Check all bylaws before moving pet into building

Last May, an unsuspecting young woman with two small dogs bought a Kits strata apartment that she thought would be her perfect home for at least the next few years and perhaps longer. The investment seemed worth the spacious condo and the neighbourhood was a dog-walkers' dream.

The next thing she knew, she was facing fines of $200 a month, a dispute with the strata council and the prospect of having to sell her unit or lose her beloved pets.

How did this happen, especially since the young woman had seen dogs already living in the complex? It turned out, even though she had taken the trouble to read the bylaws, the version she was given by the owners was outdated. In 1999, the strata corporation had amended their bylaws to include a bylaw that prohibited pets and the fine amended to $200 a month.

Strata law: Bylaws that prohibit or restrict pets are allowable under the Strata Properties Act. When a pet prohibition or restriction bylaw is adopt-

TONY GIOVENTU
Condo Smarts

ed by the corporation, pets residing in the strata lot at the time the bylaw is filed are exempt until the owner moves or the pet dies. Any new residents in the building or any residents wishing to have a new pet after the bylaw has been adopted and filed will be in violation of the bylaw and subject to the penalties.

Tips: Pets are a huge bone of contention in stratas. Be wary before you bring your beloved pets into a strata where they may not be welcome and cost you money and heartbreak. Request a Form B Information Certificate before you buy, get a copy of all filed bylaw amendments in the land title office, get a copy of the rules from the strata corporation, ask for information in writing and take the time to read the documents.

Tony Gioventu is the executive director of the Condominium Home Owners Association (CHOA). Contact CHOA by mail at 202 - 624 Columbia Street, New Westminster, V3M 1A5, phone 604 584-2462 or toll-free 1-877-353-2462, fax 604 515-9643 or email tony@choa.bc.ca