

**For Immediate Release****City Stumbles over Appointments Process****Toronto – September 27, 2012**

The City of Toronto's Ombudsman has found problems with the process used to recruit and select board members for the City's agencies, boards and commissions.

"These agencies have a considerable impact on residents' lives," says Fiona Crean, "so Torontonians must be assured board members are selected in a fair and open process."

"Unfortunately" Crean says, "in late 2011 and early 2012, after instructions from the Mayor's Office to speed up the process, city staff were not given the time, support or necessary resources to properly fulfil the provisions of the *Public Appointments Policy* while they carried out the directions. Staff did the best they could, but their ability to carry out their responsibilities under the *Public Appointments Policy* was compromised."

The Ombudsman has also determined there were gaps and difficulties that added to this problem.

- There was no process for informing members of the Civic Appointments Committee of possible conflicts-of-interest.
- There was no plan to encourage applications from diverse communities.
- Responsibility for administering the City's *Public Appointments Policy* was split between the City Clerk's Office and the City Manager's Office.

The Ombudsman has made a number of recommendations to ensure there is a fair, open and competitive process for selecting board members for the City's agencies. All of the recommendations have been accepted by the City Manager and the City Clerk.

By June 1st, 2013, the City has agreed to:

- Review the *Public Appointments Policy* to correct any omissions or shortcomings.
- Consolidate responsibility for administering the *Public Appointments Policy* into a single unit and ensure it has adequate resources.
- Require that staff report in writing to the Civic Appointments Committee any known information about potential conflicts of interest.

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- Develop sustained community engagement strategies to attract and recruit applicants from diverse communities.

Ombudsman Fiona Crean says “the City needs to ensure an open, merit-based, representative and accountable Public Appointments System. Residents expect no less.”

Copies of the report “*An Investigation into the Administration of the Public Appointments Policy*” are available on the Ombudsman’s website, [www.ombudstoronto.ca](http://www.ombudstoronto.ca)

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*Toronto’s Ombudsman is an impartial and independent officer of City Council, providing an appeal of last resort for residents who feel they have been adversely affected by a decision, act or omission of City Administration.*