

CSC to host Public Forum to Address Strata Issues



Chief Executive Officer of The Commission of Strata Corporations, Mrs. Sandra Watson

The Commission of Strata Corporations (CSC), the government's regulator of strata corporations, will host a public consultation forum to address a range of issues facing strata corporations.

The Forum will be held on Thursday April 13, 2017 at the Girl Guides Association of Jamaica Headquarters, 2 Waterloo Road, starting at 5:30 pm. The forum is open to all persons free of cost, but is especially targeted towards Executive Committees of strata corporations, persons who own strata properties or persons interested in doing so.

The Registration (Strata Titles) Act was amended in 2009 establishing the Commission of Strata Corporations. The amendments also empowered strata corporations in their management by providing a means of collecting maintenance fees through the ability to apply for Power of Sale Certificates; established the Strata Appeals Tribunal to hear matters by proprietors aggrieved by a decision of the Corporation or Commission; and giving the Commission the mandate to enforce by-laws.

Ainsworth Norton, Inspectorate Manager of the CSC says that despite the Commission's best efforts, it has not seen a reasonable level of compliance in the submission of the Annual Returns and the payment of annual fees. . "Annual Returns are essentially documentation relating to the management of a Corporation – including minutes of meetings and audited or properly kept accounting records", Mr. Norton explained. He further added "The law mandates Corporation to pay 0.4% of the unimproved value of the land, over to the Commission as an annual fee to off-set the cost of services offered by the Commission."

According to Sandra Watson, Chief Executive Officer - Commission of Strata Corporations, the goal of the Forum is to address the lack of knowledge or information that might exist about what is expected from Strata Managers and how the Commission is able to assist Corporations to be better managed. "A lot of the issues and problems that arise out of this form of communal living is as a result of a general breakdown in the communication and sometimes trust between proprietors and Executive Committees. It may also be a lack of appreciation for how the actions and non-compliance of one owner can affect the property value and upkeep of the entire property," Mrs. Watson offered.

In addition to the issues mentioned earlier, The Commission has repeatedly cited common issues such as the failure to hold Annual General Meetings, failure to pay or enforce payment of maintenance fees to the Corporation, failure to insure and a range of breaches of the by-laws.

A strata Corporation is a building or collection of buildings so registered, where there is individual ownership of a 'unit' as well as shared ownership of common areas such as external walls, walkways, recreational areas etc. An agreed monthly maintenance fee is usually collected to maintain these common areas.

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