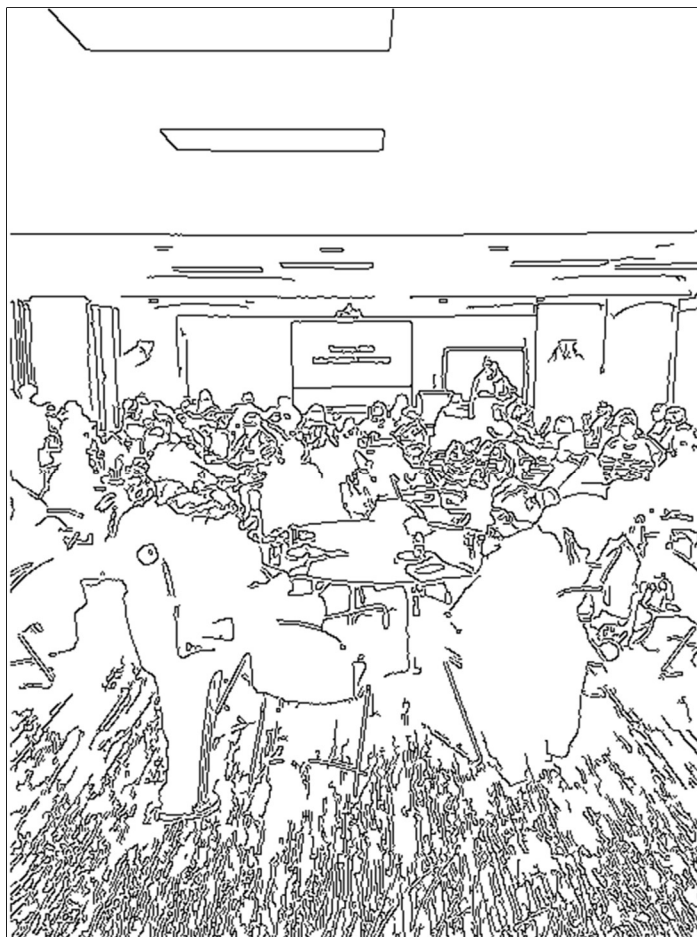


Putting Tenants First

Implementing Tenants First: TCHC Scattered Portfolio Plan and an Interim Selection Process
for Tenant Directors on the TCHC Board

February 2018



Record of discussion at Tenants First information meetings

Metro Hall, 19 January 2018

North York Civic Centre, 20 January 2018

Scarborough Civic Centre, 22 January 2018



Toronto Community Housing



OVERVIEW OF TENANTS FIRST INFORMATION MEETINGS

The comments in this Record of Discussion were collected during three information meetings held by the Tenants First Project Management Office with tenants of Toronto Community Housing in January 2018. The purpose of these information meetings was to:

- Inform tenants of the recommended actions to be considered by Council
- Inform tenants of the proposed interim process to select Tenant Directors for the Toronto Community Housing Board of Directors

128 people attended these information meetings. The comments in this Record of Discussion were recorded during small group discussions, facilitated by members of the Tenants First Tenant Advisory Panel, along with Tenants First staff. Attendees were asked three questions:

- How should we connect with tenants in scattered housing?
- What support should be made available to tenants who want to apply to be a Tenant Director through the interim process?
- In future, how should tenants be involved in the process to select Tenant Directors?

Ideas and comments generated through these discussions have been grouped into themes. Tenants' ideas will be used to help guide engagement with tenants about changes in scattered housing and the interim process to select Tenant Directors. These comments will also guide the development of a new process to select Tenant Directors.

A copy of the presentation given at the information meetings, and the poster advertising the information meetings, are attached to this document.

MEETING ONE – METRO HALL

QUESTION ONE: How should we connect with tenants in scattered housing?

Connecting with individual households

- Individual delivery of necessary information to each and every scattered house.
- Go door-to-door, because human contact is critical.
 - People should be paid (with an honorarium) to speak to residents in each home, in person, to see if scattered tenants are informed.
 - Use volunteer teams to knock door to door.
- Use email, online information, and a forum for tenants on the website.
- Send "loud mail" or a letter with the tenant's name.
- Call tenants on the phone.
- Flier under a glass case with a locked door.

Connecting tenants to each other

- Invite tenants to City Hall for Saturday lunch. Three meetings for 220 tenants each.
- Hold community events in parks across the four parts of the City.
- Communicate through local councillors.
- Establish communication hubs by area. Every group of scattered stand-alone homes should be allowed to organise, using the same geographic areas as existing TCHC operating units. Select a group leader for scattered housing via phone calls.

Other comments

- When tenants move in, the best form of communication should be decided.
- Keep the scattered houses within TCHC but increase funding so that funding is comparable to non-profits and cooperatives. TCHC units get less money per unit compared to non-profits and co-ops.
- Provide a caveat that tenants will not lose their homes in the transition.
- Fold scattered housing tenants into the closest community for participatory budgeting, electing a tenant representative etc.

QUESTION TWO: What support should be made available to tenants who want to apply to be a Tenant Director through the interim process?

Informing tenants about the interim process

- Put information and the application process on the website.
- Provide information in many formats.
- Hold general information meetings in the four parts of the City.
- Hold centralised information meetings.
- We need better communication and longer timeframe.
- Mailing is expensive but the only guaranteed way to get information to tenants.
- Use standard TCHC support mechanisms.
- Posters get removed from walls so create a brochure which can be put under the door.
- Use fax machines.

- Create newsletters.

Supporting tenants to apply

- Hold an orientation night which sets out the responsibilities of Tenant Directors, and the kinds of topics that the Board will make decisions on.
- Applicants should be required to attend an orientation session to get an application form.
- Offer education about the role of the TCHC Board – being a Tenant Director is a business position not an advocacy position. Explain that the City controls TCHC through the Shareholder Direction.
- Let applicants know the requirements of the position. Inform applicants about the amount of reading required; time for preparation; time required for meetings (two meetings a month). It takes 2-3 hours to prepare for a Board meeting, and 2 hours to prepare for a committee meeting.
- Applicants should be required to attend a TCHC Board meeting, and should be aware that all meetings are held during work hours.
- Provide a physical place to go and apply for people not comfortable with using the internet.
- Applicants require internet access and a way to submit a paper application.
- Use interpreters and translation to provide information in many languages.
- Provide a phone number for candidates to call.
- Provide sources of information on housing. Compile a glossary to explain terms that not everyone understands.
- Create a secure website for 'techies' – perhaps 10% of tenants?
- In-person coaching.

Supporting the new Tenant Directors

- Tenant Directors should be provided with the tools required to do the job – cellphone, tablet etc.
- Educate Tenant Directors about Code of Conduct, confidentiality requirements, Ontario Business Corporations Act etc.
- Tenant Directors need to be educated in how City Hall manipulates democracy.
- Former Board members could provide mentorship and training.

Other comments

- Education for tenant representatives and anybody who plays a governance role in TCHC.
- Scrap the interim process as this is incompatible with the Tenant Charter that states "All tenants will have the opportunity to vote for positions in TCH's Tenant Engagement system".
- Every floor should have a representative.

QUESTION THREE: In future, how should tenants be involved in the process to select Tenant Directors?

Tenants need to be kept informed

- Tenants are missing out on information.
- Get the superintendent involved – give them responsibility for informing tenants.

- Make the superintendent position less transitory – keep them in the same community longer so that they can become a hub for information. Continuity of information from one superintendent to the next superintendent. Keep superintendents for longer – they are our only access to information.
- Make it easier for tenants to be informed of meetings and opportunities to participate.
- Information should be marked "urgent" - but be aware that tenants don't read letters from TCHC.

Tenants need to be involved in designing and implementing the new process

- We need more tenant involvement. Don't come to tenants with the process already fully-baked. Tenants should not just give input but be involved in implementing the process.
- Look at models that already exist and can be adapted or learnt from. What are the best systems?
- Use surveys with tenants.

We want more Tenant Directors on the Board

- There should be equal representation of tenants and other members on the Board.
- A minimum of four Tenant Directors, alongside four Councillors, which will make tenants equal to one third of the Board
- There should be fewer City councillors on the Board – but we need to recognise that the City is a stakeholder.
- How can we represent the diverse cultures within TCHC communities on the Board?

Who should be eligible to stand as a Tenant Director on the Board?

- The Tenant Directors should be selected from community leaders or tenant representatives. Community leaders are ignored under the current system.
- Priority should be given to longer-term tenants.
- The pool of eligible applicants should be wider than tenant representatives – open it up to all tenants. All tenants should be able to stand if they are eligible.

What kinds of experience should Tenant Directors have?

- Successful applicants should have previous experience on boards in private industry and associations. Applicants should have the knowledge to deal with business, and social experience.
- Experience in dealing with City Councils. Experience working with an organisation, including knowledge of boards and community boards.
- Tenants Directors need an ability to talk to tenants.
- Tenant Directors should represent the interests of tenants, not the interests of Toronto Community Housing.
- "We hope that representatives have commitment to the task; communication skills; and compassion born of their experience"

All tenants should be involved in the process

- Tenants should be involved at every step, and every decision should be clearly defined. We need vastly better communications from Toronto Community Housing, from top to bottom.

- Maximum inclusion across entire tenant population. We want empowerment rather than engagement!
- Before all elections, ALL tenants should be informed at least one month in advance. Then, the tenants in the area should meet to discuss and decide on the process. Tenants should learn about the required qualifications for the Board, and nominate. It is up to Toronto Community Housing to provide meeting space.
- All tenants, as stated in the Tenant Charter, should vote – not a select few.
- Under the existing system, volunteers review resumes to select candidates for election by all tenants.
- Get tenants in the loop first. Decide representation by percentage. Every tenant gets an opportunity to vote. Create a back-up system for missing or delinquent Board members.
- If all tenants can vote, there needs to be a lot of information available.

What changes should be made to how the Board operates?

- All meetings are currently held during work hours. There could be evening meetings, or meetings could be held at a variety of times. Alternate between morning, daytime, and evenings.
- There is a disconnect between the Board and tenants. The Board should hold working meetings in buildings and talk about priorities.
- Alternative Tenant Directors should attend all meetings (including in-camera meetings).

Connections with the Toronto Community Housing engagement process

- What is the new engagement process? That must be addressed first.
- Weekly slots of time during office hours for tenants to drop in and talk to TCHC executives.
- Engage tenant leaders.
- Tenant representatives should consult tenants. Need to ensure that tenant representatives are passing information up and down.
- Develop the future process through the Tenant Engagement system.
- Tenants should run tenant engagement with outside hired support. The tenants should choose the consultant.
- Training is #1.

Other comments

- Define 'permanent' process?
- Many community leaders are not formal tenant representatives.

"We appreciate this opportunity to give feedback. Thanks for hearing us and implementing our best ideas. We five thank you" – Feedback from one table.

MEETING TWO – NORTH YORK CIVIC CENTRE

QUESTION TWO: What support should be made available to tenants who want to apply to be a Tenant Director through the interim process?

Informing tenants about the interim process

- Tenants have no idea of the process for tenant elections. We need guidance from someone who has knowledge of the process to elect Tenant Directors.
- Advertise. Ensure information is posted in buildings. There should be BIG POSTERS announcing the process.
- Overcome language barriers by translating posters. City and TCHC need to be sending information in multiple languages.
- We need to reach people who don't have access to computers.
- Superintendents should post information on doors, and in the lobby.
- Ideas for communication: Lobby intercepts; Community Service Coordinators and their managers to reach out; tenant reps to inform tenants; accountability for tenant reps; inform tenants through the mail.

Supporting tenants to apply

- Providing a short timeframe of three weeks to apply is challenging.
- Create a list of expectations for Tenant Directors and a list of qualifications to be eligible.
- TTC runs a similar process to select people for their Advisory Panel. People are notified of the opportunity. There is an information session, Q&A, help to fill out applications, and staff stay as long as necessary to answer all questions. TTC vets the applications, and then interviews. Ten people are interviewed for five positions.
- Anyone who is interested should be able to find out information about rules and expectations. Information is needed on requirements, for example what experience is required. Provide a detailed job description.
- For fairness, any help provided to applicants should be limited to help with physically writing, reading, and reviewing for completeness.
- Hold information sessions so applications can be fully explained. Provide interpreters and ASL translators. Tenants should be able to bring someone to help them understand. Provide a station set up with laptops to apply.
- Explain the rules. Simplify by using layman's terms.
- Provide a phone number to speak to someone. Make assistance available over the phone to help fill out applications.
- Create opportunities for one-on-one discussion.
- Provide an option to mail-in applications.
- Be flexible.

Supporting the new Tenant Directors

- Provide training on the Shareholder Direction.
- Use past Board members as mentors.

QUESTION THREE: In future, how should tenants be involved in the process to select Tenant Directors?

Tenants need to be involved in designing and implementing the new process

- People need to be involved from the outset, before decisions are made.
- Tenants voices must be HEARD!!!!
- Tenants should have input into the application process.
- Create a community process. Allocate budget for this process (for example, community outreach and honorariums)

We want more Tenant Directors on the Board

- Increase the number of Tenant Directors – one for each area of the city (East, Central and West).

All tenants should be involved in the process

- Make sure ALL TENANTS have opportunity to vote for the Tenant Directors, consistent with the Tenant Charter. Educate ALL tenants on the process of applying for the Board.
- Ask Community Service Coordinators and managers to identify and support potential tenant representatives to stand for the Board of Directors.
- Tenants should be the gate-keepers of the process!!!
- Tenants should be vigilant in making sure all information is sent to all households.
- We need space for large group meetings.

We need to reduce barriers to voting

- Polling stations need to be accessible.
- Bring ballot boxes to locations, for example tenant council meetings.

What should the new process involve?

- Candidates could provide written profiles of what they have to offer.
- Hold Town Hall meetings for Q&A.
- Hold panel discussions, and a debate for finalists.
- Voting process should be done by an independent organisation (the City).
- Applications should be vetted by outgoing Board members.
- Provide training.

What changes should be made to how the Board operates?

- Make Alternate Directors part of meetings, because this would use the experience of the outgoing directors.
- Stagger the terms of Tenant Directors.

Connections with the Toronto Community Housing engagement process

- The election for two Tenant Directors should be held at the same time as elections for tenant representatives.
- Create Tenant Associations.

Other comments

- The Mayor's Taskforce recommendations don't seem to be connected to the current recommendations?
- Things are happening that are violating the principles of respect, equity, and equality enshrined in the Tenant Charter.
- Tenants need more time and better notice before reports are considered by Executive Committee, to give people opportunities to depute.
- Tenants need more notification before meetings to give sufficient time to book WheelTrans.
- Meeting locations must be in fully accessible places, and have accessible washrooms.
- Include tenants in the West!

MEETING THREE – SCARBOROUGH CIVIC CENTRE

QUESTION ONE: How should we connect with tenants in scattered housing?

Connecting with individual households

- Email for people with computers, phone, direct mail-outs to tenants using (snail)mail
- Tenants provided a current telephone number for rent review.
- Hold public meetings at centrally located places – for example, community centres in different regions.
- Drop off information into mailbox (but not too much – not for every small issue).
- Create phone apps.
- Create face-to-face opportunities – talk to tenants.
- Public announcements – use the media (for example, CP24). A lot of people will see content on television – TCHC should have an hour on TV.
- Involve the Mayor or Mayor's Housing Advocate.
- Create a newsletter but be aware that a lot of people will throw them out, especially people who are not English-speaking.
- Display information on information racks.

Connecting tenants to each other

- Form our own 'hub' associations of scattered housing.
- Go door-knocking with volunteers!
- Use tenant reps as spokespeople.
- Use Social media for younger residents.
- Create a community newsletter, and community event bulletins.
- Use community centres, community advocacy groups (senior, family, multi-cultural), and food banks.

QUESTION TWO: What support should be made available to tenants who want to apply to be a Tenant Director through the interim process?

Informing tenants about the interim process

- Break down language barriers by communicating in different languages. Posters in lobbies in different languages. Community Service Coordinators should know information about which languages are dominant in each building – this should be on file. Applications could also be translated.
- Tenants may be isolated and feel like it's difficult to attend.
- More time is needed for the process.
- Use the internet and newsletters.

Supporting tenants to apply

- Public Appointments usually holds orientation sessions at City Hall. You should only get an application form if you attend.
- Offer training on:
 - How to apply

- How to be a Board member
- Be clear on that time that Tenant Directors are expected to commit, and the skills required. Create a job description.
- Applicants need to know what's involved – how much time, and whether it will be paid. When are you required to be available, and will you be reimbursed for your time? Create guidelines outlining responsibilities.
- Offer a mock interview workshop.
- Facilitate support from other tenants – outgoing board members, tenant reps. Create a workshop or forum?
- Offer financial resources and help with resources (eg. supplies).
- Hold information sessions with previous Tenant Director. Provide interpreters. Make information sessions compulsory – only provide application forms at information sessions.
- Hold a forum at City Hall.

Supporting the new Tenant Directors

- One of the current Tenant Directors, Catherine Wilkinson, has agreed to mentor new board reps (ie. offer training).
- Offer honorariums and financial support.

Other comments

- Give youth an opportunity to stand.
- Create adaptable technology for vulnerable tenants.
- Canada is an English-speaking nation, and it would be disruptive in a Board meeting if a Director does not have good English.
- Nothing has changed except the process.

QUESTION THREE: In future, how should tenants be involved in the process to select Tenant Directors?

Tenants need to be kept informed

- Connect city staff, tenants and stakeholders.
- Create a newsletter.

Tenants need to be involved in designing and implementing the new process

- The process should be tenant-driven. Ask tenants and make sure the tenants' voice is heard!
- Create a short survey or use a suggestion box.
- Hold meetings in buildings, with notice given ahead of time.

We want more Tenant Directors on the Board

- There should be more than two Tenant Directors.

Who should be eligible to stand for the Board?

- All tenants can run (barring those who fail background checks).

- All tenants should be able to apply, and all tenants should be able to vote for the Tenant Directors.

What should the process involve?

- Provide resources for campaign literature.
- Tenants should be directly involved. Tenants should vote. Hold a general election for all tenants. Hold a meeting to vote.
- Bring ballot box to tenants, not the other way around. If tenants need to travel, they should get TTC tokens.
- Continue the interim process.
- All tenants should be aware of the applicants' resume and experience. Send nominees on tour of different communities.
- There should be no staff influence.
- Create a participatory system.
- Applications should be anonymous.

What kinds of experience should Tenant Directors have?

- Tenant Directors should be good communicators. Teamwork is important. Tenant Directors need to work with the wider community.
- Tenant Directors should be reliable and dependable.
- Tenant Directors should be accountable.
- Tenants who are elected as representatives should hold monthly meetings.
- Minimum qualifications for Tenant Directors:
 - Computer-literate
 - Speak English
 - Commits to time required to attend meetings
 - Ability to understand the process
 - Working knowledge of Non-Disclosure Agreements

How should tenants be involved in the process?

- Tenants should pick the slate of candidates.
- Hold a 'Meet the candidates' meeting after candidates have been shortlisted.
- Create opportunities for more face-to-face interaction.
- Not all areas are represented under the current system.

What changes should be made to how the Board operates?

- The terms of Tenant Directors should be staggered.
- Tenant Directors should step down if you miss three meetings without regrets.

Other comments:

- We want a dedicated contact for maintenance and other issues.
- We want insulation!
- We want consistency in what utilities are covered.
- We want a cease-and-desist for on all idiotic lotteries for houses and relocation.

- More accountability and respect for tenants.
- Evaluation of repairs.
- Follow the Tenant Charter and train all employees, plus contractors and contract management.
- Tenants to receive a copy of work order and are required to sign off that repair is satisfactory.
- Please respect 24 hour law for entries.
- The park at 58 Grenoble Drive is rundown. It needs a modern makeover, and should be kids-only. There should be a basketball court and a cage at Vendome Place.


Acknowledgements


The Tenants First Project Management Office would like to thank all attendees for sharing your time and thoughts with us as part of the continuing engagement work for Tenants First. Your thoughts, suggestions and advice are a critical part of the efforts to bring transformative change to Toronto Community Housing. We would also like to thank the members of the Tenants First Tenant Advisory Panel for their ongoing guidance and assistance.

To find out more about Tenants First, please visit www.toronto.ca/tenantsfirst. You can also email tenantsfirst@toronto.ca or call (416) 338 5716.

Tenants First Information Meetings

January 2018

Tenants First 



Tenants First – Process to date

2016 - Mayor's Taskforce on Toronto Community Housing

2016 – Tenants First 'A Way Forward'

- Engagement meetings with tenants

2017 – Tenants First Implementation Plan

January 24, 2018 – Executive Council to consider Tenants First report on scattered housing and tenant directors on the TCHC Board

2018 – Further report on seniors' housing

Tenants First 



Tenant information meetings

The purpose of these meetings is to:

- Inform tenants of the recommended actions to be considered by Council.
- Inform tenants of the proposed interim process for tenant representatives on the Board

6.10 – 6.45 Presentation followed by questions

6.45 – 7pm Break

7.00 – 7.45 Discussion at tables

8pm Close

Tenants First



What is the TCHC “scattered portfolio”?

Single Family House (660): A TCHC owned house that is not a Rooming House or Agency House. Houses can be one single large unit or multiple apartments within a house

Rooming House (22): Multi-tenant houses, also known as rooming houses, can include a house where you share a kitchen and/or washroom with four or more people who each pay individual rent.

Agency House(26): A TCHC owned house that is currently leased by a non-profit corporation for a housing related purpose

Tenants First



Scattered housing: What we've heard from tenants

- Vulnerable tenants need better supports.
- Scattered houses need faster and better systems for repairs and maintenance.
- Accountability is critical.
- Communication between tenants of scattered housing and TCHC is weak.
- Engaging with tenants of scattered housing is important.

Tenants First



Proposed plan for scattered housing

The report says:

- Transfer ownership and operation of TCHC's Agency Houses and Rooming Houses to qualified non-profit housing operators
 - Operators must have expertise in providing vulnerable tenants, including people with a history of homelessness, with the supports they need for successful tenancies.

Tenants First



Proposed plan for scattered housing

The report also says:

- Transfer the balance of TCHC's scattered portfolio to non-profit housing providers, co-ops and community land trusts
 - Organisations must be qualified to engage with tenants, improve the condition of the properties and retain the properties as affordable housing in perpetuity.

Tenants First



Proposed timeline for scattered housing

2017 – Request for Expressions of Interest

- 15 expressions of interest received
- Tenants invited to review

Early 2018 – Request for Proposals from organisations to coordinate support services for tenants in TCHC rooming houses

2018 - Request for Proposals from non-profit housing providers to own and manage TCHC scattered houses

2019 – Report to Council on recommendations for transfer of scattered houses

Tenants First



Scattered housing: Have your say

If recommendations are approved by Council, we will engage with tenants through:

- Meeting for tenants of Rooming Houses to inform tenants of changes in service
- Meeting for tenants of Single Family Houses to get feedback on what to require from a new not-for-profit housing provider
- Ongoing communication with scattered housing tenants as the transfers are advanced

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Questions?

Tenants First



Who are the TCHC Board of Directors?

The Board of Directors oversees the management of Toronto Community Housing and monitors the performance of the organisation.

- 2 Tenant Directors
- 3 Councillors
- 1 Mayor's designate
- 7 Citizen members

In July 2017, Tenant Director terms expired and were extended.

Tenants First



Tenant directors What we've heard from tenants

- Under the existing system, tenant representatives are elected by tenants. Tenant representatives then elect tenant directors to sit on the TCHC Board.
- Many tenants are not aware how the existing system to vote for a tenant director works.
- Not everyone has information about the process, and there is low voter turnout in tenant elections.
- It is important to keep a tenant voice on the Board for the next term.

Tenants First



Proposed interim process to select tenant directors

The report says:

- Ensure effective governance and facilitate ongoing tenant representation by implementing an interim process to appoint Tenant Directors to the TCHC Board, ensuring a tenant voice in the governance of TCHC
- Two tenant directors for 2018-2020 term
- Consistent with City's Public Appointments Process

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What is the City's Public Appointments Process?

- All TCHC tenants can apply
- Online application form
- Information sessions
- Selection panel of City staff and a TCHC tenant will shortlist, interview, and recommend candidates to Council

Tenants First



Proposed timeline Tenant Directors

5 February 2018 – Application process opens

End February 2018 – Application process closes

March 2018 – Shortlisting and interviews

April 2018 – New members appointed to the Board

2019 – City and TCHC agree to a revised shareholder direction including permanent process to select Tenant Directors

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Tenant Directors How to apply

If the interim process is adopted by Council, you will be able to apply at:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/pa/home.do>

Please email tenantsfirst@toronto.ca if you are interested in:

- Attending information sessions
- Information about how and when you can apply

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Questions?

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Break

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To discuss in small groups

- How should we connect with tenants in scattered housing?
- What support should be made available to tenants who want to apply to be a Tenant Director through the interim process?
- In future, how should tenants be involved in the process to select Tenant Directors?

Tenants First



Item EX30.2 “Implementing Tenants First” will be considered at Executive Committee on Jan 24, 2018

The full report is available at:
www.toronto.ca/tenantsfirst

tenantsfirst@toronto.ca

416-338-5716

Thank-you!

Tenants First





Putting Tenants First

Information meetings for Toronto Community Housing tenants

Tenants First is about improving the lives of tenants living in Toronto Community Housing through better service delivery, better access to services, and better building conditions.

You are invited to attend an information meeting to hear an update from the City's Tenants First team. This meeting will cover two issues:

- **Interim process for selecting tenants to sit on the TCHC Board of Directors; and**
- **Process to transfer scattered housing units to non-profit housing providers**

In July 2017, City Council adopted the *Tenants First Phase 1 Implementation Plan*. Since July, the City's Tenants First team has been working together with Toronto Community Housing, the Tenants First Advisory Panel, Senior Tenant Councils, service providers and other stakeholders. The City's Executive Committee will consider the next *Tenants First* report on January 24, 2018.

Friday, January 19

**Metro Hall
Room 308/309
55 John St
6 - 8 pm**

Monday, January 22

**Scarborough Civic
Centre
Committee Room 1
150 Borough Dr
6 – 8 pm**

We look forward to seeing you again!

Light refreshments and TTC tokens provided
Register at tenantsfirst@toronto.ca or call (416) 392 4627

Please contact us with 7 days' notice to request:
ASL interpreter // Child Care // Interpretation services

For more information
visit www.toronto.ca/tenantsfirst or
contact Bidy Livesey at biddy.livesey@toronto.ca or (416) 338-5716