

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

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DATE	17 May 2000
TO/DEST.	Co-ordinator Community Services Committee
FROM/EXP.	A/Director of Social Housing
SUBJECT/OBJET	OTTAWA-CARLETON HOUSING (OCH) BOARD: COMPOSITION AND APPOINTMENTS

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council defer any decision regarding the composition of the OCH Board or filling the existing vacancy until the future ownership and governance of the public housing stock is determined, and that this decision be communicated to the Chair of the Board.

BACKGROUND

The Region of Ottawa-Carleton is currently responsible for nominating nine of the thirteen members of the Ottawa Carleton Housing (OCH) Board. The remaining four members are federal nominations. With the signing of the federal/provincial Social Housing Agreement, it is expected that the Region will be responsible for nominating all thirteen members.

In the spring of 1999, the OCH Board comprised five Regional Councillors and eight members from the community at large. At that time notice was received from the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that the first terms of four community members, all nominated by the Region, had expired. All four were eligible for reappointment; three expressed interest in sitting a second term. With the advent of vacancies, the issue of the composition of the OCH Board came to be considered by the Region's Social Housing Working Group (SWHG). This group, comprised of Regional Councillors and staff as well as tenants and other members of the social housing community, recommended that the next four OCH Board appointments be tenants resident in OCH accommodation to complement the existing membership drawn from Regional Council and the community at large. At its meeting of 8 July 1999, Community Services Committee approved this recommendation.

Subsequent to this approval, OCH undertook a process to select tenant Board nominees for consideration by the Region. The names of three successful candidates were brought to the 16 September 1999 meeting of Community Services Committee with the recommendation that they be appointed. After discussion, Committee moved that:

this item be referred to the Board of OCH, for amendment to the selection process to allow for election to the Board by the tenants, similar to the procedures employed by City Living.

The Region has received two communications from OCH following the Committee decision to refer the issue of tenant nominations back to OCH. The first requests the appointment of a tenant to fill the current Board vacancy and advises that the Board has formed an ad hoc committee to review its composition and candidate selection process. The second communicates a Board resolution respecting its composition and responsibility for the selection process, passed on 24 January 2000, as follows:

RESOLVED that the Board of Ottawa-Carleton Housing be composed of 13 Members comprised of four Councillors, four OCH tenants, four representatives from the public at large, and a Chair. The Chair is to be appointed by the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

The Terms of Office would be two consecutive terms of three years each, for a total of not more than six consecutive years. The appointment of Councillors will be restricted to their term of office. Members may not miss three consecutive meetings unless special circumstances exist.

The Region will have sole responsibility for recruiting, selecting, and nominating all appointments to the Board. Background and experience of candidates should include legal, or administration, or finance, or business, or social services, or tenant association involvement.

DISCUSSION

The above resolution comes from OCH at a time when the future of the public housing portfolio is undecided. It appears that the Province will soon be tabling legislation to address the transfer of social housing administrative responsibilities to the CMSMs and the future ownership of public housing. At the same time, the Board of the Ontario Housing Corporation is reviewing a number of initiatives including the sale of single and semi-detached public housing units and alternative service delivery for property management functions for OCH, as the local housing authority. This is being undertaken prior to any decision about the future ownership and management of public housing. Decisions could be forthcoming within the next few months.

There is currently one vacancy on the OCH Board. Nominating a tenant to that position without evidence that OCH has undertaken an election process 'similar to the procedures employed by City Living' would be inconsistent with the earlier Committee directive. Three of the four members who became eligible for reappointment last year continue to sit on the Board and may do so until an Order in Council is passed either re-appointing or replacing them. It should be noted that the current terms of the other five Regional appointees, all Councillors, and one Federal appointee, expire in either May or July 2000, but they too may continue to sit on the Board until replaced or formally re-appointed. The current Chair continues on the Board through an extension of his final term to September 2000.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consultation on the broader issues of the ownership and governance of OCH is being undertaken in the context of the development of recommendations by Social Housing staff respecting the future administration and governance of social housing in the CMSM.

CONCLUSION

It is considered premature to make decisions about either the OCH Board composition or the process for the recruitment of Board members, in the absence of decisions regarding the future ownership and governance of the public housing stock. It should, nevertheless, be noted that the composition proposed by OCH is consistent with the earlier recommendation of the Social Housing Working Group and with the view that OCH would benefit from the participation of key stakeholders in its decision making process.

*Approved by
Marni Cappe
A/Director of Social Housing*