

June 2010

Summary of Policy

This policy provides guidelines for using deputations as a means to further inform the Board of Directors of Housing Connections on an item that is before them. The Policy confirms Housing Connections' commitment to the consideration of stakeholder opinion and input.

Introduction

Housing Connections has a commitment toward open and transparent decision making. It is also dedicated to fostering links with the community to which it provides services; including feedback and input into decisions about the business processes that affect all stakeholders.

Housing Connections needs a Deputation Policy to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to advise the board of an important piece of information that they felt was missing in the Board's knowledge of the agenda item before them. Corporate-wide decisions that require Board approval or information are generally at a high level reflecting policy, principles, Housing Connections' reputation and/or financial management.

Besides deputations, there are other ways in which applicants and other stakeholders provide input into items going before the Board, including:

- Community Partner Network,
- Internal Review Panellists,
- focus groups with landlords; and
- the Board Advisory Council.

Through this accountability framework, the Board is assured that stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input and influence, related to Housing Connections items before those items reach the Board. Minutes of the Board Advisory Committee are also received by the Board.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for principles and guidelines for deputations to the Housing Connections Board.

Policy Statement

Where stakeholders feel that their input has not been captured in the report to the Board, deputations provide an alternate method of input to the Board of Directors itself.

Application of Policy

This policy applies to applicants, housing program tenants, staff, landlords and other stakeholders of Housing Connections. This policy applies to matters that are on the public agenda of the Housing Connections Board of Directors.

Principles of the Deputation Policy

- Commitment to open and transparent decision-making
- Access to decisions that impact stakeholders
- Policy-making processes that contribute to building partnerships with stakeholders
- Applicants and staff have input into decisions that directly affect them
- Respect for Housing Connections' values and policies
- Deputations benefit stakeholders, committee members and the board

Policy Guidelines

- Deputations may be made on all public agenda items at meetings of the Board of Directors.
- Deputations to the Board should further the Director's understanding of the issue.
- Deputations are not a forum for debate between deputants and Directors, but are to be used as an opportunity for sharing information and clarifying issues.
- Where several deputation requests are made on the same matter, efforts will be made to ensure that each deputation brings forward new information that will assist the Board in understanding an issue or in reaching a decision.
- Reports to the Board will include information on the involvement of stakeholders including a summary of concerns/issues/support raised by stakeholders

- The Board will consider deputations in the context of the broader stakeholders input considered in the Board report and recommendations.
- Deputants are requested to inform the Board Secretary of their intent to depute before the meeting in order that the Chair may:
 - confirm that the deputation is related to the recommendations before the Board; and
 - ensure that it contains information that furthers the Board understanding of the issue.
- While it is preferred that deputants inform the Board Secretary of their intention to depute it is not a requirement, however stakeholders who wish to ensure that their concerns can be adequately addressed by Directors at the meeting may submit a written or alternate format* copy of their deputation at least 3 days ahead of the meeting in order to allow enough time for review

**Alternative formats will be accepted in cases where accommodation for a disability is required*

- At the start of each public meeting the Chair will poll stakeholders to identify those wishing to depute to public items on the agenda. Only those deputants who identify themselves through the chairs poll will be heard when their item arises.
- Deputants may only depute once on the same item.
- The Chair will generally hold deputations to 5 minutes to ensure that all deputants have an opportunity to speak and committee members have the time and opportunity to ask questions or engage in discussion of key issues.
- In keeping with Housing Connections' values and policies, the Chair is responsible for ensuring that the behaviour of all parties to the process is respectful and is not damaging towards any applicant, tenant, stakeholder, Director or Housing Connections staff.

Accountability

- Housing Connections will inform the public of the deputation policy and related expectations by posting on www.housingconnections.ca and community partner newsletter
- Every attempt will be made to have Board public agendas available on the Internet up to 5 business days before the meeting.

Housing Connections will make the policy publicly available on our website.

Housing Connections' Deputation Policy

- Written depositions will be appended to reports going forward to the Board and form part of the Housing Connections public record.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed 12 months after implementation.

Approved by the HC Board of Directors, June 21, 2010.