



Ombudsman



Annual Report 2016



National Capital Commission Ombudsman

Mandate of the NCC Ombudsman

The mandate of the NCC Ombudsman was established by the NCC Board of Directors in 2009. The Ombudsman's mandate is to provide members of the public with an independent, neutral, fair and confidential process to resolve complaints concerning the activities of the NCC. The Ombudsman is required to keep the NCC Board of Directors and NCC senior management informed about complaints, on a need-to-know basis.

The Ombudsman's aim in investigating a complaint is to reach the best possible understanding of the situation that gave rise to the complaint and to form a view of a fair way to resolve it. After completing the investigation, the Ombudsman explores the possibility of resolving the complaint informally, by agreement between the complainant and the NCC. If this is not feasible, the Ombudsman will submit a recommendation to the complainant and the NCC.

A person with a complaint against the NCC must start by trying to resolve it directly with the NCC. If this approach is unsuccessful, the Ombudsman can investigate the complaint.

The Ombudsman is not able to investigate complaints concerning the appropriateness of NCC policies, compliance with contracts or legislation or issues before the courts.

The Ombudsman is not an advocate for the complainant or for the NCC.

What is an Ombudsman?

The word *ombudsman* is of Swedish origin. The role was established in Sweden to create a process to address complaints made by individuals against public agencies.

An ombudsman is an independent, neutral official who investigates complaints against an organization in the public or private sector. The ombudsman's mandate and processes are established either administratively by the senior management of the organization or by law.

The ombudsman must assess whether or not a complaint falls within the ombudsman's mandate, and if so, whether it has merit. The ombudsman must work independently and impartially, meaning that the ombudsman's only interest in the outcome of the complaint is to reach a fair resolution.

December 31, 2016

National Capital Commission Board of Directors

Dear Members of the Board,

I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the NCC Ombudsman for 2016. This annual report summarizes the activities of the NCC Ombudsman during its eighth year of operation.



Yours truly,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen Fry'.

Ellen Fry
NCC Ombudsman

“We are indebted to you for your quick and compassionate action.”

“Thank you for everything you did.”

How to contact
the NCC Ombudsman
confidentially

EMAIL

info@ombudsman.ncc-ccn.ca

WEBSITE

www.ombudsman.ncc-ccn.ca

MAIL

NCC Ombudsman
311-40 Elgin Street
Ottawa ON K1P 1C7

TELEPHONE

Direct Line: 613-947-4330

Toll Free: 1-877-947-4330

TTY: 613-947-4339

Toll Free TTY: 1-877-947-4339

FAX

613-947-4311

The Year in Review

In 2016, as in previous years, the Ombudsman received communications from the public about a wide range of issues concerning the NCC. The Ombudsman investigated and resolved complaints filed with the Ombudsman, using approaches to seek informal resolution where feasible. The Ombudsman also ensured that members of the public who had not yet tried to resolve their issues through NCC internal processes were put in touch with the NCC. In instances where the issues were urgent, the Ombudsman assisted in ensuring that they were addressed promptly.

The following are complaints by members of the public to the Ombudsman in 2016:

- A member of the public complained that an NCC site was not accessible to disabled persons who wished to attend an event there. The NCC worked with the complainant to solve this problem.
- A member of the public complained about certain actions allegedly taken by an NCC employee. The Ombudsman's investigation did not indicate that any of the specific allegations made about the employee were valid. However, it did indicate that the employee was in a situation where it could be difficult for the public to distinguish between his professional actions and his personal actions. The NCC indicated that it would avoid such situations in future.
- A member of the public alleged that a neighbour was harming the vegetation on NCC property and that the NCC should take action to prevent this from occurring in future. The Ombudsman's investigation indicated that the NCC's management of the vegetation in this area was consistent with NCC policy.

“Thank you so much for your understanding and help in this matter.”

“Thank you again and I am so grateful that you are helping us with this matter.”

Types of Complaints

The Ombudsman can investigate complaints concerning the full range of NCC activities. Complaints can involve

- NCC property maintenance
- Compliance with NCC and government policies and procedures
- Communications issues
- Service issues
- Tenant issues
- Contractor issues

Numbers at a Glance

In 2016, there were 146 inquiries from the public, involving 158 issues.

| TYPE OF ISSUE/INQUIRY | NO. OF ISSUES/INQUIRIES | ACTION |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Complaint Investigation and informal dispute resolution | 6 investigations, including 8 issues | Investigated the complaint and recommended resolution |
| Inquiry about the Ombudsman's role | 2 | Explained the Ombudsman's role |
| Issue within the NCC mandate, but NCC internal resolution has not yet been tried. | 124 inquiries, including 134 issues | Referred to the NCC |
| Issue outside the NCC mandate | 14 | Suggested a more appropriate organization to contact |

Complaint Resolution Process

The complaint resolution process requires complainants to try to resolve their complaints directly with the NCC before filing them with the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is required to keep the NCC Board of Directors and NCC senior management informed about complaints, on a need-to-know basis.

