

# The Role of the Ombudsperson

The Board of Directors believes the role of the Ombudsperson is an important one. For the past year, Hazelburn has had an Ombudsperson, and while he has not been involved with any serious issues, members have sought advice. The Board feels the role of Ombudsperson is an important demonstration of the democratic process that is the foundation of co-operative living. Therefore, the Board presents to the membership the following motion:

"Motion to accept the policy for the position of Ombudsperson at Hazelburn Co-operative."

## **PURPOSE**

The Ombudsperson is a member of the Co-operative. His/her job is to provide you with help. for example, if you are having a disagreement with a neighbour, committee, staff member or the Board of Directors, you would talk to the Ombudsperson. He/she will provide you with:

Information; and

Advice; and

Help in speaking for you at meetings.

The Ombudsperson will keep all information private. The Ombudsperson is a person whom you can talk to about any aspect of co-operative living.

## **OMBUDSPERSON**

### 1. **Advisory Role**

The Ombudsperson, independent of all committees and the Board of Directors, shall act as advisor for members and staff with regard to any personal or business matters pertaining to the Co-operative or the By-laws. The Ombudsperson may act as an advocate or representative for any member/staff at committee or Board of Directors meetings.

2. **Qualifications**

No person shall be Ombudsperson of the Co-operative:

- a) if he/she is under 18 years of age; or
- b) if he/she is and undischarged bankrupt or mentally incompetent person;  
or
- c) if he/she is not a member of the Co-operative; or
- d) if he/she is in default under the Occupancy Agreement; or
- e) if he/she has not held a position of Hazelburn Director or Chairperson for a minimum of two (2) years.

3. **Election and Removal**

The Ombudsperson shall be elected at each annual meeting. The members of the Co-operative may, by resolution passed by a majority of votes cast at a General Meeting called duly for that purpose, remove the Ombudsperson before the expiration of his/her term, and may by a majority of the votes cast at the meeting, elect any person in his/her stead for the remainder of his/her term.

In the event the elected Ombudsperson cannot complete his/her term, the Board of Directors may appoint a qualified person in his/her stead for the remainder of the term.

4. **Balloting**

Election of the Ombudsperson's term shall be by ballot. In the event of a tie vote, the meeting Chairperson shall cast a vote.

5. **Terms of Office**

The Ombudsperson's term shall be one (1) year from the date on which he/she is elected or until his/her successor is elected or appointed.

6. **Vacation of Office**

The office of Ombudsperson shall automatically be vacated:

- a) if he/she becomes bankrupt or suspends payment of his debts generally or compounded with his creditors or makes an authorized assignment or is declared insolvent; or
- b) if he/she defaults under the Occupancy Agreement or any other contractual agreement with the Co-operative; or
- c) if by notice in writing to the Co-operative he/she resigns his/her position.

7. **Remuneration**

The Ombudsperson of the Co-operative shall serve without remuneration.

8. **Confidentiality**

The Ombudsperson must adhere to a strict code of confidentiality in all matters pertaining to individual members or the Co-operative, except when matters are that of a criminal nature.

9. **Authority**

The Hazelburn Board of Directors has final jurisdiction in all disputes within the Co-op, whether involving members or staff.

Approved by the Board of Directors: March 27, 1991

Approved by the General Membership: April 21, 1991