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The Closing--Time to Wrap Things Up



It's time to schedule the closing.

What should be done in advance of the closing, to insure that things go smoothly at the settlement table.

Always endeavor to leave absolutely nothing for resolution at the closing. In some cases, there may be an economic issue or other matter that the parties have been struggling to resolve throughout the course of the transaction. In that case, the parties may have no choice but to resolve the open issue at the closing table. This approach must be used cautiously. I strongly recommend against raising material issues at the closing that have not been discussed before, unless you have no other choice. Last minute surprises have caused many a closing to adjourn and sometimes disintegrate into litigation.

There's a Limited Time Allocated to Your Closing

Weighing on the issue of resolving matters at the closing is the fact that both the managing agent and the representative of the buyer's bank have a limited time slot allocated to closing the transaction. If a closing lasts longer than two hours, without fail, the managing agent and the bank representative will start to get edgy and uncooperative. Sometimes the bank's loan closer will have to leave for another closing. After years of attending closings, my unequivocal advice is to do your best to avoid a "high noon" confrontation at your closing.

The "Twenty Year Rule"

Invariably, minor issues arise right before a closing that may cause one or both of the parties emotional distress. The buyer reneges on buying a wall unit or furniture, the seller really doesn't have a guaranteed parking space in the garage, the leak in the bathroom wasn't repaired as promised. Usually there's a cost involved that no one wants to incur. You get the picture. In the alternate universe of Manhattan, people can get really cranky about these types of issues, and sometimes, rightfully so. If it should happen to you, try applying my "Twenty Year Rule":

Will whatever I'm fighting about make any difference to me twenty years from today?

In most cases, the answer to the above query will be a resounding "no." Keep my *Twenty Year Rule* in mind if an issue arises before or at closing that might sour you on the whole experience.

Taking Care of it After Closing

On a final note, sometimes the parties agree to deliver a document or perform a task (like repairing a leaky sink) after the closing is concluded. An escrow of money may be held by one of the attorneys as incentive to get the item handled. Post-closing tasks should be avoided to the greatest extent possible. Once the closing is over, the unaffected party rapidly loses interest in the transaction. If an issue remains open, no matter how minor, you will often find it time-consuming and difficult to get the necessary cooperation after the closing. Not all post-closing items are difficult to complete, but as a strong general rule, the parties should endeavor not to leave anything to be accomplished once the checks and documents are exchanged.

Residential Reality: Sit Back, Relax and Enjoy the Show

A closing can be a very satisfying experience. Even when a transaction is difficult, when you finally get to the closing table, it almost always feels worthwhile. Although there are many hoops to jump through before the parties conclude the transaction, the above suggestions should make the process easier and more enjoyable.

For more about coop and condo basics, see [If You're Buying a Co-op](#)” and [If You're Buying a Condo](#)”.

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