



Stay Connected

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DIRECTORS REVIEW OF THEIR BOARD INVOLVEMENT TO DATE

PLEASE NOTE: THESE ARTICLES ARE EACH DIRECTOR'S BOARD PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Gary Kitchen, Managing Director

When Malcom first approached me with the idea of joining him and running for a board position, my first response was no thank-you. My wife however, believed strongly that my skill set was what was needed to get the gates implemented and besides, it's only a couple of hours of meetings once a month, so no biggie!

Well, nothing could have been further from the truth! After our very first board business meeting I was appointed to be Managing Director, which seemed a straightforward and logical decision. Little did I know that all things done by the office went through that position and the Community Services Coordinator reported directly to me. Well, that would have been nice, but we didn't have a CSC as she had quit some time before the last AGM. I came into the office and found a mountain of unpaid invoices, a million e-mails complaining or asking for repairs.

I went about processing what I could, as fast as I could. Paying overdue invoices, dispatching gutter and stucco repairs, replacing windows, processing alteration requests that had piled up and following up on work quotes and so on. I spent hours and hours trying to catch up on the unfinished work.

While doing this work, I had to become an expert on the by-laws, articles of incorporation and past Board Minutes so that I could apply these rules and guidelines in the performance of my duties. Thankfully, the board hired Jon Connick as the new CSC who started work almost immediately after moving to the community. Unfortunately, Jon was new to the community and to the job, and even newer to the rules and regulations of Sonoma Pines, so we had to spend much time together as I relayed to him what I had just learned a few weeks before.

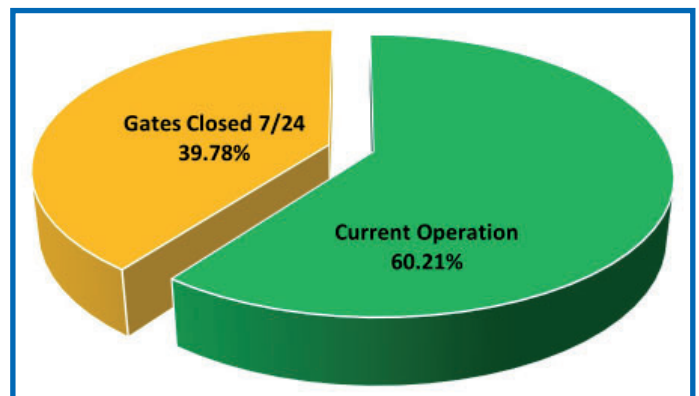
Working on the gate access control project occupied the vast majority of the time. Now that they have been implemented for some time, it was time to conduct a survey of residents to decide if they liked the way things were

operating today, with the lower gates open from 6 AM to 6 PM or if they prefer to have both sets of gates closed 24/7. Today the survey closed and the results are in!

Survey Results:

Of the 387 participants who participated in the survey, 60.21% (233) selected **NO** to changing the gate protocol from what it is currently running on, and 39.79% selected to change to the both sets of gates closed protocol.

Q1 Do you want to change the current gate protocol?



Therefore, we will continue operating under the current gate operating protocol, and can re-visit this decision if circumstances arise that have changed traffic patterns or other such circumstances.

Jon Connick's Absence

Our Community Services Coordinator will be out of the Country on family related matters from February 6 – 27 inclusive. During this time office staff will monitor his e-mails and forward emergency or urgent matters to me for action, and other less pressing matters will be dealt with upon his return. We are fortunate that February is considered one of the quieter times in the office. Please be patient while waiting for a response from Jon upon his return. I will endeavour to deal with alteration request as needed.

Conclusion

I am very pleased with the long, and finally successful implementation of the gate access control technology, and I feel that my work here is done. There are many more things that are needed in the community, much of it delayed due to COVID etc. We are finally getting some quotes in to do painting this Spring and the arborist has recovered from his injury and will start work on March 1st. All of these things can be handled by Jon and overseen by the next Managing Director whomever that may be.

While I received some very harsh criticisms, I received way more compliments and I am thankful that most people appreciated the long hours and hard work that I put into this job and approve of the final product.

Gary Kitchen, Managing Director

Danielle Renaud, Director

As my time on the board of SPHM Ltd. is coming to an end I would like to inform the community that I will not be staying on the board next year. I will continue to work six days a week in my paid work.

I, like the others on the board this year, was asked to join the board because nobody else had put their name forward. As you know, there was no need for an election because we only had enough names nominated to fill the bare minimum of open spaces, as all the previous board members were not returning.

Once we took over from the previous board we asked for patience while we learned the ropes and familiarized ourselves with ongoing issues and projects. That was no small feat and new issues emerged immediately.

We have been both complimented and complained about for our efforts. We did our best to solve problems, to deal with new issues and to create an atmosphere of transparency, open communication, and cooperation. We hired staff, revised some of the ways things were done and dealt with changes in board membership and committees, all while trying to keep the community running as it should.

There will always be people who will be unhappy with whatever decision is made. That is to be expected. I would recommend that if you have a complaint to ask, rather than demand, that your suggestion be considered. There are 495 homes in this community and the board's task is to make decisions in the best interest of the majority.

I, personally, learned a lot about how things work here (and don't) and about the wonderful staff and volunteers we have in this community, who are often not in the lime-light. Thank you to them.

Special thanks and kudos to Gary Kitchen, the Manag-

ing Director, who did more than is humanly possible to get the gates operational in a timely manner.

I would encourage residents of the 495 homes in this community to consider joining the board, or a committee.

I believe that we have a beautiful and amazing place to live and I, for one, appreciate it.

Danielle Renaud, Director

CONSIDER JOINING THE BOARD



Dawn Spence, Secretary

We are off on a breakaway day after tomorrow and I am trying to write all I want for the newsletter and the future of the SPHM Board.

First advice, be kind to your neighbours. You don't know what burdens they carry and they may not ever wish you to know. Number two, if you aren't prepared to step in and take over to make a difference "keep your mouth shut". Mom always said "If you ain't got nothing nice to say, say nothing at all", or "love thy neighbour as thy self."

The past year with our group has taught me so much and I am ever grateful for having shared with a very good small group - one of the best boards ever. We are all different, with different priorities, visions and goals, but all have the common task of ensuring Sonoma Pines residents got the best that they could get from what we can offer. I have been on many boards, groups and charities but never a corporation for a community group. I did not ask to be on this nor did I solicit for votes. Anywhere my husband and I have lived we have pitched in and helped with hours, volunteering, labour and dollars to ensure the safety, beauty sustainability of the community. In my past 40 year career I learned that when you are responsible directly or indirectly with someone else's money, life changes.

I saw first hand here in our community how supportive, helpful, and grateful some residents are. I learned we

have a fabulous group of volunteers that head up so many committees that make life work for all of us and make this community a wonderful place, and yet I also learned the other side.

I have learned I do not want to go for walks due to negativity or repercussions, berated or belittled or grilled to death. These feelings should not be fostered nor should gossip.

We have a fabulous community with so many awesome volunteers that make it a wonderful place to live. Many in our community do not realize the number of issues, complaints (warranted or not) the office staff have to deal with, in addition to the ones that require the board to deal with. Nor do they know how demanding or how insensitive to other's opinions some residents are. Each request is logged and registered and we as a board or group must deal with these.

In 2014 when I retired from this type of service work I wrote, " I leave knowing I can clear my mind, heart and soul and I wish to pursue happiness of family, heart and better being. "

My role on the board has not granted that and as such I will NOT be stepping forward for another term, although after a breath of fresh air, will definitely continue in a volunteer committee role or two.

Dawn Spence, Secretary



Randy Benson, Vice-Chair

I have lived in Sonoma Pines for just over two years. I have enjoyed this community and getting to know my neighbors. I appreciate the bond of friendship that has

developed, and the way we help and support one another (helping clear snow from each other's driveways, etc.). We live in a wonderful community.

I was appointed to the board this past summer to fill a vacancy, so I am still learning the ropes of corporate boardmanship. One of the jobs I have been tasked with is to examine our by-laws, and suggest edits to clarify certain areas and make them more understandable and "user friendly."

Two areas of significant editing are Security and Personal Information (Division 5) and the bylaws regulating the RV Storage Lots.

1. Previously, Security and Personal Information covered only the use of fobs and security cameras at the clubhouse. We have added wording to also include the RFID and security cameras at our entrances and exits.
2. Previously the RV Storage bylaws contained two sections. One for the upper lot, and one for the lower lot. We have now created one section that includes both the upper and lower lots as the rules and regulations were the same for each.

Other areas of editing include clarification on parking, pet control, and renovation specifications.

I would like to give special thanks to Jon and Sheila from the office for their assistance in this project. I could not have done it without their help. These edits will be coming out to homeowners in the next few months.

As a board member, my goal is to serve the shareholders and do my part in helping this to be the best community it can be. Communication is key in that process. To that end, I encourage you all to take part in the upcoming town hall, so that as a board we can make wise and informed decisions.

Randy Benson, Vice Chair



Jim Burkinshaw, Ex-Officio

Joyce and I moved into this beautiful Sonoma Pines community full-time in 2018. We love it here and have met many wonderful neighbours; the sense of community is the best! Malcom approached me a number of times to join the Board and I finally agreed to serve as Treasurer in an 'ex-officio' capacity. I like to contribute and thought that my previous accounting experience might be a help. I have worked for small, medium, and large corporations, both for-profit and non-profit. I started this past September and have been 'learning the ropes' ever since. We were without a Treasurer for a period of time so I am still working on catching up on past financial decisions and transactions; Coldwell Banker does a lot of our day-to-day banking, bill payment and accounting for us but they rely on us for much of the information. My goal is to provide the detailed information necessary for those who manage the different areas (Office, Repairs & Maintenance, Landscaping, Irrigation, etc.). At the same time, different information is required for homeowners to know how things are running. I aim to make this information as clear and helpful as possible. We currently have a hard-working and very committed Board, and I am open to continuing as Treasurer if needed.

Jim Burkinshaw

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Malcolm Metcalfe, Chair

Sonoma Pines is one of the most beautiful communities in the Okanagan Valley, and for me, it is a privilege to live here. In addition to being a comfortable and safe place, it is inhabited by many terrific people. The majority of the people that I have met are hard working and supportive. Like me, they love the community.

I was an SPHM board member for two previous years, but work pressures created a situation whereby it was necessary for me to leave halfway through the second year. I currently work half time for Generac (the makers of home generators) in their research area, which I find fascinating. At the same time, I teach at UBCO and BCIT three times each week and I am helping to supervise a PhD student at SFU in Burnaby who is doing valuable research in my area. I am also providing oversight into a research project by the School of Sustainable Energy Engineering at SFU. I love the work that I am doing, as it is one way to keep a youthful spirit, an active mind and involves a gratifying use of my time.

Last year, not one of the SPHM board members chose to run for re-election, and only one person from the community put their name forward to fill the vacant positions. My wife, worried that SPHM Ltd. would be without a board,

encouraged me to run for office. I agreed that this was an important task where I could contribute my previous board experience to help manage my community. I struggled to find others to run for office, and after many discussions, we succeeded with, in my opinion, a great group. I was warned by the previous board Chair, Lloyd Searcy, who is a friend and was a neighbour, that he had been very frustrated by the actions of a small group. I hoped we would not experience the same frustrations. With only six candidates for office, we were acclaimed at the AGM. The unexpected disruptions at that AGM were an experience that I hope can be avoided in future.

Board Agenda - Policy, Finance and Governance

We set out an agenda to attempt to operate as a corporate board, providing service, transparency, and listening carefully to the needs of our shareholders. It started as a simple plan. Our board, like most corporate boards, would have three key responsibilities - Policy, Finance and Governance. We appointed Gary Kitchen as the Managing Director, responsible for operations, including staff, service contracts and dealing with homeowners' issues. All requests and concerns from residents were to be filtered through the Community Service Coordinator, Jon Connick, and the Managing Director. This process was intended to provide faster response to concerns, and only issues that could not be resolved at that level would go to the Board.

This process also established a clear line of responsibility for our staff. Only the Managing Director would give direction, eliminating past issues when other Board members gave conflicting or alternate directions to staff members.

Improve Transparency

Transparency was identified as a key need. We published a newsletter almost every month and we updated and maintained the Sonoma Pines Website to ensure that information was available and right up to date. We added a photo gallery and have tried to make the website more appealing to our homeowners.



Gary Kitchen, our Managing Director, set to work to pick up on the gate project and found that the delays caused by COVID had put us in a difficult position. Gary worked essentially full time and unpaid, to get the job done. We are all grateful for the work that he did knowing that he did not expect the many hours required for this project. Along the way, to keep the homeowners informed, he sent out many emails, explaining each step in detail. He had taken the initial plan done by the previous board and modified it, to improve operational flexibility. The board spent considerable time discussing the plan, to ensure that it would prevent people from the apartments above Sonoma Pines from using our property as a parking location, or a place to walk their dogs. The upper gates were critical in maintaining the beauty and safety of our property.

Despite our actions to improve communications and transparency, we received concerns, complaints and demands. Some suggested that we were a dictatorship. It became apparent that many had not read the newsletters, the emails, or the webpages. We were told that some actions were illegal, while others believed that we had not been transparent. It was, to put it mildly, frustrating and very disappointing after the work that we had done to be visible to every homeowner.

In my case, my doctor has advised that I should reduce my workload, eliminating stressful tasks. My role on the SPHM board is one task that I hope to eliminate. This stress is not only mine but is shared by my wife who has tried her best to support me. At present, I do not plan to run next year.



Owners Right to Voice Their Opinion But...

My concern is clear. Owners have the right to voice opinions. At the same time, our Board has a responsibility to ALL homeowners, and we do not implement demands from one or two individuals unless the majority of our homeowners are in agreement or there is some other mitigating factor. It is very disappointing to get threats, and allegations that we are operating illegally. We have

and will continue to carefully investigate any alleged incorrect operations, and candidly, to date, this has taken a lot of valuable time with little justification or positive results. We have done our best to operate within the required legislation, to communicate freely with our owners and listen carefully to their concerns. What is now so badly needed is a community that can unite, provide guidance and support to achieve results that are good for us all, and do that in a way that is cooperative and constructive.

Operation of Sonoma Pines

We have had a lack of continuity on our boards. We need right-minded homeowners with experience to run this wonderful establishment. We manage almost \$500 Million in assets, making us a significant company. We **NEED** the support of people with the skills to manage this community if we hope to maintain our property values. One of the reasons that I suspect results in the lack of people seeking to join the Board is the disharmony that has caused so much frustration and concern. Our attempts to be transparent seem to have failed to reach all owners. We have heard many good comments on some of the initiatives, including the work done by Gary Kitchen and the newsletters, but it still seems that there are a number of homeowners who do not appear to recognize our efforts to communicate openly.

We are calling a Town Hall to discuss issues in an open forum. I hope that you can all plan to attend and participate either in-person or on Zoom. My 5 years of experience as chair of a strata in Whistler that was larger than Sonoma Pines was one of the most enjoyable and rewarding tasks that I have had. We need to rebuild a similar level of trust and understanding here at Sonoma Pines, so I am counting on your support by participation.

So please plan to join your board and bring your ideas of how we can build a cohesive group that will work as a single team to maintain our role as one of the best places in the Valley to live. Indifference will not achieve this.

Malcolm Metcalfe, Chair

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**PLEASE JOIN US ON
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13th,
4:30 to 6:30PM
FOR AN SPHM
TOWN HALL MEETING
TO DISCUSS YOUR
CONCERNS AND IDEAS
IN-PERSON* OR ON ZOOM
*SIGN UP SHEET OUTSIDE OFFICE
ZOOM LINK WILL BE PROVIDED BY EMAIL**