

Selection of Candidates for Interview for the Housing Rights Advisory Committee

Date: October 30, 2023

To: Civic Appointments Committee

From: City Clerk

Wards: All

REASON FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

This report deals with personal matters about identifiable individuals who are being considered for appointment to the Housing Rights Advisory Committee.

SUMMARY

The Civic Appointments Committee must select candidates to interview for appointment to the Housing Rights Advisory Committee. Following the interviews, the Civic Appointments Committee will recommend eleven candidates, including one as Chair, for appointment to City Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Clerk recommends that:

1. The Civic Appointments Committee select 22 of the candidates listed in Table 1 of Confidential Attachment 1 for interview at its next meeting for appointment to the Housing Rights Advisory Committee.
2. The Civic Appointments Committee direct that the confidential information contained in Confidential Attachment 1 remains confidential in its entirety as it relates to personal matters about identifiable individuals currently appointed or being considered for appointment to the Housing Rights Advisory Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on May 10, 11 and 12, 2023, City Council amended the Terms of Reference for the Housing Rights Advisory Committee:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM6.28>.

At its meeting on March 29, 30 and 31, 2023, City Council adopted the Terms of Reference for the Housing Rights Advisory Committee:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.CC5.6>.

At its meeting on July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022, City Council adopted a series of recommendations to establish the role or function of a Housing Commissioner for the City of Toronto. This included direction to City staff to report to City Council with a proposed Terms of Reference for a new Council Advisory Committee to support the City's goals set out in the Toronto Housing Charter and HousingTO Plan for the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.7>.

At its meeting of December 17-18, 2019 City Council adopted PH11.5 "HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan" as the framework to address Toronto's housing and homelessness challenges by 2030. This Plan includes a number of actions and targets to address critical needs across the housing spectrum. This also included the adoption of a revised Housing Charter, committing the City to advance the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing. The City Council decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH11.5>

COMMENTS

Advancing the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Housing in Toronto

In 2019, City Council adopted the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, which sets a blueprint for action across the housing continuum. This plan is informed by a human rights-based approach to housing, and was built on significant engagement with Indigenous peoples, residents, and stakeholders. Council also adopted a revised Housing Charter which commits the City to the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing, as affirmed in international law.

One strategic action identified in the HousingTO Plan concerns the establishment of a role or function of a Housing Commissioner for the City, to

- independently assess implementation of the Housing Charter and the HousingTO plan, and

- Ensure the City, within its legislative authorities, and through implementation of various programs and policies, is taking concrete actions to combat systematic housing discrimination and address systemic hurdles in the housing system.

In July, 2022, City Council adopted a report from the City Manager providing a series of recommended actions to advance this strategic action and establish the role or function of a housing commissioner. This report was informed by research, jurisdictional and governance analysis, and engagement undertaken by independent consultants, with over 150 individuals and organizations. This included consultation with people with lived experience of housing precarity and homelessness, Indigenous communities, Black and racialized communities, housing and tenant rights groups, accessibility advocates, legal aid organizations, and housing and shelter service providers.

A key recommendation of the City Manager's report was to establish a new Council Advisory Committee to provide direct advice to Council from community members with lived experience of housing instability, as well as academics and advocates with expertise in human rights related to housing. This body would be independent of the public service and enable a range of voices and expertise to advise Council on the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

Composition of the Housing Rights Advisory Committee

In March, 2023 and May, 2023, Council adopted and amended the [Terms of Reference](#) for the new Housing Rights Advisory Committee. Per these Terms of Reference, the Housing Rights Advisory Committee will be composed of 12 members:

- 1 Member of City Council
- 11 Public Members.

The public members will include:

- At least 4 members with a diversity of lived/living experience of housing precarity, discrimination, living in social or supportive housing and/or homelessness;
- 7 representatives of organizations working in such fields as (but not limited to) housing services, health (including mental health) services, substance and harm reduction services, legal services, community services (including newcomer, people with disabilities, youth and senior services) or organizations focused on research related to poverty reduction, housing and/or human rights;
- At least 2 between the ages of 18 and 33;
- At least 2 who self-identify as a person with a disability;
- At least 2 who have lived experience and/or expertise in social barriers impacting Black communities and reflect the diversity of Black communities;
- At least 2 who self-identify as First Nations, Inuit or Metis;
- At least 4 who self-identify as women;
- At least 2 who self-identify as being from the 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Responsibilities outlined in the Terms of Reference

The mandate of the Housing Rights Advisory Committee is to provide advice to City Council:

- a) on policies, programs and actions that the City can implement to advance its commitment to furthering the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing in Toronto based on housing and human rights expertise, lived experiences of housing precarity, discrimination and homelessness, and academic research and learnings from other jurisdictions;
- b) to ensure that the interests and needs of those with living/lived experiences of housing precarity, discrimination and homelessness are reflected in City programs and service delivery
- c) to support the City's engagement with Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities, including those with living/lived experiences and using an intersectional equity approach, in order to help identify systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing and maintaining adequate housing, and to recommend actions to remove such barriers;
- d) on advocacy and communications with other orders of government to recommend actions that they can take to address systemic barriers to adequate housing which lie outside of municipal jurisdiction;
- e) by independently monitoring progress of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan's implementation through publicly available data, within the Advisory Committee's capacity to do so.

In addition, members will take an intersectional approach to the work of the Advisory Committee in support of and aligned with the City's commitments to Indigenous Peoples advanced through the City's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) from 2022 to 2032; and with the City's commitments to confronting anti-Black racism in Toronto advanced through the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism in 2017.

Eligibility

The Public Appointments Policy requires that appointed members must:

- Be residents of Toronto;
- Be at least 18 years of age (the age of majority in Ontario);
- Not be a member City staff or an employee of City agencies and corporations;
- Not be a relative of current Members of Council.

Recommended qualifications

To meet the Committee's mandate, staff recommend that, in addition to the general eligibility requirements set out in the Public Appointments Policy and the composition requirements outlined in the Terms of Reference, membership should be comprised of individuals and organizational representatives who collectively demonstrate a range of lived / living experience, skills and qualifications, including:

- A strong interest in progressive advancement of the right to adequate housing and the rights of people experiencing housing precarity, discrimination and/or homelessness;
- Expertise in a human rights-based approach to housing and understanding of international laws and frameworks establishing the right to adequate housing;
- Knowledge and awareness of the function of different levels of government and intergovernmental roles and responsibilities related to housing;

- Knowledge of the academic research related to a human rights-based approach to housing and housing policy and/or learnings from other jurisdictions;
- Experience in communication, decision-making, community advocacy;
- Experience or skills in navigating sensitive discussions in a public environment, facilitating respectful dialogue, and fostering a welcoming and safe space for diverse experiences to be shared.

There are eleven public positions under consideration

This being the inaugural Housing Rights Advisory Committee, all eleven public positions are open for appointment.

Term of Office

Public members of Council Advisory Bodies are appointed for a term coincident with the term of City Council. The advisory committee will meet until the completion of its mandate or the end of the current City Council term, ending on November 14, 2026, whichever comes first.

Coordination with the Housing Secretariat and City Staff

The Public Appointments Secretariat has and continues to work closely with Housing Secretariat staff to ensure the appointment process meets the requirements of the Terms of Reference for the Housing Rights Advisory Committee. Other City divisions consulted and involved include: Strategic Public and Employee Communications, the Indigenous Affairs Office, and People and Equity.

Outreach

The opportunity to join the Housing Rights Advisory Committee was included in a city-wide outreach campaign jointly developed and implemented by the Housing Secretariat, Public Appointments Secretariat, and Strategic Public and Employee Communications. The call for applications opened on September 8, 2023 and applications were received for a period of 6 weeks.

Promotion included: online ads; social media posts on Instagram and LinkedIn; outreach via the Public Appointments e-update list; a City news release; promotion on relevant job and volunteer boards; sharing through the networks of the Housing Secretariat, People and Equity, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, and the Indigenous Affairs Office.

Next steps - Interviews

Once the Civic Appointments Committee has selected candidates for interviews, the City Clerk's Office will contact the candidates to schedule them for 15-minute interviews. 22 interviews plus deliberations will take approximately 7 hours to complete.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

John D. Elvidge
City Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Confidential Attachment 1 – List of Candidates, Qualifications, Confidential Diversity Information Summary, and Applications for Appointment to the Housing Rights Advisory Committee