

Braun & Rich

A Professional Corporation

Post-Closing Considerations

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Even though your closing has concluded, there are still a few considerations that are important to understand as property owners. Below you will find some helpful pointers that our clients find useful.

Real estate Taxes –

(If You Escrow with a Lender) - Your real estate taxes are paid by the lender. You will receive an original tax bill for the PIN(s) that affect the property, but you are not responsible for paying the tax bill(s). You are simply responsible for making sure that your lender has timely made the necessary payments. You can check the county treasurer's website and look up your tax payment status simply by entering your PIN(s). If your lender has not paid the taxes by their due date you need to contact the lender immediately and advise them of the outstanding taxes in order to make sure they have not missed anything on their end. If more than one PIN affects the property, such as a deeded parking space, it is possible the lender did not set up the payment process for both PINs to be paid. Double check this and also check that you are getting your homestead or other exemption on the taxbill (2nd installment in Cook County).

(If You Do Not Escrow) - As we explained at closing, you are responsible for payment of the real estate taxes that affect this property. You need to make sure that you have timely paid the tax bills or you face the possibility of incurring interest charges from the county and, if you continue not to pay, possible loss of the property at a tax sale. If you are not certain whether you paid the taxes, you can visit the county treasurer's website and type in your PIN(s) to view the status of the bills. If more than one PIN affects the property, such as a deeded parking space, it is possible the lender did not set up the payment process for both PINs to be paid. Double check this and also check that you are getting your homestead or other exemption on the tax bill (2nd installment in Cook County).

Changing Title - If your marital status changes or you wish to transfer title to the property in a land trust for privacy, we can assist you with that transaction. If you are simply looking to add your spouse to the title then we can prepare a deed and work with your title insurance company to make sure the title policy you received as part of the closing is not adversely affected. Additionally, we can work with land trust companies and prepare a land trust agreement in which you transfer the title from you personally into a land trust in which you decide who will be the beneficiary of the trust.

Real Estate Tax Appeals - Your taxes may not reflect the value of your property. They may be much higher than comparable properties. You may be interested in trying to appeal the taxes in order to lower your tax liability. We can refer you to attorneys that concentrate their practice to handle these kinds of matters. Check your Assessed Valuation on the county assessor's website. If you own a condominium, know that the association will protest the taxes as a group. It is more effective than protesting them individually.

Deed Solicitations – You will receive a solicitation from companies that want to send you a copy of your deed for \$89. Your deed will be mailed to you a few months after the closing and we can get you a copy any time you would like, so do not pay for this service.

Insurance – Be sure your insurance covers sewer backup where applicable, one of the most common claims made. This is not normally covered with a typical policy. Also, know the limits for mold and fungus and the like and be sure they are appropriate as well. You may also want to consider an umbrella policy that can provide extra coverage for home and auto liability claims.

Condominium Governance - Our firm also represents condominium associations in a variety of capacities. We can work with your association on updating documentation such as by-laws or the condominium declaration or even preparing revised budgets. If your association has not filed as a not-for-profit association or failed to file annual reports, then we can work on your behalf and prepare the necessary paperwork with the Secretary of State so that your association is in good standing and potential for liability by the board of directors is limited.

Home Maintenance – Every home requires maintenance. Do not wait until you have an issue before you perform routine yearly tasks. The best examples include gutter cleaning, furnace and AC cleaning in the spring and fall, checking carbon monoxide and smoke detectors and fire extinguisher, clean dryer vents of lint buildup, test sump pump and consider battery backup unit.

Estate Plan - You have just purchased a fairly large asset. This acquisition may have implications on your estate. We can refer you to trusted estate planning attorneys that can advise you on setting up the necessary estate planning tools, such as a will, trust, or even powers of attorney for health and property. Be sure that your property and wealth is transferred how you would prefer. More importantly, avoid unnecessary estate administration costs and stress on your loved ones and provide guardianships for children.

Self-Directed IRA Investing - The days of investing in the market as your exclusive option for your IRA are a thing of the past. The tax law now allows you to take your IRA funds and invest them in real estate as well. Provided you strictly comply with the IRS tax code, buying an investment property in a self directed IRA is a potentially advantageous way to use retirement savings in a non-standard format. We work with companies specializing in establishing self-directed IRAs and can assist in the necessary steps to get this started for you.

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