



# Condo Connection

Wilson, Blanchard Management Inc. – *Condominium Management with Experience and Integrity*  
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The WB Condo Connection highlights Ontario condominium related articles and educational items that may be of interest to Boards of Directors and condo owners. It is published online and available on our website ([www.wilsonblanchard.com](http://www.wilsonblanchard.com)) as well as in hard copy format to each of the members of our Boards of Directors.

We hope you enjoy this edition and we welcome your comments, suggestions, or article topic requests by email to [newsletter.editor@wilsonblanchard.com](mailto:newsletter.editor@wilsonblanchard.com) or by mail to:

Editor – WB Condo Connection  
101-701 Main Street West  
Hamilton, ON, L8S 1A2

## A BRIGHT IDEA!

By: Darren East  
Property Manager - Cambridge

WNCC 128 is a 46 unit townhouse site located in Waterloo, Ontario. Recently, the Board of Directors there began to consider site lighting. The site had only 4 light standards that gave poor lighting, at best. The site was extremely dark and some residents had commented on safety and security concerns because of how dark it was.

The Board consulted with local police services as well as various lighting consultants on how to improve the feeling of safety and security at their site. The overall opinion was, of course, “more light”. The question of how to achieve this in a way that was functional as well as an enhancement to the site became of interest.

While exploring the project, the Board learned that to install additional light standards throughout the site would cost approximately \$24,000. As this would be an addition to the site, the Board was concerned about a special assessment to the Owners during a time that a complete window replacement project was also underway.

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The Board spent approximately 3 months investigating different coach-style lamps for replacement at the units on site. Each unit had two lamps – one by the front door and one at the garage at the roadside. It was thought the lamps required replacement as they were beginning to age. The Board felt that if all unit owners were to have their lights on at night, this would illuminate the main roadway through the site. The Board continued to work with its electrical contractor and came up with a fixture that used a photocell to control lights being turned on and off. The fixture featured a special high-efficiency CFL bulb. In fixing a test unit with the new fixtures, the temperature of the light was looked at and the quality of light in the area was examined. It looked great!

There was, of course, a problem with some unit owners not turning on lights at night. This would naturally defeat the goal.

The Board worked with the electrician and discovered that at current energy pricing, for the two lights to be on for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, it would represent a cost to the Owner of approximately \$10 per year!

When considering the cost of a special assessment, this means that an Owner would have had to pay for approximately 23 years through their regular hydro bill to cover the special assessment as a one-time payment.

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This information was presented to the membership and the project was a GO.

Lights were installed and hard wired to the unit electrical supply removing control of the lights from the Owner and relying solely on the photocell to govern when lights were on and off. The results.... In a word – spectacular!

As of today: Real estate agents are making a point of taking prospective buyers to the site at night. The visual appeal of pulling into the site with every light on at the garage and unit door is incredible! The site is warm and inviting.

Local police have returned to the site to view the results. Their comments include: “Not a shadow anywhere for someone to hide in. Great job!” Residents, neighbours and other members of the property management industry are touring the site and all saying the same things: “The site looks INCREDIBLE! So well lit. Such a feeling of being safe when walking at night!”

This project was bold and daring and the results have been excellent! The site is no longer dark and residents feel safe to stroll their community in the evening. The perceived value of the property is up, and the cost to complete the project? Under \$10,000 including fixtures, bulbs and installation!

Problems in communities come up on a regular basis. It is important to stop and think about what solutions would work best for you!

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## Improving Curbside Appeal & Spring Maintenance

By: Jill Mark, RCM  
Property Manager - Toronto

Unightly grounds affect curbside appeal and are the first thing prospective buyers see. Spring often sees the highest turnover in a condominium hence the grounds are something that require attention early on. Property Managers need to prepare for this as early as March.

Until the plants and flowers grow and the trees and shrubbery begin to flower or leaf, we can enhance the entrance to the building with bright spring arrangements in pots or urns.

Landscapers cannot plant annuals until around the end of May after the ground has thawed down at least 6 feet, but if your condominium community has a garden committee, the planting of tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths in the fall would produce early spring flowers. A good garden has a balance of something in bloom spring, summer, and fall. A lilac or magnolia bush in a corner garden can also brighten the area.

Trees and/or shrubbery also need tending. Broken and/or dead branches should be carefully removed in late April or early May to protect the plant and to improve ground appearance and enhance new growth. Dead branches higher than 6 feet will require the hiring of an arborist. Managers should also be seeking quotes for summer annuals as landscapers get busy around late April. It is best to have a quote approved before the end of April to ensure your summer annuals are installed on time. To ensure healthy vegetation, the grounds need to be clear of debris.

Winter months are blustery. As the snow melts, a common issue is finding a lot of debris all over the grounds. Some of it blows over from other properties, is tossed by passersby or is loose garbage from bins or balconies. In the spring, once the snow is gone, the grounds and flower beds alongside the building are littered with cigarette butts and packages, toys, old pop cans, clothes...you name it, and let's not forget the plastic grocery bags billowing in the trees or the areas all over the grounds where dogs have done their business and it has sat there all winter. Clearing the debris not only improves the appearance of the grounds but also allows the soil to breathe which encourages earlier growth in the gardens and grassy areas. Ask the superintendent or cleaners working with landscapers to clean the grounds in March and report to the manager as to which grassy areas need sod replacement.

All condominium managers know about salt damage; the grassy areas along the curb side and edging along sidewalks are usually badly damaged. Spring quotes to replace damaged sod are mandatory and one of the first things we look for as the ground thaws.

A visual inspection of the exterior of the building is

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usually done in April when it is tolerable to stay outdoors to do a thorough inspection. Balconies, grounds, walls, retaining walls etc. should all be inspected to ensure they are in excellent condition and if needing repair, contractors can be hired to fix immediately, or quotes can be received and approved by the Board to action the repairs before the nice weather to ensure that the exterior looks pleasing for the entire summer. Ice and the sub-zero temperatures lasting a month in February cause havoc. Some managers will find broken pavement or cement, brickwork etc. which must be repaired or replaced. Some managers will have to replace plants or trees that died over the winter.

Regular spring maintenance will also include garage and window washing to brighten the look of the building. Spring is also a good time to do exterior painting of the garage door, fences etc.

The grounds are the first impression of a building. Until the summer growth comes in, it is important to keep the grounds tidy to improve the look of the building and to protect the vegetation.

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## Catching the 'Poopetrators' – DNA profiling of dogs

By: Sarah Farr  
Administrator - Hamilton

Imagine a way of correctly matching an offending pile of dog poo on the common elements to the dog responsible, and the careless owner that left the mess there. The frustration of finding piles of doggy-do on the common elements is an ongoing and exasperating problem. Aside from the very real health concerns, it affects the aesthetics of the community, and the general suspicions that some people just aren't picking up what their pets are putting down.

For the majority of dog owners, picking up the poop is a small inconvenience that is accepted as part of the broader joys of pet ownership, but for those who continually offend with no recourse, a new DNA matching profile may ensure that the offending owners are found and duly notified.

PooPrints, a division of Tennessee-based Bio Pet Vet Lab, has spearheaded the technology required to catch the 'poopetrators' via a DNA database of dogs.

They have targeted the apartment and condominium industries due to the magnitude of the problem at these buildings, and the sheer desperation faced by Property Managers, Board members, and condo dwellers in dealing with the ongoing issue.

To set up the database, each owner is provided with a DNA collection kit and requested to collect cheek swabs of their dogs in the presence of the Property Manager or a representative of PooPrints. Registration information is then entered into the World Pet Registry and the dog owner is provided with a registration tag to attach to the collar of their pet. The swabs are then sent to Bio Pet Vet Lab for processing.

Once an offending pile of poop is located, a small sample is taken and sent to the lab for testing. The Property Manager then receives notice of the offending pet's ID and the offending unit owner can be notified and/or fined.

The initial registrations are gathered by meeting face-to-face with individual owners or, if the facility accommodates, a pet registration event can be held on-site. Fees for the registration service can be charged-back to the unit owner as a one-time registration fee (averaging around \$69.99 - \$89.99 dependant on the number of dogs in the complex), and if an offending poop is discovered, the fee for the analysis (currently \$89.99) can be recouped from the unit owner through the enforcement of pet bylaws and policies. There is no cost to the Condominium Corporation itself. The DNA registration holds particular value to pet owners as a unique identification system, which works particularly well when coupled with microchip identification and city licensing.

PooPrints also offers the benefit of being non-contract, and their website provides a valuable list of resources for Property Managers, complete with pre-written letters explaining the system, registration reminders, and 'matched mess' letters.

The pet DNA profiling has generated great interest in BC and Alberta, where it is already in common use. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Maggie @ PooPrints Canada by emailing: [info@pooprintscanada.com](mailto:info@pooprintscanada.com) or calling 403-560-5971. Email me at [sarah.farr@wilsonblanchard.com](mailto:sarah.farr@wilsonblanchard.com) if you would like the company's PDF presentation or visit [www.pooprintscanada.com](http://www.pooprintscanada.com).

## Arrears Letters Going Electronic

By: Jeff Lack, BAcc, CPA, CGA  
Manager of Financial Reporting - Hamilton

In conjunction with our continuing efforts to protect the environment, beginning **September 1, 2015** Wilson, Blanchard Management will be moving to electronic delivery of all arrears notices – **arrears notices will no longer be sent by postal mail.**

All owners will have the option to continue receiving courtesy notices regarding arrears on their account by confirming their current email address with the Accounting Administrator responsible for their property.

Owners can do this by emailing their full name, condominium corporation number and unit address to [ownerinfo@wilsonblanchard.com](mailto:ownerinfo@wilsonblanchard.com). Wilson, Blanchard began informing owners of this change in April through multiple methods and will continue doing so over the next several months, including notices in AGM & Budget packages and a notice on all arrears that are sent by mail until September 1. We encourage Boards to also include this change in any newsletters that are sent to your owners. We thank all of our Boards and owners for embracing this change and helping us to help the environment.



## Welcome!

Wilson, Blanchard would like to welcome our newest managed properties:

H.S.C.C. 639  
P.S.C.C. 39  
Y.S.C.C. 1273  
B.C.E.C.C. 106

H.S.C.C. 525  
N.N.S.C.C. 248  
Humber Terrace



101-701 Main Street West  
Hamilton, ON  
L8S 1A2

**Phone:**  
905-540-8800  
**Fax:**  
905-540-4450

**Email:**  
[info@wilsonblanchard.com](mailto:info@wilsonblanchard.com)

206-16 Four Seasons Place  
Toronto, ON  
M9B 6E5

**Phone:**  
416-642-2807  
**Fax:**  
416-642-2810

**Email:**  
[toinfo@wilsonblanchard.com](mailto:toinfo@wilsonblanchard.com)

200-149 Ainslie Street North  
Cambridge, ON  
N1R 3P4

**Phone:**  
519-620-8778  
**Fax:**  
519-620-8558

**Email:**  
[kwinfo@wilsonblanchard.com](mailto:kwinfo@wilsonblanchard.com)

**Newsletter Editor Email:**  
[newsletter.editor@wilsonblanchard.com](mailto:newsletter.editor@wilsonblanchard.com)

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