



Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 344
Thorold ON L2V 3Z3

Phone: 905-682-9201
Toll Free: 1-800-232-3292
(from Grimsby and beyond Niagara region only)

Street Address:
Campbell East
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold ON

Main Fax: 905-687-4844
Fax – Applications: 905-935-0476
Fax – Contractors: 905-682-8301
Web site: www.nrh.ca

March 2, 2020

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their February 14, 2020 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors received the following information as attached in the report NRH 5-2020:

That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors send a letter to the Ombudsman of the Province of Ontario with a copy to Regional Council and area MPPs and FORWARD to the Public Health and Social Services Committee for information.

It is further requested that the Regional Chair send a letter to the Ontario Ombudsman supporting the request from Niagara Regional Housing for a review of the ongoing delays in matters before the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter Sendzik', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Walter Sendzik
Chair



Niagara Regional Housing

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COM-C 10-2020

NRH 5-2020

20-187-4.4.

February 14, 2020

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario
483 Bay Street, 10th floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

March 2, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

It is with utmost respect that the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors must convey our ongoing concerns with delays in matters before the Landlord and Tenant Board.

As you may appreciate, both private landlords and not-for-profit housing associations operate on the income they receive from their rental properties. Prior to the fall of 2019, applications to terminate tenancies for non-payment of rent were processed and hearings were scheduled within four to five weeks of the date of filing. More recently, we are finding that hearings are sometimes scheduled four or five months after filing. The financial impact on social housing landlords, with the burden to carry tenants who are not paying rent, is creating a significant impact on our day-to-day operations. We can only imagine how this is adversely impacting private landlords who have large mortgages as well as operating expenses.

NRH is in the business of providing affordable housing and such delays are affecting our ability to meet our mandate. On a day-to-day basis we are finding that tenants are learning of the delays which are allowing them to remain in rental units without paying for months on end.

We believe that this situation has been caused by the large number of vacancies that appear in the list of adjudicators who are available to hear cases. These adjudicators are appointed by the province. We are advised that the Landlord and Tenant Board, in particular the Hamilton office which governs our territorial jurisdiction, is understaffed as attrition takes place and no new employees are hired. There are times when we file applications by fax and the paperwork languishes for an extended period of time without being processed due to these staff shortages.

We respectfully ask that the government and the ombudsman take immediate action to remedy this situation to make the system effective and efficient again. Failure to do so will result in social housing providers' inability to provide suitable housing to those truly in need.

Sincerely,

Walter Sendzik
Board Chair, Niagara Regional Housing

cc: The Hon. Steve Clark, Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Jim Bradley, Regional Chair, Niagara Regional Council
Jeff Burch, MPP Niagara Centre
Wayne Gates, MPP Niagara Falls
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP Niagara West
Jennie Stevens, MPP St. Catharines

**Please call 905-682-9201 if you need this information in a different format,
or translated into another language.**