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Message From The President

A new Council has been established with a strong team which is committed to promoting the interests of the members and the Association. We hope to engage in more dialogues with our members through newsletters and meetings.

At the first meeting, the Council agreed on an exciting Workplan for our term. Several projects have been in place and close to finalization. We will make the necessary announcements in due course.

With globalisation, many changes have taken place particularly in the property and facility management field. Innovations and sustainability are two key words. To meet the challenges in the industry, there is a need to establish links with regional and international bodies. This year APFM will host our inaugural International Congress in April. This is a follow-up of the successful conference held in Singapore in 2007. Our counterparts in region will be invited to participate in this international meeting.

A Task Force has also been set up to launch our membership drive this year. We hope members would continue to support the Association's various activities, and to contribute to the growth of APFM.

Dr Lim Lan Yuan
President

10th Council 2010-2012

We would like to congratulate the following persons who were elected into the Council during the AGM held on 30 July 2010.

President	Dr Lim Lan Yuan
Vice President	Andrew Aathar
Honorary Secretary	Raymond Ang
Asst. Hon. Secretary	Lim Tiong Eng
Honorary Treasurer	Tay It Tuan
Asst. Hon. Treasurer	Andrew Lioe
Council Member	Eric Chan
Council Member	Alfred Chng
Council Member	Reymond Fernandez
Council Member	Peter Tan
Council Member	Teo Kok Seng

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STRATEGIES FOR RECOGNISING THE IMPACT OF GREEN BUILDINGS ON PROPERTY IMAGE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

By Dr Lim Lan Yuan

Introduction

There is an increased global concern and interest in green and sustainable developments. Case studies and database are being developed to build a business case for such developments. This article examines how we can develop strategies to take advantage of such a development trend to improve the building image and operational efficiency.

The Green Movement

In 1984, the United Nations established a group to identify long-term environmental strategies for the international community. By 1987, a report entitled “Our Common Future” was published. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environmental and Development commonly known as the ‘Earth Summit’ took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In the 21st century, ‘sustainable development’ is identified as an area that will pose a challenge for further economic development as environmental issues are likely to deter growth. Increasingly, international, national and regional enterprises/institutions are incorporating sustainability into their developments.

Sustainability and Green Buildings

Sustainability refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability is used interchangeably with the term “green building” which is defined as one that incorporates design, construction and management practices that will significantly reduce or eliminate its negative impact on the environment and its occupants. A green building is like any building except that it incorporates features which will reduce the use of energy and water, improve on air quality and application of appropriate efficient building materials.

Experience in other countries

Rating systems have been developed in various countries to assess sustainable developments. The purpose is to evaluate the extent to which a particular building project is sustainable. Some of these rating systems include the LEED in North America, the Green Star in Australia, and the Green Mark in Singapore.

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Studies carried out in these countries have shown the impact of sustainability in terms of benefits and cost savings arising from improved building services and reduced operating costs. Sustainable developments also have impacts on operational efficiency which affects building performance.

Strategies for Developing Green Buildings

The following are some strategies which can be established for developing green buildings.

- Need for familiarity with the green technology and green features
- Understand the advantages and benefits of green developments
- Learn about incentives for green initiatives
- Be aware of policies and legislative measures that promote green buildings
- Plan sustainable communities, minimise energy demand, use renewable energy supply, minimise environmental impact, increase use of recycled materials, enhanced public transport and walkability etc
- Minimise disruption, noise, dust etc and focus on waste minimisation, maximise recycling, and emphasis on construction environmental management
- Focus on management including emphasis on built to last, clean, user friendly, energy efficient operation and effective maintenance
- Explore design improvements eg for water efficiency and incorporation of energy savings measures
- Consider new designs through the use of technology
- Carry out a report highlighting cost savings, value enhancement, and image building
- Implement sustainability policies and measures in the organization

Overcoming Challenges

Incorporating green technologies have some challenges which need to be overcome. First, there is the budget issue. Secondly, management resistance also needs to be overcome. On the other hand, with an increasing emphasis on enhancing building image, market demand from the tenants, and with Government support, the green movement is likely to get an impetus.

Conclusions

The Green movement is here to stay with our increasing concern on climate change and rising energy costs. Hence, opportunities should be taken to incorporate green features in building developments. Although the impact of sustainability is not widely spread, there is a growing and an increasing interest. Incorporating sustainability policies will yield benefits in the long run for the developments as well as the occupiers and investors.

HAVING FINANCIAL CONTROLS

By Andrew Lioe
Executive Director - A4 International Pte Ltd

Recent media reports regarding managing agent staff entrusted with looking after MCSTs but absconding with their monies have surfaced a need for better control measures & governance for not only MCST Councils but also managing agent firms.

In cases of fraud or fraudulent use of funds, the best measures to be taken are preventive & regular checks to make it difficult for the perpetrator or to enable such acts to be detected quickly so that immediate action can be taken. These are some basic procedures/processes suggested to assist Council members and Managing Agent firms to review and implement where applicable –

System procedures/process related to

Cash/cheque payment or receipts

1. Establish the number of signatories required to authorize payment. In most cases, 2 of the 3 office bearers operate the MCST account. There are some MCST that establish procedures for certain higher amounts to be signed by all 3 or 4 office bearers.
2. Ensuring that all receipts of monies/cheques are banked into the MCST account in timely order. (example - not more than 3 working days)
3. Ensuring bank reconciliation statements are prepared on a periodic basis.
4. Having a practice of the latest original or copy of monthly bank statement to accompany the monthly signing of cheques for the signatories to view as usually all correspondence from the bank are sent directly to the MA's office.
5. For cash collection, proper pre numbered receipts are issued and accounted for in timely order. (example – once a week or once in two working days)
6. Vouchers for cheque payments and petty cash payments to be supported by original supporting documents. For works done by maintenance vendors, relevant service reports etc to be attached. All invoices should be stamped PAID with relevant cheque details recorded on the invoice to prevent double payment. Cheque payments should be crossed with the 'bearer' portion of the cheque struck out.
7. Cancelled cheques can be strike out with the word cancelled across the cheque and shall be attached with the cheque butts. Cheque signatories shall be able to view these cancelled cheques while signing the monthly cheques to ensure that the cheque numbers remain in sequence.

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Stock Inventory

In most MCSTs, the main stock inventory involving costs are vehicle transponders, access cards/keys etc.

1. A proper stock inventory record with movements of stock details
2. Establish control of the stock by designating specific people/staff for control of both inward & outgoing stock. Proper & clear place of storage.
3. Stock taking on periodic basis (example – once a quarter)

Investment

Bank Fixed Deposits are the most common type of investment vehicles for MCSTs.

1. The fixed deposit account can be checked independently with the banks by the signatories or evidence of documentation provided to the Council from the bank on a regular basis (example – twice a year)
2. Added security measure such that at least one or more signatory be present at the bank to for any withdrawal or retirement of the fixed deposits.

Security of financial documents

1. Cash, cheques and official receipts should be locked in designated metal cabinets with access given to specific personnel. Staff are reminded not to leave such items unattended or in an unattended environment.
2. Cheque books (particularly unused ones) & cash should be secured in either a safe or designated location with limited access given. Check & balance to be done on the access where possible. (example – two key holders)
3. Copies of Specimen signatures for the cheques should be kept filed separately and secured with limited access to deter forgery of such signatures.

Human Resource

1. A good practice would be to screen those personnel of authority and handling cash/cheque payments. Caution should be taken when personnel are found to be facing bankruptcy action. This can be accessed through the Insolvency & Public Trustee website. Staff with financial difficulties should be assessed and minimise their involvement with cash/stock.
2. Where possible, division of work such that personnel are inter-dependent, particularly, when coming to cheque payment, cash collection etc. (Example – Cheques are prepared by the accounts clerk, verified by the accounts executive/property executive before being sent out for signature)

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Audits

1. Recommended to rotate auditors periodically (Example – every 2-3 years) as a practice or if the firm is sizable, to request that a different audit staff from the previous audit handle the present one.
2. Ensure request for bank confirmation letters are signed on time before the audit report is completed. The original bank confirmation letters can be attached with the audit reports that are submitted to the Council for their signatures. If time does not permit, the original bank confirmation letters can be viewed by Council members at the AGM or next Council meeting.

Summary

The above procedures/policies are by no means exhaustive and should be seen from a basic general perspective, I am aware that there are many different type of MCST operations with different needs, alternate sources of income & expenditure.

Obviously there is no end to the amount of checks, audits and processes that one can implement. However, as most Council members are volunteers with limited time, too onerous processes and steps may deter efficiency or be counterproductive. As Managing agents, we should not take for granted the responsibility and trust that the MCST has given us in managing their finances and where possible apply due diligence in safeguarding such monies.

Circulars

These circulars can be downloaded from www.corenet.gov.sg/einfo

- Green Mark Incentive Scheme For Design Prototype (GMIS-DP) (*Circulated by BCA, Research Division*)
- Adoption of New Codes and Standards - (A) BCA Green Mark Certification Standard For New Buildings (GM Version 4); (B) Code for Environmental Sustainability of Buildings (Second Edition); (C) SS 531: Code of Practice For Lighting of Work Places; (D) SS 553: Code of Practice For Air-Conditioning And Mechanical Ventilation in Buildings (*Circulated by BCA, Building Plan and Management Division*)
- Extension Of Implementation Date To Comply With Alternative Access To Lift Well Requirement in Clause 3.2.2 of SS 550:2009 – Code Of Practice For Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Electric Passenger and Goods Lift (*Circulated by BCA, Building Plan and Management Division*)

These circulars can be downloaded from www.ura.gov.sg

- Amenity Provision Guidelines For Ancillary And Secondary Workers' Dormitories In Industrial / Warehouse Developments (*Circulated by URA*)
- One-Time Permit for Home Office in Private Residential Premises (*Circulated by URA*)
- Temporary Change of Use of Existing Shophouses and Shopflat Developments to Hotel Use in Selected Locations (*Circulated by URA*)
- Revised Guidelines for Communal Pavilions at Ground Level and Rooftop (*Circulated by URA*)

Inaugural International Congress on Property and Facility Management – 19-21 Apr 2011

1st Announcement and Call for Papers

APFM will be holding our Inaugural International Congress from 19-21 April 2011 in Singapore.

Introduction

Property management as a professional discipline was in existence in the early 1900s. Facility management emerged in the 1980s. Since then, much development has taken place in the field of property and facility management. With the advancement in technology, in particular, green technology, management of facilities and building has been facilitated but has also become much more complex. This inaugural congress will examine the current state of the art and developments in the field.

Congress theme

The theme of the congress is “State of the Art in Property and Facility Management”. This theme is appropriate as the congress will review developments in the property and facility management field across countries in the Asia Pacific rim. The congress will also examine various related sub-themes and look at specific issues such as:

- Developments in Property and Facility Management
- International Experiences in Property and Facility Management
- Strata Title Management
- Town Council Management
- Asset and Corporate Management
- Management of Facilities and Operations
- Application of Technologies in Management
- Green Technologies and Management
- Management of Specific Property Types eg malls, offices, industrial properties
- Management of Resorts and Hospitality Facilities
- Condominium Management
- Education and Training of Property and Facility Managers etc.

Submission of Papers

We would like to invite all practitioners, researchers and others in the property and facility management field to submit their papers or to participate in this inaugural congress.

To encourage research in the field, this congress will feature a “Best Paper” competition submitted and presented at the congress.

Important Deadlines:

Abstract Submission:	31 Jan 2011
Notification of acceptance:	15 Feb 2011
Full papers submission:	1 Mar 2011
(for those participating in best paper competition)	
PowerPoint slides submission:	8 Apr 2011

Kindly email all submissions to apfm@pacific.net.sg

Upcoming Events

CPD Talks by APFM

- **Update on Management Corporations –**

21 Jan 2011 (Friday), 1.30pm, APFM office

The talk will discuss some of the difficulties encountered in managing management corporations. A brief description of the functions and responsibilities of MC is given and the role of MA is discussed. This is followed by a panel discussion on some of the problematic issues encountered. This talk will be most relevant to managing agents and their staff personnel who are involved in managing management corporations.

- **Important Law Relating to Property and Facility Management – Feb 2011**

It is essential that MA who manages properties and facilities be familiar with some of the important law governing management. These include environmental law, workplace safety and health, and planning and building control, and taxation. This talk will give participants and overview of the main requirements of the law relating to management. It will be most relevant to managing agents and their staff personnel who are involved in managing management corporations.

- **Shopping Centre Management – Mar 2011**

The management of shopping centres and retail malls is complex. This talk will discuss some of the issues involved. They include lease management including tenant control, maintenance management of the shopping malls, and overall management of shopper crowd and security. This talk will be most relevant to managing agents and their staff personnel who are involved in centre management.

Response Slip

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