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Edgewater Isle angers residents

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Reporter

On the outside, life at Edgewater Isle, nestled next to Marina Lagoon and curving bike paths, seems tranquil and homey, but on the inside this picturesque scene is anything but serene.

At the forefront of the turmoil is PML management. PML is hired by Edgewater Isle Homeowners Association to perform property management services - to maintain common areas and buildings; to supervise performance of local vendors and contractors for routine maintenance of plumbing, carpentry and electrical work; and to sustain a steady flow of communication between homeowners and property management regarding any aspect of the complex.

The fee for the services is \$150 to \$200 per month, depending on the size of the unit, but lately residents said they are wondering where the money is going and who, if

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anyone, is listening to them.

For nine years Rudy Estrada has lived at Edgewater Isle and said current conditions defeat his whole purpose of living in a condominium complex.

"I live here because it's self-maintained - things like taking care of the pool, lawn and landscaping we pay to have done for us so we don't have to deal with it," he said. "But when you look around, the condition of the neighborhood makes you wonder where our money is going. It's obvious nothing is being done."

"Just how are these people spending our money?," echoed Moxi Posner, an Edgewater homeowner for over nine years. "They decide to spend money on major projects without even notifying us, like the time they decided to repaint our units a different color without consulting us. Then when they do decide to communicate, after everyone is upset, they said it would cost us \$11,000 to undo the painting they had already done. That price seemed high to a lot of people, and a lot of people were very upset about it."

Talk to other residents and they tell the same story - requests and phone calls are ignored, homeowners are treated rudely and nothing is repaired for months and months, they claim.

"There is a blatant disregard for homeowners by PML," said Martha Garza, an Edgewater homeowner. "For the last six months, there has been so much tension. They can't ignore people when it's their home you're dealing with. It's too big of an investment for people to become apathetic. We're not going to go away."

"It's time to get a better management company," she said. "It's scary to think he (manager Stephen Fox) is getting paid all this money and he doesn't care about us. He's just looking out for his own interests."

Stephen Fox, manager of PML was unavailable for comment for this article.

"I hate to see what is going on here," said Noreen Kalman a resident of Edgewater Isle since April. "I know of a lot of people in the complex who have had problems with PML. We're not being treated with respect."

Choosing the dividing line

The turmoil has even begun to affect the relationship among individual homeowners.

The Homeowners' Association elects a council of five homeowners to represent them on issues they have with the management company. However, residents have been complaining of secret meetings, personal agendas and election fraud.

Irwin Posner is a newly-elected Board member for the south side of the complex who said he has witnessed the corruption first-hand.

"One of the members on my Board voted to have a drainage leak fixed in her unit at a cost of over \$3,000," he said. "You can't be a member on a board and vote to have your own unit fixed. When things like this happen, it makes you wonder what else is going on we don't know about - just yet."

Posner said he is also questioning Fox's actions regarding paying himself an additional \$60,000 in addition to his regular salary, for overseeing a reconstruction project following a litigation settlement with the corporation that built Edgewater Isle.

"Why should Fox receive an additional \$60,000 on top of his monthly salary for overseeing a project that is part of his regular duties?," Posner said. "That is a lot of money to be paid to someone who probably knows as much about construction as I do."

Questioning the validity

Another problem at Edgewater that is dividing residents is the issue of election fraud on the north side. The problem has been seemingly resolved because the Board's president, Janet Migliore, has agreed to a recount of the ballots to be witnessed by an arbitrary party.

The first recount had been done at Migliore's home where she and two Board members, one being a candidate in the election, recounted the ballots themselves without notifying any of the homeowners.

Residents were not happy with the election because the Board and the Association's attorney, Tom Fier, would not let anyone view the ballots, which they have a right to do, according to the Associations' bylaws.

Kerrilyn Cane ran in the election and said that when she looked at the tally sheet, the numbers indicated she had won.

Since then, the elected candidates have filled their position on the board, but Cane is having a difficult time ignoring feelings that the election was driven by personal agendas because after each recount she was the only candidate to consistently lose the majority of votes.

Fier, who said he was tired of the whole dispute, said the election issue got blown way out of proportion.

"They have misplaced anger," he said. "There is no way a simple dispute over a ballot procedure should escalate into something like this situation."

Fier is referring to the heated council meetings where people start calling each other names and cry and mutter nasty words under their breaths.

Although Fier said he can understand the homeowners' frustrations with PML, he declined to go into any detail.

Looking to the future

As far as Cane is concerned, she said she still feels the election wasn't done fairly but believes something better is going to come out of all this in the end when the homeowners band together to fight for what is right.

"For me, it's not about the election issue anymore. It's about the principle," she said. "If anything, the election issue has brought the people together, and I believe the end result, which we're working toward right now, is going to be a better, more efficient and more effective association that will benefit all of us."