

## Condo Smarts August 30<sup>th</sup>-September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

### Bugs, Beasts n' Birds

Dear Tony: Who is responsible for pest removal from a strata property? We have a unit apartment building and 12 townhouses in our strata. The townhouse owners have been complaining about chronic wasp nests and the apartment owners have complained about the sound of mice in the walls and attics. We had the same issues last year and everyone took care of their own problems, but this year several owners have refused to pay for the exterminators or pest control to deal so the problems are much worse. We would appreciate some guidelines for how to address these issues. Cedar Gardens Strata Council.

Dear Council Members: In most infestations of rodents and insects, access begins out doors and through the common property. It could be through vents, foundations, walls, balconies, windows and doors left open in the warm season, or failures in the building envelope system. The point of access is common property, unless you are a bare land strata where owners are responsible for their own buildings that are not shown on the strata plan. Understanding access is the first step to understanding responsibility. While strata councils often refuse to pay for the costs of pest control, in most instances it is a common expense. The sooner the strata corporation takes responsibility and coordinates the removal and control of pests, the greater chance of protecting property and preventing future issues. Raccoons who attempt access to roofing areas are generally looking for a place to nest, but the quick safe relocation of our masked faced friends is possible while minimizing damage to our buildings. Pests who invade our living spaces will cause serious building damage to electrical and mechanical infrastructure as well as nesting in wall cavities and contaminating insulation. It is unlikely the infestation in your walls and ceilings are mice and most likely rats as we have seen a significant increase of rat infestations this year. Wasp nests, bees that hive in walls and attics, bird infestations, cockroaches, bed bugs, carpenter ants, termites, mice, rats, raccoons, possums and bears are all part of environment. Residents and strata councils need to be vigilant and report any infestations or incidents and address them as soon as possible. We also need to ensure our environmental surroundings are not encouraging infestations. Bird feeders, feeding of wild animals, hoarding in crawl spaces, garages and carports, barbeques left with food debris, unattended wood piles, unsecure composters, and rotting wet wood all attract pests and animals. Owners and tenants need to be aware that if they do not maintain and repair their strata lots or contribute to the problem by bringing in pests, the strata corporation may be seeking those damages and costs against your strata lot. If there is any sign of a pest or animal problem contact your strata council immediately. They can arrange for a qualified pest control service to manage the problem quickly and prevent property damage or health risk to your residents.

Sincerely,

Tony Gioventu, Executive Director  
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