

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Executive Committee](#)
Subject: FW: OCHE ----RE EX17.2 Implementing Tenants First 2020 Action Executive Committee October 21/2020
Date: October 20, 2020 11:41:53 AM
Attachments: [OCHE.pdf](#)

I am respectfully submitting comments for distribution to Committee and Council

EX 17.2 Implementing Tenants First 2020 Action Updates
Executive Committee October 21, 2020.

I am a tenant at TCHC. I have lived in TCHC for ten years, in one of the best buildings in the City.
I have been an active member of numerous committees including The Charter for TCHC.
I have been Chair of Seniors Voice an advocacy group for Seniors within Housing
I am presently Chair of SAAC SENIOR ADVISORY AND ADVOCACY COUNCIL

I have been a volunteer in Housing, Health and Transportation for many years.

In my years of volunteering and advocacy, I have had the pleasure of meeting numerous Councillors, Staff at the City and Housing. During this time I have been able to work effectively and passionately for the Citizens of Toronto.

It is now imperative that Tenants have an autonomous department, to go to where they are treated with respect and not judged, but are helped to avoid eviction. I am asking Committee and Council, to read the attachment in order that the real impact is related.

We do not have anywhere to go to when facing eviction or hardship except for The Commissioner of Equity. Staff in Housing, adds stress to our lives not assistance, but the Office of The Commissioner of Equity allows us to have successful tenancies.

We need the Commissioner of Equity to stand for us, and her position should only answer to Council or the Mayor.

Respectfully

Anita Dressler
Chair SAAC Senior Advisory and Advocacy Council
[REDACTED]

DEPUTATION OCHE October 19/20

A few years ago I gave a deputation on the reasons that tenants need OCHE, this was given at City Hall before Mayor Tory and several Councillors.

Councillor Paula Fletcher took great interest in my opinions on the matter.

I am not going to give you the same deputation but what I have observed in the last couple of years, as Chair of Seniors Voice and now Chair of SAAC (Senior Advisory and Advocacy Council)

Tenants First has been charged with a lot of responsibility, which will affect tenants for many years to come.

I would like you to take a few minutes and imagine that you are a tenant, who is scared and overwhelmed. You are behind in your rent and no one is helping you. You will soon be either in a shelter or on the street. You soon become depressed at the thought. You are afraid to leave your apartment for a trip to the food bank or to the Doctors in case someone locks you out and you lose the few possessions that you have.

In a City like Toronto, it is hard to imagine the number of desperate people who are down on their luck.

Now stop imagining the fear and the overwhelming feeling. You might not even be able to imagine the scenario, that I put forward as you work hard, but you live comfortably. As a young child I was taught the phrase "By the Grace of God there Go I" I never forgot this phrase and made me more aware of the plight of others.

OCHE is not a nicety to be shoved anywhere in The City or TCHC it is essential for tenants.

OCHE under the direction of The Commissioner of Equity should be autonomous (freedom of contact or influence and independent)

In my advocacy I have referred numerous tenants to OCHE, for assistance. These tenants were treated with respect and arrangements were made. Today those tenants are living in their apartments without fear of eviction. They are giving back to TCHC as they volunteer to help others. One person who I referred to OCHE, thought that he could beat the system and would not cooperate with the OCHE team, has been evicted and is couch surfing and soon will be on the streets. He contacted me recently and said that he was a fool, that when the OCHE team tried to help him he did not listen. He told me that he was scared of shelters and knew that he would die in the streets. He now understands too late that OCHE is an important element to tenants.

I am asking you to please consider the following:

OCHE not be made part of another department of the City i.e. Shelter and Housing nor the TCHC. Please let it be independent and be able to act with autonomy. OCHE should be accountable and I would suggest to either, The Mayor or City Council. Tenants First, please do the right thing. **Remember**, many tenants are afraid of staff, have been ignored, have been embarrassed and have been treated not equally or with equity. **Let's do this right.**

Thank you

Stay safe and well

Respectfully submitted

Anita Dressler
Chair SAAC Senior Advisory and Advocacy Council