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News

**Housing agency going corporate; None of seven nominees to govern TCHC has a record of working full-time for non-profits**

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**CORRECTION:** A June 15 article about citizen nominees for the **Toronto Community Housing Corporation** board of directors incorrectly stated that of the seven nominees, none had worked full-time in the non-profit sector. In fact, Christian Buhagiar is vice president, education and certification at the non-profit Institute of Corporate Directors. Also, the article incorrectly stated that Audrey Wubbenhorst, director of real estate finance for BMO Financial Group, and one of the seven nominees, is the chair of Ernestine Women's Shelter, but she left the organization in 2008. (June 16, 2011, page A2)

As the **Toronto Community Housing Corp.** ponders the sale of its 928 single-family homes, it will probably be governed by a board of directors heavier than the last board on corporate and real estate experience and lighter on experience working with the poor.

City council is scheduled to vote on the citizen nominees to the board Wednesday. Of the seven nominated, four work or have worked in real estate, compared with three of the seven who resigned under pressure from Mayor Rob Ford in March in the wake of a spending and procurement scandal. Two of the citizen members of the previous board worked full-time for non-profits. None of the seven nominees does.

Two nominees are commercial lawyers; the one lawyer on the previous board was also a "creative educator" and activist. And the last board chair was a jail superintendent who grew up in public **housing**; the man nominated as the new chair runs a development company.

The TCHC has been governed since March by former councillor Case Ootes, who has functioned as a one-man board.

The seven nominees were chosen from more than 300 applicants by a panel composed of lawyer Mary Flynn-Guglietti, YMCA of Greater **Toronto** chair Bahadur Madhani and Councillor Paul Ainslie, a Ford ally.

Flynn-Guglietti said the nominees were selected before Ootes proposed the mass sale.

And she said even those with real estate backgrounds were chosen because they possess many appealing traits, such as proficiency with numbers, expertise in corporate governance, and a commitment to working for the greater good.

Bud Purves, who was recommended as chair, is president of York University Development Corp. He also sits on the board of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Audrey Wubbenhorst, director of real estate finance for BMO Financial Group, is the chair of Ernestine's Women's Shelter.

"I don't think there's anybody on the list that hasn't been involved in assisting people in the **community**," Flynn-Guglietti said.

Nonetheless, Wellesley Institute **housing** director Michael Shapcott, an academic and left-leaning activist, said he was "extremely concerned" about those chosen to lead TCHC.

"The board needs to wrestle with some big questions, like how to deal with a \$650 million capital repairs shortfall and how to grow the affordable **housing** stock to deal with the 15-year wait that people are currently dealing with. Those questions are not going to be answered by looking in real estate law books or looking at mortgage and amortization issues," said Shapcott, who was interviewed for the board but not selected.

The other names on the list: Zahir Bhaidani, chief financial officer of Bayfield Realty Advisors; Jason Gorel, director of financial reporting at the Cinram International Income Fund and a former employee of Canadian Apartment Properties Real Estate Investment Trust; Christian Buhagiar, vice-president of education and certification for the Institute of Corporate Directors; Brian Kwan, a lawyer in private practice; and Jennifer Wood, a lawyer with the Royal Bank of Canada.

Wood ran unsuccessfully for council in the ward vacated by Ootes upon his retirement in 2010. Ootes' then-executive assistant managed her campaign.

The remaining members of the board include two tenants and four councillors, all of whom are Ford allies.

Kwan said he was motivated to seek a board post by the improprieties uncovered by the city's auditor general.

"The things that I didn't like were basically the same things that the current administration is against," he said. "The spending - as a taxpayer, I'm very concerned about where my money is going. So I can either sit back and do nothing about it, or I can step up and take a shot."

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