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Chair & Members
Executive Committee
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen St. West
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January 22, 2014

Re: EX 2.1 Council Advisory Bodies for the 2014 to 2018 Term of City Council

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to request that the Committee consider the accompanying recommendations requesting EX 2.1 be amended to also establish a Tenants Issues Committee for the 2014 to 2018 term of City Council.

Tenants make up over 50% of Toronto's residents and have specific rights and responsibilities that are governed by City of Toronto by-laws and provincial legislation. Tenants have the right to live in a clean, well-maintained home and deserve fair representation when being faced with unfair rent increases or eviction.

Between 1999 and 2010, the City had a subcommittee that discussed and made recommendations on tenant issues to the Community Development and Recreation Committee. This sub-committee was revived by Councillor Davis in 2013. The sub-committee's mandate was to look at reports from staff on the Tenant Defence Fund, receive reports on the "automatic rent reduction" related to property assessment, provide opportunities for tenants to comment on staff reports that come before Committee and Council on issues that affect tenants such as Tower Renewal, and provide advice on provincial policy and legislative changes affecting tenants in Toronto for the purpose of informing a City position or submission.

While I support all of the subject areas under the sub-committee's purview, there are many issues affecting tenants that report through other committees including Planning & Growth Management and Licensing & Standards. That's why I'm proposing the establishment of a Tenants Issues Committee with an expanded mandate that reports directly to Executive Committee to reflect the cross-jurisdictional nature of tenants' issues.

Thank you for your consideration.

Recommendations

1. City Council establish a Tenant Issues Committee with the Terms of Reference attached in Appendix A

Appendix A

Tenant Issues Committee Terms of Reference

A. Purpose

1. Tenants make up over 50% of Toronto's residents and have specific rights and responsibilities that are governed by City of Toronto by-laws and provincial legislation. The Tenant Issues Committee will receive input from tenants and City staff toward improving conditions for Toronto renters.
2. The mandate of the Tenant Issues Advisory Committee is to:
 - Receive reports from staff on the disposition of the Tenant Defence Fund grants and outcomes related to above-guideline rent applications and other uses of the grants
 - Receive reports on the "automatic rent reduction" related to property assessment
 - Provide advice on the service levels for the Tenant Defence Fund
 - Receive input and provide advice on property standards by-laws and enforcement including audits performed as part of the Multi-Residential Apartment Buildings (MRAB) program
 - Receive input and advice on City of Toronto and Provincial policies regarding planning matters including infill development on rental properties
 - Provide opportunities for tenants to comment on staff reports that come before Committee and Council on issues that affect tenants such as Tower Renewal and other tenant related initiatives
 - Provide advice on provincial policy and legislative changes affecting tenants in Toronto for the purpose of informing a City position or submission

B. Membership and Term

1. The Tenant Issues Committee will have a membership of up to 6 members of Council
2. The Members of City Council, including the Chair, will be appointed by City Council on the recommendation of the Striking Committee
3. Members are appointed for a two-year term or until their mandate is complete, whichever comes first.

C. Governance

1. The Tenant Issues Committee will provide its advice to City Council through the Executive Committee
2. The Tenant Issues Committee will meet two to four times a year at the call of the Chair
3. The City Clerk's Office will provide meeting management support to the Committee
4. City Divisions including Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDF), Municipal Licensing & Standards (ML&S), Shelter, Support, and Housing (SSHA), and City Planning will provide policy-related staff support to the Committee