFOYLE

CCI Toronto is thrilled to announce that MTCC #1398 has been announced as the third quarter finalist of the newly launched Condo of the Year Award. The following article was written by the Board of Directors and Property Management of Two Aberfoyle as part of the corporation's submission for entry to the contest. Our congratulations are extended to MTCC 1398!

Further details on this contest may be found on page 26 or on the CCI-T website at www.cci-toronto.org. The closing deadline for the next quarter submissions is May 1st, 2009. The annual grand prize winner will be selected from amongst the four quarter finalists in the early fall of 2009.



Defining a Vision has helped our Board of Directors and Property Management take a more proactive approach to the management of our building for the future, versus the reactive approach of dealing with problems as they arise, while recognizing that the latter more often need to be dealt with more urgently. In reviewing our Vision, we are usually able to recognize things to pursue and then plan an approach. We hope the following account of our progress will be of interest to others who might want to define and pursue a vision of their own, while still dealing with problems as they arise.

Our Vision was developed in 2007 at meetings of the Board and the Property Manager, facilitated by the District Manager of our property management company. It was presented at the 2007 Annual General Meeting of MTCC 1398, Two Aberfoyle, and was received with much enthusiasm and support from the owners and residents

Our Condo

Our 12-storey building, first occupied in 2001, has 116 suites on 12 floors, with two levels of underground parking. Mechanical rooms and air conditioning equipment are on the roof. Amenities include a party room, a billiard room, an exercise room

and an indoor lap pool. We are located at Two Aberfoyle Crescent, across the street from an office tower, a five-minute walk from Islington Station of the Bloor-Danforth Subway Line.

Our Vision

1. Sustained property value
2. Optimal use of resources
3. Strategic relationships with our community
4. Environmentally-progressive building
5. Safe and secure building
6. Enhanced quality of life and good relationships among residents
7. Leadership development

Our Accomplishments

1. Sustained Property Values

Our vision is to maintain sustained property values based upon a structurally-sound building and high-end appearances, internally and externally, by means of modest fee increases.

The appearance of the south or back door of our building, on busy Aberfoyle Crescent, has been improved by installing a canopy over the door on which the name “Two Aberfoyle” appears. This is our preferred branding of our building (over the Developer’s original “Town and Country-Phase Two”) and also appears on the main entrance from Lomond Drive.

We have pursued a multi-year enhancement program to improve the landscaping around our building, undertaken on our own and together with our sister condominium corporation (“Town and Country-Phase 1”) by means of the Shared Facilities Committee.

We have undertaken major projects to maintain/upgrade the building, including relining the pool (\$30,000), overcoming pinhole leak problems in the domestic hot water recirculation system (\$150,000), and implementing an Energy Savings Program (\$165,000). The latter two initiatives are discussed in detail below.

Energy savings and reduced plumbing expenses have made it possible to have zero Maintenance Fee increase for 2008-2009, while maintaining a surplus in the range of one to two months’ spending.

A Condo Fact Sheet, available to owners, indicates that our fees are low in comparison to two other condos in the neighbourhood.

2. Optimal Use of Resources

We want to be forward-thinking, progressive, innovative, and have a “smart” building.

We have put into operation a pool cleaning robot to save on expense and have streamlined parcel and courier deliveries.

Developing a Vision in the first place was with the intent of being forward-thinking and progressive.

We are having successful energy saving and waste disposal programs as described below.

3. Strategic relationships with our community

Our objective is to maintain quality of life, security and the aesthetic environment.

A new owner has recently taken over the office complex across Aberfoyle Crescent south of our building and has already made some improvements to their property. We approached them regarding their landscaping plans and have been assured there will be improvements to the existing status.

We have documented our concerns regarding present and future traffic patterns on Aberfoyle Crescent, and shared the document with the City of Toronto traffic planning, the property management of the office complex and our sister condominium corporation.

We are participating in the local Bloor-Kingsway Condominium Association

which meets quarterly to discuss problems, solutions and a range of budget information. We shared information on the progress of our projects and our early successes at several meetings of the group.

We have also held a meeting jointly with our sister building regarding the redevelopment of Bloor-Islington and the Islington TTC Station.

We have regular interaction with our City Councillor’s office on matters of community interest such as local traffic concerns, parking, noise by-law enforcement and plans for the TTC station and local intersection changes. Our City Councillor addressed our recent Annual General Meeting and fielded questions about such matters.

We participate annually in the community spring clean-up of the ravine in Tom Reilly Park adjacent to our building.

4. Environmentally-progressive Building

We want to ensure that we have an environmentally-progressive building with respect to energy savings, waste disposal and recycling to save money and as “the right thing to do.”

Energy Savings

Our Energy Savings Program started in 2005 with the formation of the Energy Saving Committee. Proposals were obtained from energy management firms and we have carried out the following projects over a four year period: retrofitting T8 Fluorescent Lights and Electronic Ballasts in the parking garage, installing CO Sensors to control the exhaust fans in the parking garage, installing a Variable Frequency Drive to reduce flow of make-up air to the corridors, installing three High Efficiency Boilers to act as Lead Boilers in our three boiler systems, and installing some small lighting retrofits.

These projects were undertaken over four years at a cost of \$165,000, financed from the surplus in the first

year, and from resulting savings in the second and third years. We have achieved savings of 35% in gas, 16% in electricity, payback of the total investment early in 2008, the third year, and savings of \$68,000 in excess of costs in the remainder of 2008.

Three problems remained unresolved. We had complaints of some crossovers of hot water into the cold water lines, resulting in wasted water and gas, in addition to the inconvenience. It was determined that the condensing feature on the high efficiency hot water boiler increased the crossovers problem and it was therefore turned off. We were not successful in finding the source(s) of the crossovers. A second problem pertained to some complaints of waiting times of several minutes rather than a few seconds to get hot water, also an inconvenience and a waste of water and gas. A third problem, as mentioned above, was an increasing number of pinhole leaks in the domestic hot water recirculation system, which were



expensive to repair and often unsightly during repairs.

In 2007, the work of the Energy Savings Committee was integrated into the

mandate of a new Major Maintenance Committee (MMC) which was charged with researching and advising the Board on major issues having to do with building systems and integrity, beginning



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with how to overcome these three remaining problems (i.e., pinhole leaks, “crossovers” and wait time for hot water). The MMC met with representatives of our plumbing company, our mechanical maintenance contractor, an epoxy pipe lining contractor and a vice-president of our property management company who had experience with similar problems in other buildings.

It was determined that pinholes were the result of erosion of the walls of the pipe, associated with the thickness of the pipe walls, and the velocity of the water. It was noted that the recirculation pump appeared to be oversized and that there were no balancing valves on the risers. To reduce costs while seeking a more permanent solution, we stopped replacing the sections of pipe with the leaks and temporarily clamped over them.

The outcome was a specification, drafted by the V.P. of our property management company, which was adopted and

implemented. On the first five floors where pipe sizes of the risers were smaller, Grade M pipe was replaced with Grade L which has a thicker wall. All ½” pipes were replaced by ¾” providing a thicker wall and a reduced water velocity. A lower capacity pump was installed to provide a lower average flow. Balancing valves were installed on all risers to provide equal flow on each. There was also one piping change specifically to address the crossover problem.

What came to be known as our “Pinhole Leaks and Plumbing Repairs” or PLPR Project was carried out in early 2008 at a cost of \$150,000. One crossover point was found and corrected. All three challenges relating to our plumbing system were overcome. There have been no more pinhole leaks, no further crossovers of hot water into the cold water system and no complaints of long waits for hot water. We have been able to turn on the condensing feature of our new high efficiency boiler (for further

energy savings) with no instances of crossover. Without the extended waits for hot water, we are anticipating reduced water consumption.

Our energy savings initiatives have improved the financial condition of the corporation. The combination of energy savings and reduced plumbing expenses resulted in an increased surplus for 2007/08 and made possible the zero percent increase in Maintenance Fees for 2008/09. In addition, the surplus will be useful in offsetting some of the increase in Reserve Fund Contributions expected for 2009/10, resulting from a new study.

Waste Disposal and Recycling

We promote recycling through newsletter articles and with posters in the Recycling Room and in the Garbage Chute Rooms on each floor. We are achieving 50 percent waste diversion for fibres and containers through our Blue Box program in comparison to the



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city average of 17 percent in multi-residential buildings like ours. Wine, liquor and beer bottles are collected separately and returned by a volunteer with proceeds donated to charity.

Batteries, toner cartridges and cell phones are also collected separately for proper disposal.

5. Safe and secure building

We want to employ strategies to enhance the security of residents and the building.

We have held town hall meetings about fire and security procedures and assisted residents in the operation of in-suite security systems. Our Safety and Security Committee has made recommendations for additional security procedures, locks and cameras.

To facilitate visitor access to the parking garage, while retaining security, we have installed communication equipment at the top of the ramp to the garage so that visitors can more easily check in with the concierge, whose office is in the lobby of our sister building.

6. Enhanced quality of life and good relationships among residents

We want to make the building user-friendly and provide occasions for interaction among residents.

Our Shared Facilities Committee coordinates matters of concern to our sister Condominium Corporation and ourselves, such as security systems, shared driveways and gardens, and social events.

We maintain open communications with owners/residents through town hall meetings with both internal and external speakers providing information presentations, usually including Power Point slides. In addition to fire safety and personal and property security as noted above, a town hall meeting has been held regarding planning changes for West Toronto including changes to local TTC stations and major intersections.

Volunteers periodically publish a multi-page newsletter to convey news about the Corporation, with focus on Green Initiatives and reminders of the Corporation's rules.

Our Social Committee hosts a monthly movie night and morning coffee hours for residents in addition to special events like the summer barbeque and the Christmas season party.

Our Bridge Club provides a weekly evening bridge game and social occasions.

Twice a week, Aquafit classes provide exercise and the opportunity for social interaction. To eliminate odours, eye and skin problems associated with a traditional chlorination system and to provide a more pleasant feel, we recently converted the treatment of the

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pool water to a Salt System, which has been well received.

Automatic door openers were installed on the doors from the parking garage to the elevator rooms and have been greatly appreciated by residents carrying things or returning from shopping. New high-definition flat screen television sets were recently installed in our Party and Exercise Rooms.

7. Leadership development

We want to develop leadership within the corporation and demonstrate leadership in the external community as well.

For this reason, we shared our successful Energy Savings Program in an article published in the summer 2008 edition of CondoVoice, and also in the winter 2008 edition of Condominium Manager, published by the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario. We continue to attend condo conferences and seminars, especially those dealing with building maintenance, energy saving and environmental issues.

Committee work is also seen as leadership development, and committees are viewed as a recruiting ground with the possibility of future Board participation.

Comments on the Vision Process

Before we embarked on the "Vision Thing", we considered the Board to be proactive, as evidenced by successful Energy Savings, Waste Disposal, and Landscaping Improvement Programs, which started years before and continue now. However we are now more focused on the long range with respect to improving the building for the future and communicating internally and externally, while still attending to current problems and issues. ■

THE MYTH

- Engineers are the only people to do your Reserve Fund Studies & Updates -

Fact – Regulation 48/01 of the Condominium Act, Section 32 wisely dispels that myth. There are several recognized professionals authorized to do them.

Fact – There are only two recognized designations for professional Reserve Fund Analysts – the CRP (Certified Reserve Planner) from the Real Estate Institute of Canada and the PRA (Professional Reserve Analyst) from the Association of Reserve Analysts.

Fact – The "Functional Reserve Fund Study" model that we use exceeds the bare minimum standards set out in the Act. It's the one taught to CRP's. One has to take courses to learn how to do them.

Fact – John Molnar, BA, FRI, CPME, CRP, PRA is the only Canadian with both recognized professional designations for Reserve Fund Analysts.

For your Reserve Fund Study or Update, call
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