

CHARLES P. SWOFFORD

HB 5536

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

ENTRY
DECK

KEEP OUT

Uninhabitable

DO NOT ENTER BEFORE ENTERING

Address or Unit No.

Code Official

[Signature]
(Signature)

Date

Inspector

(Signature)

MARCH 10, 2012

These pictures are of support posts on a two story set of wood stairs at the Meadows Condominium in Branford CT. These posts were about to collapse Friday March 2nd, when Anthony Cinicola the Branford Building Official declared these stairs unsafe. The Building Official then ordered emergency repairs to be done. This in itself is bad enough. The real problem is that two and half years before this present situation. A sixteen foot 6 in x 6 in wood post on another similar set of stairs broke loose and fell over. When this pole fell, it just missed a woman's head hit her car and totaled it out. Had this pole hit the woman's head she would have been dead. All the stairs on these units were built at the same time over thirty years ago. It would stand to reason to inspect all poles of the same type and construction. The Condo Board was told to inspect these poles. This set of stairs is in direct sight of and visible from where the sixteen foot 6 in x 6 in wood pole fell. It was never inspected.

This situation is part of a larger issue which is total lack of accountability of these Condo Boards. These Condo Boards ignore dangerous public safety issues on an everyday basis. They ignore severe public safety issues, create very dangerous conditions and will listen to no one, not even people who are qualified in these matters. The real problem is that the owners of these condos are powerless before these Condo Boards. You do not have to use a gun to injure or kill someone you can just do what these Condo Boards do. This whole situation would not have come to light had I not said anything. You can trust that this is not the first time a have spoken up. This is just the tip of the

Iceberg. This is a very important Public Safety issue that needs to be examined and action taken to correct the problem. These Condo Boards do whatever they want to and over and over again in complete disregard for Public Safety Statue.

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THIS ~~IS~~ PROBLEM IS ALSO
WITH PROPERTY MANAGERS



Margolis Condo Management Fined For Padding Condo Association Bills

January 2, 2012

On November 9, 2011, following a two year investigation by the State of CT Department of Consumer Protection (Docket No. 11-818, Case No. 2009-5477), Commissioner William M. Rubenstein, imposed a penalty of \$8,000 on Stephen Margolis, A/K/A Margolis Management & Realty of Hamden, CT, for failing to properly notify and disclose to The Meadow's Association the inflated prices he, Mr. Margolis, was charging for "additional services other than Association Services for compensation, to an Association, The Meadows of Branford, to which he was also providing Community Association Manager Services."

In 2009, Kevin Shea, an owner at The Meadows of Branford, became aware of inflated billing for contractors' services to the condominium. "It was obvious that something was wrong, [anyone] could see that money was going out the back door." Additional/multiple assessments had been levied for four years running for major maintenance items, some of which were never completed.

Prior to 2009, The Meadows Board and their property manager were confronted by Association members [the owners] who petitioned for and scheduled a special meeting. Members requested that the assessment funds be accounted for and segregated from the regular operating budget. The Board, property manager and their attorneys refused.

Following an inspection of the Association records, Mr. Shea filed a complaint with the CT Department of Consumer Protection, which investigated the issue over a two year period. In November 2011, a settlement was made in Shea's favor, with a penalty of \$8,000 imposed on Stephen Margolis.

Margolis' Assurance of Voluntary Compliance, in which he agreed to the penalty without admitting any violation, was accepted by the Commissioner with Margolis further agreeing to refrain from any business practices that can be construed as a violation of the CT Fair Business Practices Act. The Board did not pursue Margolis.

The Connecticut Condo Owners Coalition (CCOC), a grassroots organization, became aware of this case, which again confirms the need for a mediator to resolve issues between condo owners and their boards or management companies. CCOC's membership is comprised of hundreds of condo owners from 112 cities and towns statewide; it seeks a level playing field between condo owners and condo boards, and it petitions state legislators to improve and enforce condo laws.

Visit us at :

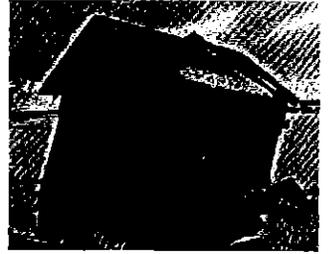
<http://www.ctcondo.org/>

THE MEADOWS MIRROR

OWNERS
NO 5
BOARD
March 2012

BOARD HOARDS RESERVES WHILE BUILDINGS DETERIORATE

After not providing owners a 2010 Annual Report of income and detailed expenditures which has been the practice at the Meadows forever, Treasurer Kate Galambos tried telling members at the January 2012 Budget Meeting that Meadows Reserves were **\$212,000**. When reminded that at a recent Board Meeting she represented that reserves were in the **\$350,000** range, Galambos immediately back peddled, admitting that Reserves are in the \$340,000 range and the Board will be adding an additional \$40,000 this year to the mysterious, overstuffed, reserve(s) account(s) which Members have and are being forced to invest in while being assessed an additional \$40,000. Galambos refused to provide any investment/reserve information. When asked what the Board's plans are for all this money, they refused to answer. A sufficient reserve balance for 136 units is \$136,000. This year there will be a \$244,000 surplus that's \$1,794 per unit that is being held with no explanation of how that money will be used.



RE-OCcurring REVOLVING ROOF ASSESMENTS

This year's budget revealed that **Members are being re-assessed another \$40,000** to pay for roofing of car garages. Members were assessed in 2004-2008 to have all roofs done, we all now know that large amounts of those monies under the watch of Board Members Cash, Galambos and Fitzgerald went missing, leaving the much touted roof project incomplete. Upset members protested that garage roofs and reserves should not take precedent over a growing number of neglected resident buildings that are now suffering from decaying, near blight-like conditions and have recently been mentioned by Real Estate Agents and Appraisers in Market Reports.

BOARD ATTEMPTS SILENCING THEIR PROPERTY MANAGER

In October 2011 stunned residents received an unprecedented email from the sitting Property Manager. The email contained disturbing information in regard to improper Board behavior, Board-Management Relationship and suspicious contractual activity. The Manager distributed the scathing email several days prior to a scheduled public Board meeting hoping to sound the alarm, raise meeting attendance and owner awareness of Board malfeasance and 'irregular business practices' stating that owners 'were being cheated'. The Manager fully intended to attend and provide details, however **the Board denied her access to the meeting and then ordered the Manager to 'NOT SPEAK TO ANY OWNER'**. When asked, the enraged Property Manager spoke of Board interference with the Manager's routine duties along with other items. The Manager described a bizarre scenario where the board put a \$120,000 contractor's contract in front of the Manager and asked her to sign it on behalf of the Board. When the Manager refused to 'Play Ball' and tried to notify the community, she was barred from the property and told not to speak to anyone. Unbelievable. During a July 2010 walking inspection another former Manager, David Clark, was asked 'why our buildings were in such disrepair' he replied 'if the Board does not allow me to maintain the Meadows appropriately I will leave'. Clark left that December. The Meadows is on its fourth Board selected Manager since 2009.



type of post

that fell







