Building a Sense of Community
within community title bodies corporate

Monday 13 May 2013

Gary Bugden
gary@mystrata.com

Coverage

1. What is community?
2. Historical background
3. What are the essentials for building community?
4. What are the constraints to building community?
5. The role of planning and titling laws
6. Importance of physical layout
7. Need for community building "facilities"
8. The management structure
9. The role of management
10. How do you build community?
11. Summary

What is community?

- **Master planned subdivision ≠ community**
- **Community title + Owners Association ≠ community**
- **Various descriptive words can be used –**
  - Sharing of common interests and values
  - Commonality of spirit and culture
  - Harmonious and caring relationships
  - Understanding, care and tolerance
  - Pride well being and belonging
- **Body corporate communities can be both geographical and virtual**

Historical background

- Origins in North America in the 1920's
- Original focus was on land use planning – before public planning schemes
- Common interest subdivisions then emerged
- Home Owners Associations began focusing on building a sense of pride, well being and belonging within their membership
- Australian developers followed North American trends
- The 1980's saw the emergence of "master planned communities" (?"subdivisions")

Historical background (continued)

- **Community titles legislation emerged**
- **Take-up of community titles has been slow**
- **Increasing in popularity as its benefits become clearer to the market**
- **Benefits of community building are now starting to be recognized**

Essentials for community building

- **Planning and titling mechanisms must facilitate community building**
- **Physical layout and facilities of the project must provide opportunity for human interaction**
- **Management structure must empower management to use resources to community build**
- **Management must drive the community building efforts**
- **Must be a formal strategic planning process**

Constraints to community building

- **Legislation**
  - Focused on building maintenance, by-law enforcement and administrative processes
  - Does not empower community building
- **Developers**
  - Failure to "seed" the process
  - Lack of physical facilities
  - Failure to focus management structure
- **Managers**
  - Narrow focus
  - No enthusiasm for developing a sense of community

Planning and titling laws

- **Provide the economic "driver" for community building**
- **Often focused on "subdivision"**
- **Need to facilitate –**
  - **Establishment of a master plan**
  - **Locking in architectural and landscape controls**
  - **Staging or sub-development (i.e. flexibility)**
  - **Creating a "controlled environment" (value + lifestyle)**
  - **Promoting a sense of community**

Physical layout

- **Master plan must set land use patterns**
- **Must take full advantage of the topography and characteristics of the site**
- **Must address sustainability issues**
- **Public access must be restricted**
  - No place for ideology
  - Compromises security
  - Adds to community expenses
  - Creates a barrier to community building

Facilities

- Can be private or public or partly both
- Can be tangible (clubhouse, gym, parks, swimming pools, skate parks)
- Can be activity based (sports team, bridge club, band)
- Can be virtual (web site, electronic newsletter)
- Can be "services" (security, electricity, chilled water, community TV)

Example of a Community Web site

© Mystrata Pty Ltd
www.mystrata.com

Management structure

- **Importance –**
  - Must connect and congregate residents
  - Must facilitate communication and interaction
  - Must provide means for development of community and well being
  - Must allow organized activities and opportunities for social discourse
- **Body corporate or community association is the appropriate "vehicle"**
- **Their roles and structure need improvement**

Management

- Must have motivation and skills to build community
- Must be able to arrange activities
- Must appreciate the importance of children's programs
- Need to be adequately remunerated
- Opportunities for "in-house" resources in larger schemes

Adult activities

Active –

- **Golf days**
- **Tennis tournament**
- **Swimming carnival**
- **Bike riding**
- **Car rallies**
- **Sailing days**
- **Walking and running groups**
- **Picnic days**
- **Baby sitting clubs**
- **Community service projects** (meals on wheels, mentoring, collections)
- **Organized philanthropy** (indigenous scholarship fund)

Passive –

Card evenings
Cocktail and dinner parties
Barbecues
Educational activities (photography, internet, computers, stock market, health and wellness)
Book clubs
Theatre parties
Visits to galleries and museums
Sightseeing tours
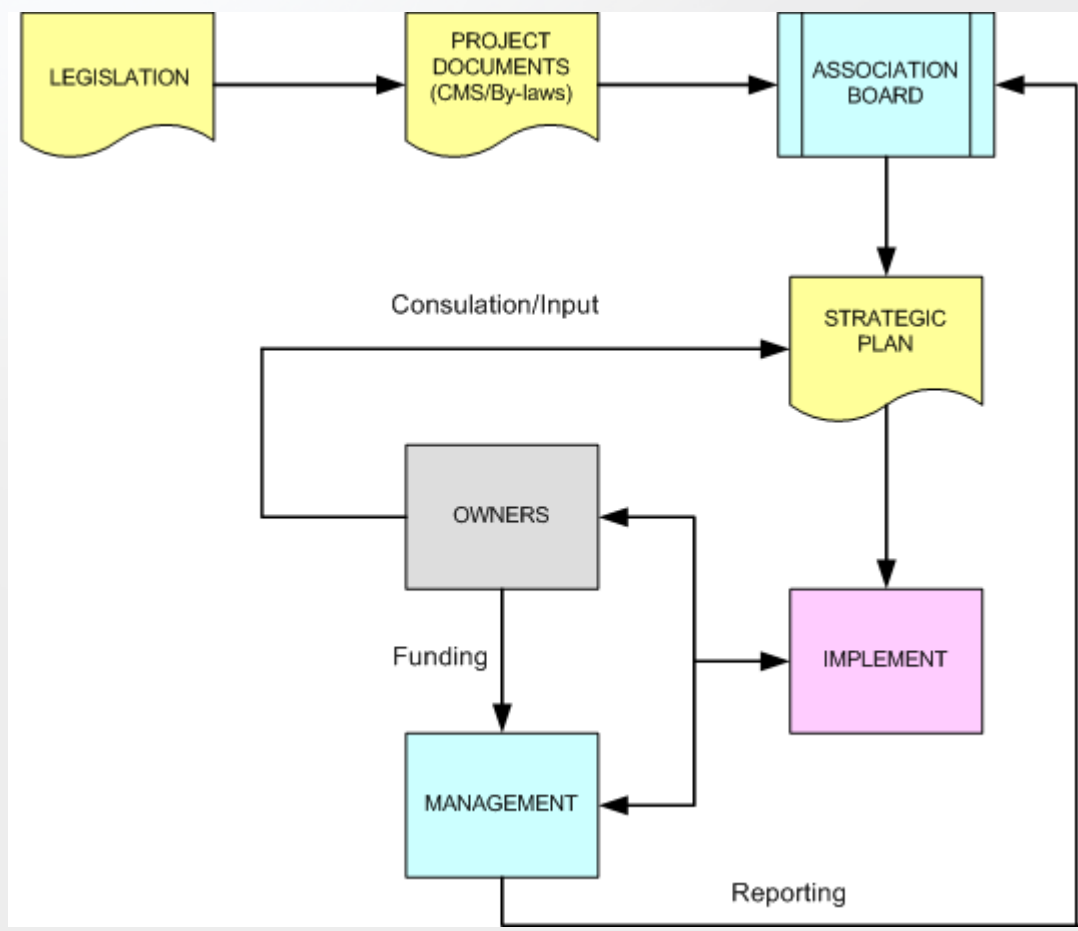
Children's activities

Active	Passive
Camping and fishing	Concerts
Summer camps	Movie nights
Skateboard competitions	Computer game nights
Sporting competitions	Book clubs
Blue light discos	Bingo nights
Sailing lessons	
Swimming carnival	

Building community – the process

Building community – strategic planning
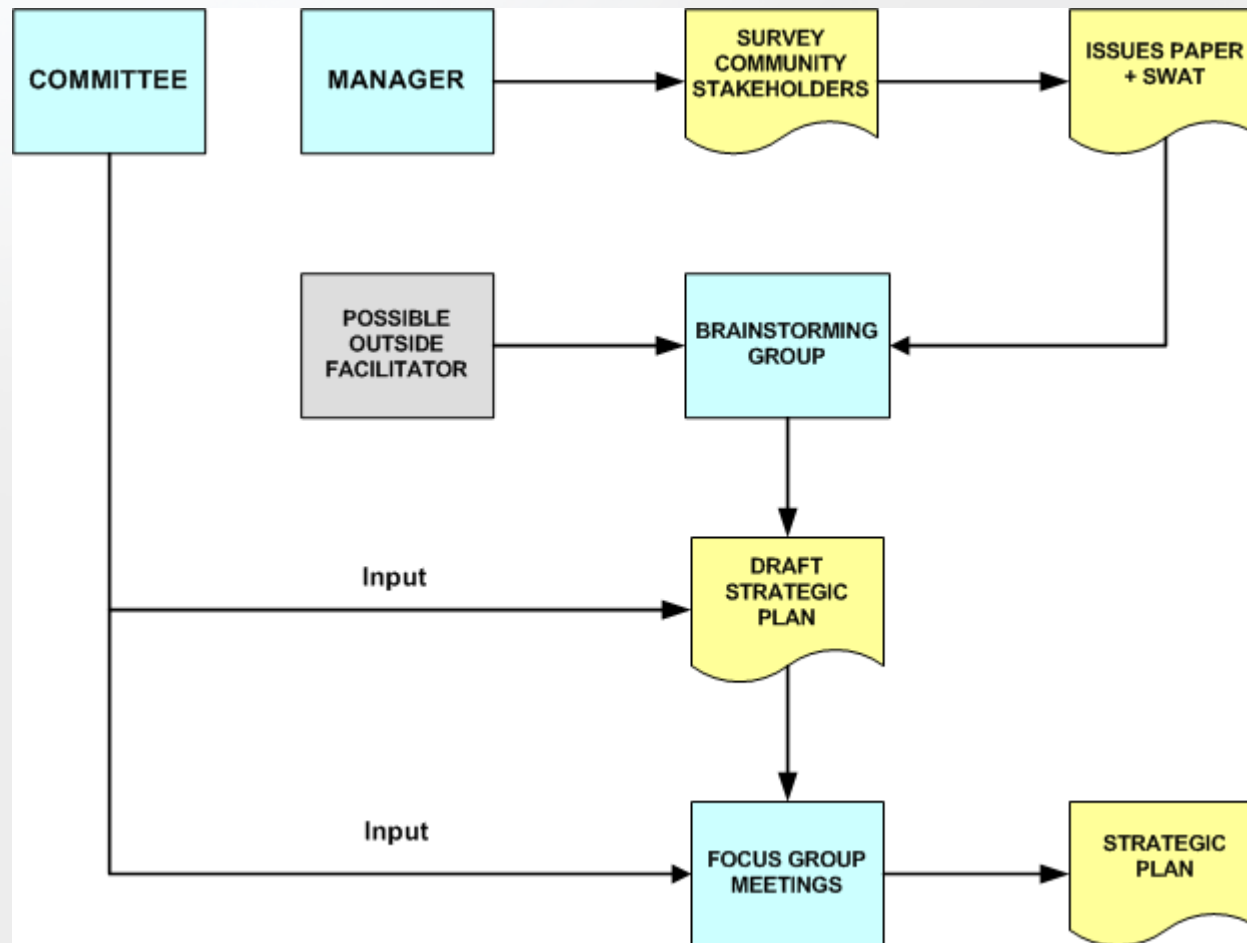
Summing up

- Community has to be created – it will not just happen
- Governance and management must "drive" the process
- Strategic planning is essential
- There must be communal facilities to support a range of recreational, educational and social activities
- There must be good lines and means of communication
- There must be adequate funding
- Must be genuine commitment by everyone involved
- Rewards are well worth the cost and effort

Further reading

- **Strata and Community Title in Australia for the 21st Century II Conference** – Paper on "Building Community" by Gary Bugden

- **Wikipedia** – Under "Community"

Building a Sense of Community
within community title bodies corporate

Monday 13 May 2013

Gary Bugden
gary@mystrata.com