

# Constitution of the Vancouver Tenants Union

## Name

1.1 The name of the organization shall be the Vancouver Tenants Union (the “VTU”).

## Purpose and Objectives

2.1 The Vancouver Tenants Union is made up of individuals and groups committed to building a transformative movement for housing justice and housing rights for all people: people who do not own property, people who rent, people who do not have stable housing, people who are homeless.

These are the people who we are working for and centering in our organization. We believe everyone, regardless of race, economic status, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, religion, lifestyle or citizenship status deserve safe, affordable housing and homes.

We acknowledge that we are organizing, living, and resisting on unceded Coast Salish territories, specifically of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations. We recognize that displacement and gentrification are part of the larger colonial and capitalist systems that occupy these lands. Fighting for tenants’ rights is a fight for housing justice for all. No more displacement on stolen Native land.

Our core values for the Vancouver Tenants Union define us and all actions we take, policy change we pursue, and revolution we create together. By joining the Vancouver Tenants Union, you stand for these values, and acknowledge your responsibility to work towards these values and hold each other accountable:

- **Housing is a human right.** Everyone deserves to live with dignity in a safe, secure, clean, affordable and accessible home. We reject the speculative market. We reject that housing can or should be seen as a ‘commodity’ or an avenue to make money.

- **Decommodify land.** We reject corporate ownership and support initiatives like cooperative housing, land trusts and other alternatives to private ownership.
- **We oppose displacement** in the forms of violent gentrification, renovictions, rent increases, illegal evictions, and the tearing down of tent cities. We believe that no one should be forced to live apart from the networks, institutions, communities and culture they rely on to survive and thrive.
- **Decolonization** is the end we are constantly working towards. As a mixed group of settlers and Indigenous peoples, we commit to examining our values, tactics and strategies to align with moves towards real, deep decolonizing work.
- **Livable City, Living Wages.** We support raising the welfare, pension and disability rates to a level where people can comfortably afford to live and house themselves in their community. We support higher minimum wages, and the campaign for living wages.
- **Solidarity in motion.** We are in solidarity with tenants in other municipalities, provinces and communities experiencing housing crises, and support the founding of other tenants unions and resistance groups.
- **Solidarity across movements.** We know that our work is not in isolation of the systems of oppression that make necessary all social movements. We work and move in solidarity with other movements fighting for a more just society. We recognize that fighting for the most marginalized lifts everyone up, and we work to centre these voices and experiences at the core of our organizing.

In joining the Vancouver Tenants Union, you will help us build this movement together. We are only as strong as our members are, and we need all hands on deck to move us towards our goals:

- 1) Oppose gentrification and building of condos in low-income neighbourhoods like the Downtown Eastside and Chinatown, and resist the developer tide flooding our city.
- 2) Change policy at all levels of government (where possible, and also where seemingly impossible) to benefit tenants. This includes but is not limited to: stronger eviction protections, rent control, anti-discrimination legislation, and

other initiatives set out by our Policy Working Group.

- 3) Create a force of renters and tenants with thousands of dues-paying members, across all barriers and identities.
- 4) Empower tenants to organize and fight injustices to protect themselves from the threats, intimidation, and bribes that lead to the loss of their homes. Encourage people to fight and inform themselves wherever possible.
- 5) Connect and share resources and strategies with other organizations and groups who share common values and goals across borders. We are not reinventing the wheel, but sparking the wheels to turn across communities.
- 6) Work to shift consciousness and public opinion on the challenges of living in this city: around tenancy stories, tenancy law, discrimination, gentrification, income assistance, accessibility, and affordability.

# Bylaws of the Vancouver Tenants Union

## Part 1 — Definitions and Interpretation

### Definitions

#### 1.1 In these Bylaws:

**“Act”** means the [Societies Act](#) of British Columbia as amended from time to time;

**“Annual General Meeting”** or **“AGM”** means the meeting held once per year in order to comply with 3.1.1;

**“Bylaws”** means these Bylaws as altered from time to time;

**“Elected Steering Committee members”** means the portion of the Steering Committee that is elected by the general membership at the AGM;

**“Equity Liaison”** means a member of the Steering Committee with a self-identified connection to an Equity-Seeking Group as explained in 4.2(b);

**“General Meeting”** means either an Annual General Meeting or a Regular General Meeting;

**“Liaison”** means Equity Liaisons and Working Group Representatives;

**“Lower Mainland”** means portions of the Fraser River Valley located North of the U.S. border, West of the Eastern shore of Harrison Lake to the Salish Sea, and South of Horseshoe Bay. Map depicted in Appendix B

**“Neighbourhood Chapter”** means a place-based group of tenants within VTU whose primary function is to organize tenants in specific geographical areas;

**“Neighbourhood Chapter Representatives”** means the portion of the Steering Committee that is selected by each Neighbourhood Chapter

**“Regular General Meeting”** or **“RGM”** means any meeting held in order to comply with 3.1.2;

**“Steering Committee”** means the Elected Steering Committee members, Equity

Liaisons, and Working Group Representatives who form the Board for the purposes of the Act;

**“Tenant”** means a person who does not own the property in which they live, a person who rents, a person who does not have stable housing, a person who is homeless, or a person who owns property but endeavours to uphold the VTU’s purpose and objectives in all their interactions with the VTU;

**“Voting Member”** means a member of the VTU who is in good standing;

**“VTU”** means the Vancouver Tenants Union;

**“Working Group”** means a Working Group of the VTU;

**“Working Group Representatives”** means the portion of the Steering Committee that is selected by each Working Group.

### **Definitions in Act apply**

1.2 The definitions in the Act apply to these Bylaws.

### **Conflict with Act or regulations**

1.3 If there is a conflict between these Bylaws and the Act or the regulations under the Act, the Act or the regulations, as the case may be, prevail.

## **Part 2 — Members**

### **Application for membership**

2.1.1 Upon application, Tenants who agree with the purpose and objectives of the organisation as set forth herein and who live in the Lower Mainland shall be admitted to membership.

2.1.2 Membership in the VTU expires at the end of every December unless renewed in accordance with 2.3.5.

2.1.3 A member in good standing is a person who has been a member for 45 days or more and lives in the Lower Mainland.

2.1.4 Membership in good standing shall be renewed annually.

**2.1.5** A member who renews their membership after it has lapsed immediately becomes a member in good standing.

### **Responsibilities of Members**

**2.2** Every member must uphold the Constitution of the VTU and must comply with these Bylaws.

### **Amount of annual membership dues**

**2.3.1** Annual membership dues shall be no less than one dollar (\$1.00) CAD.

**2.3.2** A member may subsidise another member's annual membership dues.

**2.3.3** The Steering Committee may set the minimum annual membership dues, which shall be approved by a majority vote of the membership at the next AGM.

**2.3.4** Any member of the Steering Committee can waive a member's annual dues either on the grounds of financial hardship, or because they recently paid their dues.

**2.3.5** The Steering Committee can delegate the power to waive annual membership dues in accordance with 2.3.4.

**2.3.6** Members can renew their annual membership by paying their annual dues or having them waived as per 2.3.4/2.3.5 any time during the month of December. If a current member does not renew their annual membership by December 31, that member is no longer in good standing.

### **Steering Committee May Revoke Membership**

**2.4** A person's membership in the VTU may be revoked by a two-thirds vote of the Steering Committee, if the Steering Committee is of the view that the individual is acting in a manner that is injurious to the VTU.

### **Member not in good standing**

**2.5** A member is not in good standing if the member has not been a member for at least 45 days in total, has not renewed their membership in accordance with 2.3.6 or is no longer living in the Lower Mainland.

## Part 3 — General Meeting of Members

### **Time and place of General Meetings**

**3.1.1** An Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) must be held at least once every 15 months, at the time and place the Steering Committee determines.

**3.1.2** A Regular General Meeting (“RGM”) must be held no less than 5 times per calendar year, each at the time and place the Steering Committee determines.

### **Notice of Annual General Meetings**

**3.2.1** Written notice of the date, time, and location of an AGM must be sent to every member of the VTU at least 14 days before the meeting and not more than 60 days before the Meeting.

**3.2.2** Notice of an AGM of the VTU is deemed to have been sent under 3.2.1 if:

**(a)** notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting has been sent, to every member of the VTU who has provided an email address to the VTU, by email to that email address, and

**(b)** notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting is posted, throughout the period commencing at least 21 days before the meeting and ending when the meeting is held, on the VTU website.

**3.2.3** The accidental omission to send notice of an AGM to a member, or the non-receipt of notice by a member, does not invalidate any proceedings at the meeting.

### **Ordinary business at Annual General Meeting**

**3.3** At an AGM, the following business is ordinary business:

**(a)** adoption of rules of order;

**(b)** consideration of any financial statements, if any, of the VTU presented to the meeting;

**(c)** consideration of the reports, if any, of the Steering Committee, the Neighbourhood Chapters, and the Working Groups;

- (d) election or appointment of Steering Committee members;
- (e) appointment of an auditor, if any;
- (f) business arising out of a report of the Steering Committee members, Neighbourhood Chapters, or working groups, not requiring the passing of a Special Resolution.

### **Ordinary business at Regular General Meetings**

**3.4** At an RGM, the following business is ordinary business:

- (a) adoption of rules of order;
- (b) consideration of the reports, if any, of the Steering Committee, the Neighbourhood Chapters, and the Working Groups;
- (c) business arising out of a report of the Steering Committee members, the Neighbourhood Chapters, or working groups, not requiring the passing of a Special Resolution.

### **Special Resolutions**

**3.5.1** A Special Resolution may be brought by a member of the VTU in good standing to require a vote of the General Membership of the VTU at the next General Meeting on matters of significance to the VTU as a whole, including but not limited to:

- (a) challenging the decision of the Steering Committee to approve or disapprove a Working Group;
- (b) challenging the decision of the Steering Committee to revoke the membership of an individual;
- (c) endorsing political campaigns, coalitions, and candidates; and
- (d) amending the Constitution or the Bylaws.

**3.5.2** Where the decision being challenged is a decision of the Steering Committee to revoke an individual's membership, that individual may challenge the decision under 3.5.1 as though they were a member of the VTU in good standing;



**3.5.3** The Constitution and Bylaws cannot be amended such that they conflict with the Act.

**3.5.4** If a member wishes to challenge a decision made by the Steering Committee under 3.5.1(b), the member may request a meeting of the General Membership to address the Special Resolution. The Steering Committee will be obliged in this circumstance to call a meeting within 14 days if the next scheduled General Meeting is not within 14 days.

**3.5.5** A member of the VTU in good standing wishing to bring a Special Resolution must submit to the Steering Committee the following:

- (a)** a written draft of the proposed Special Resolution;
- (b)** the signatures of 2 other VTU members in good standing who support the proposed Special Resolution; and,
- (c)** whether the Special Resolution requires immediate attention.

**3.5.6** Upon receipt of a proposal that meets the above criteria, the Steering Committee shall include the Special Resolution in the business of the next General Meeting, or shall facilitate a vote of the membership on the Special Resolution at the earliest possible date.

**3.5.7** Notice of a Special Resolution shall be given to members of the VTU at least 7 days before the date on which the vote will occur.

**3.5.8** A Special Resolution must be passed by a vote of two-thirds of the Voting Members in attendance.

### **Notice of Special Resolutions**

**3.6** A notice of a General Meeting distributed by a Co-Chair must state the nature of any business, other than ordinary business, to be transacted at the meeting in sufficient detail to permit a member receiving the notice to form a reasoned judgement concerning that business.

### **Chair of Annual General Meeting**

**3.7** The following individual is entitled to preside as the chair of an AGM:

- (a)** the individual, if any, appointed by the Steering Committee to preside as the

chair; or,

**(b)** if the Steering Committee has not appointed an individual to preside as the chair or the individual appointed by the Steering Committee is unable to preside as the chair, the Voting Members who are present must elect an individual present at the meeting to preside as the chair.

### **Quorum required**

**3.8** Business, other than the election of the chair of the AGM and the adjournment or termination of the meeting, must not be transacted at an AGM unless a quorum of Voting Members was present at the commencement of the meeting.

### **Quorum for Meetings**

**3.9.1** The quorum for the transaction of business at an AGM is 5% of the Voting Members.

**3.9.2** The quorum for the transaction of business at an RGM is 20 members.

### **Lack of quorum at commencement of meeting**

**3.10** If, within 30 minutes from the time set for holding an AGM or RGM, a quorum of Voting Members is not present,

**(a)** in the case of a meeting convened on the requisition of members, the meeting is terminated, and

**(b)** in any other case, the meeting stands adjourned to the same day in the next week, at the same time and place, and if, at the continuation of the adjourned meeting, a quorum is not present within 60 minutes from the time set for holding the continuation of the adjourned meeting, the Voting Members who are present constitute a quorum for that meeting.

### **If quorum ceases to be present**

**3.11** If, at any time during an AGM there ceases to be a quorum of Voting Members present, business then in progress need not be suspended as long as there was a quorum of Voting Members at the commencement of the meeting.

## **Adjournments by chair**

**3.12** The chair of an AGM must, if so directed by the Voting Members at the meeting, adjourn the meeting from time to time and from place to place, but no business may be transacted at the continuation of the adjourned meeting other than business left unfinished at the adjourned meeting.

## **Notice of continuation of adjourned Annual General Meeting**

**3.13** It is not necessary to give notice of a continuation of an adjourned AGM or of the business to be transacted at a continuation of an adjourned AGM except that, when an AGM is adjourned for 30 days or more, notice of the continuation of the adjourned meeting must be given.

## **Order of business at Annual General Meeting**

**3.14.1** The order of business at an AGM is as follows:

- (a) elect an individual to chair the meeting, if necessary;
- (b) determine that there is a quorum;
- (c) approve the agenda;
- (d) receive the Steering Committee's report on the financial statements of the VTU for the previous financial year, and the auditor's report, if any, on those statements;
- (e) receive any other reports of the Steering Committee's activities and decisions since the previous AGM;
- (f) elect or appoint Steering Committee members;
- (g) appoint an auditor, if any;
- (h) deal with new business, including any matters about which notice has been given to the members in the notice of meeting;
- (i) terminate the meeting.

**3.14.2** The Steering Committee may restructure the order of business, but must include the order of business in the notice of the meeting, if time permits.

## **Methods of voting**

**3.15.1** A member in good standing who is present at a general meeting of members is entitled to one vote per resolution.

**3.15.2** Voting must be by a show of hands, an oral vote or another method that adequately discloses the intention of the Voting Members, except that if, before or after such a vote, 2 or more Voting Members request a secret ballot or a secret ballot is directed by the chair of the meeting, voting must be by a secret ballot.

**3.15.3** Resolutions proposed at a general meeting need to be seconded, and the chair of a meeting may move or propose a resolution.

**3.15.4** In the case of an equality of votes, the chair shall not have a casting or second vote, and the proposed resolution shall not pass.

## **Announcement of result**

**3.16** The chair of an AGM must announce the outcome of each vote and that outcome must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

## **Proxy voting permitted**

**3.17** Voting by proxy is permitted.

## **Matters decided at Annual General Meeting by ordinary resolution**

**3.18** A matter to be decided at an AGM must be decided by a simple majority of Voting Members in attendance, unless the matter is required by these Bylaws to be decided by Special Resolution.

## **Approval of Annual General Meeting minutes**

**3.19** The minutes recorded at an AGM will be approved at the next General Meeting following that AGM.

# **Part 4 — Steering Committee**

## **Number of members on Steering Committee**

**4.1** The Steering Committee shall be composed of at least 9 elected members and 1

representative from each active Working Group and Neighbourhood Chapter, as set out in Appendix A.

### **Composition of the Steering Committee**

**4.2** The Steering Committee shall be composed of, but not limited to, individuals representing each of the following groups, as set out in Appendix A:

- (a)** Working Groups;
- (b)** Equity-Seeking Groups, including but not limited to:
  - (i)** People with lived experience with housing vulnerability, defined as homelessness, single room occupancy tenancy, or living in social housing;
  - (ii)** Indigenous persons;
  - (iii)** Racialized persons;
  - (iv)** Persons with disabilities;
  - (v)** LGBTQ2IA+ persons.
- (c)** Elected Steering Committee members.
- (d)** Neighbourhood Chapters.

**4.3.4** Within a month of the AGM, or within a month of their formation, each Neighbourhood Chapter must elect or appoint its Neighbourhood Chapter Representative using the process set out in Appendix A. They hold office for one year from the time of the election.

### **Election or appointment of the Steering Committee**

**4.3.1** At each AGM, the Voting Members must elect or appoint the Steering Committee using the process set out in Appendix A. They hold office for one year from the time of their election.

**4.3.2** Prior to each AGM, the Steering Committee must appoint a Voting Member to be the returning officer, whose ranked ballot determines which candidate is elected in the event of a tie, as set out in Appendix A.

**4.3.3** Within a month of the AGM, or within a month of their formation, each Working

Group must elect or appoint its Working Group Representative using the process set out in Appendix A. They hold office for one year from the time of the election.

### **Eligibility for Steering Committee**

**4.4.1** In order to be eligible for nomination to the Steering Committee, an individual must:

- (a)** be a member of the VTU in good standing;
- (b)** provide a written or verbal statement (recorded by another member) summarizing the individual's qualifications, experience, and desire to be nominated; and
- (c)** consent in writing to run for the Steering Committee and agree to act in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, purposes, and objectives of the VTU if elected.

### **Term Limit**

**4.5** No person shall serve more than four consecutive terms as a member of the Steering Committee.

### **Vacancies on Steering Committee**

**4.6.1** If a vacancy arises on the Steering Committee and the date of the next AGM has been announced under 3.2.1, the Steering Committee may appoint a new Steering Committee member to fill the vacancy. The Steering Committee Member so appointed shall hold office for the unexpired term.

**4.6.2** If a vacancy arises on the Steering Committee and the date of the next AGM has not been announced under 3.2.1, the Steering Committee shall appoint a Nominating Committee of 5 members, who shall propose a shortlist of nominees for the position to be voted on at the next General Meeting. The Voting Members present shall elect a new Steering Committee member from those nominees to fill the vacancy. The Steering Committee member so elected shall hold office for the unexpired term.

### **Steering Committee Officers**

**4.7** The Steering Committee shall elect from its members, at the first meeting of the Steering Committee following its election at the AGM, whatever Officers the Committee

deems necessary to properly carry out its functions, which shall include a Treasurer and at least two co-chairs, whose functions are enumerated in these Bylaws.

### **Role of the Co-Chairs**

**4.8.1** The co-chairs are responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) issuing notices of General Meetings and Steering Committee meetings;
- (b) taking minutes of General Meetings and Steering Committee meetings;
- (c) keeping the records of the VTU, including a list of active members and ensuring members' contact information is secure;
- (d) conducting the correspondence of the Steering Committee;
- (e) making available the annual report of the VTU.

**4.8.2** In the absence of the co-chairs from a meeting, the Steering Committee must appoint another individual to act as chair at the meeting.

### **Role of the Treasurer(s)**

**4.9** The treasurer is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) receiving and banking monies collected from the members or other sources;
- (b) keeping accounting records in respect of the VTU's financial transactions;
- (c) preparing the VTU's financial statements;
- (d) making the VTU's filings respecting taxes.

### **Role of the Trustees**

The trustees are responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) Ensuring that bylaws and procedures are adhered to at RGMs, AGMs, and

Steering Committee meetings;

- (b) Updating bylaws when special resolutions are passed to change them;
- (c) keeping a record of how bylaws have been interpreted over the years;
- (d) oversee the work done by the Steering Committee and report any atypical decisions to the General Membership of the Union;
- (e) inspect the financial records of the VTU in consultation with the Treasurer; and
- (f) Trustees shall have the ability to obtain all non-email account passwords that pertain to common union business

### **Role of the Chapter Coordinator(s)**

The chapter coordinator is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) Setting up meetings with Chapter Representatives and/or Chairs as necessary to support them in their role;
- (b) Facilitate communication between chapters, which may include facilitating regular meetings of all Neighbourhood Representatives or their delegates;
- (c) Maintaining and updating “Chapter Resources” folder as necessary;

### **Role of the Solidarity Coordinator(s)**

The solidarity coordinator is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) Liaises with external and/or allied organizations as a representative of the VTU

### **Role of the Education Coordinator(s)**

The Education Coordinator is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) Coordinate, lead, facilitate or otherwise engage with member education work being done by working groups, neighbourhood chapters or Steering Committee;
- (b) Ensure that all education work serves to educate and empower members, in accordance with the values set out by members in our constitution; and
- (c) Ensure that education work complements organizing work within VTU.

### **Absentee Steering Committee Members**



**4.10** If a Steering Committee member misses 5 meetings without a reasonable excuse during a term, the Steering Committee may decide whether to declare that member's position vacant at the next meeting following the fifth absence.

#### **Calling Steering Committee meeting**

**4.11** A Steering Committee meeting may be called by a Co-Chair, a Neighbourhood Chapter Representative, or a Working Group Representative.

#### **Notice of Steering Committee meeting**

**4.12** At least 2 days' notice of a Steering Committee meeting must be given to all Steering Committee members, unless all the Steering Committee members agree to a shorter notice period.

#### **Chair of Steering Committee meeting**

**4.13** The Steering Committee shall appoint a chair to conduct the meeting at each Steering Committee meeting.

#### **Proceedings valid despite omission to give notice**

**4.14** The accidental omission to give notice of a Steering Committee meeting to a Steering Committee member, or the non-receipt of a notice by a Steering Committee member, does not invalidate proceedings at the meeting.

#### **Conduct of Steering Committee meetings**

**4.15** The Steering Committee members may regulate their meetings and proceedings as they think fit, but shall record minutes of each meeting and make these minutes available upon request to any member of the VTU in good standing.

#### **Quorum of Steering Committee**

**4.16** The quorum for the transaction of business at a Steering Committee meeting is 5 Steering Committee members.

#### **Responsibility to Consult Membership**

**4.17** When making major decisions affecting the direction of the VTU, the Steering Committee has a responsibility to obtain the consent of Voting Members by means of a

majority vote. Examples of such decisions include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Spending above \$1000.00 that does not directly facilitate regular VTU functions, such as an AGM;
- (b) Positions on laws and policy at all levels of government that the VTU would actively advocate to enact.

### **Forum for Consultation**

**4.18** The Steering Committee shall consult membership on major decisions as per 4.2.1 at a General Meeting.

### **Time-Sensitive Decisions**

**4.19** In cases where the Steering Committee deems that a decision is of a time-sensitive nature, the Steering Committee may take action prior to consulting the membership. Once action is taken, the Steering Committee must communicate their decision to the membership and provide an adequate forum for discussion and debate at the next General Meeting. The Steering Committee must ensure members are aware that their decision can be challenged by the membership under 3.5.1.

## **Part 5 — Working Groups**

### **Establishment of Working Group**

**5.1** A Working Group may be established by the Steering Committee, or by a petition to the Steering Committee by 3 or more VTU members outlining the general scope of the Working Group.

### **Approval of Working Group**

**5.2** The Steering Committee shall approve a Working Group unless they deem it to be incompatible with the objectives and purposes of the VTU. The decision shall be issued in writing and made available to all VTU members.

### **Joining a Working Group**

**5.3.1** Any member of the VTU may join a Working Group, provided:

**(a)** The member is in good standing; and

**(b)** The member has attended at least one General Meeting or meeting of the Working Group.

### **Working Group Representative**

**5.4.1** Each Working Group must appoint at least one Working Group Representative.

**5.4.2** If desired, a Working Group may ask the Steering Committee to appoint its Working Group Representative.

### **Role of the Working Group Representative**

**5.5.1** The Working Group Representative is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

**(a)** Sitting on the Steering Committee and participating as a regular member of the Steering Committee;

**(b)** Facilitating communication and cooperation between their represented Working Group and the Steering Committee, other Working Groups, and the general membership;

**(c)** Choosing dates and times for Working Group meetings;

**(d)** Securing venues for Working Group meetings;

**(e)** Issuing notices of Working Group meetings;

**(f)** Taking minutes of Working Group meetings;

**(g)** Keeping a list of Working Group members;

**(h)** Making available any minutes or reports to the Steering Committee.

**5.5.2** In the absence of the Working Group Representative from a meeting, a Working Group may appoint another member to fill the role of Working Group Representative;

**5.5.3** If the Working Group Representative is already a member of the Steering Committee, then no additional seat is added to the Steering Committee.

## **Working Group Procedure**

**5.6** Except where specified by these Bylaws, each Working Group shall establish its own procedures for operation and shall report them to the Steering Committee.

## **Absentee Working Group Members**

**5.7** If a Working Group member misses 3 meetings without a reasonable excuse, the Working Group Representative may choose to remove the member from Working Group correspondence lists.

## **Relationship of Working Groups to Steering Committee and Membership**

**5.8.1** Each Working Group shall be represented by at least one seat on the Steering Committee.

**5.8.2** Each Working Group shall report regularly on its activities to the VTU Steering Committee, and at least once per year at the AGM.

## **Temporary Working Groups**

**5.9** Working Groups may be established to fulfill short-term objectives of the VTU. Temporary Working Groups are subject to the same bylaws as regular Working Groups. Once the objectives of a Temporary Working Group have been fulfilled, the Working Group is disbanded. The seat held on the Steering Committee held by the Working Group Representative from the Temporary Working Group is then eliminated.

## **Inactive Working Groups**

**5.10.1** A Working Group which hosts no meetings for 3 consecutive months shall be considered inactive. The seat on the Steering Committee held by the Working Group Representative becomes vacant and is subject to 4.6.

**5.10.2** Inactive Working Groups shall be either listed as inactive or removed from VTU directories at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

**5.10.3** The Working Group shall cease to be inactive if VTU members re-establish the working group in accordance with 5.1

## Part 6 — Neighbourhood Chapters

### **Establishment of Neighbourhood Chapter**

**6.1** A Neighbourhood Chapter may be established by a petition to the Steering Committee by 3 or more VTU members in good standing outlining its geographic boundaries. VTU members who are holding regular meetings of established Neighbourhood Chapters as of January 2022 need not submit a petition, but shall define its geographical boundaries to Membership.

### **Approval of Neighbourhood Chapter**

**6.2** The Steering Committee shall approve a Neighbourhood Chapter unless they deem it to be incompatible with the objectives and purposes of the VTU. The decision shall be issued in writing and made available to all VTU members.

### **Becoming a Voting member of a Neighbourhood Chapter**

**6.3** Any member of the VTU shall be considered a voting member of a Neighbourhood Chapter, provided:

- (a)** The member is in good standing; and
- (b)** The member has attended at least one General Meeting or meeting of the Neighbourhood Chapter

### **Neighbourhood Chapter Chair**

**6.4.1** Each Neighbourhood Chapter must select at least one Representative at any given time.

### **Role of Neighbourhood Chapter Representative**

**6.5.1** The Neighbourhood Chapter Representative is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a)** Sitting on the Steering Committee and participating as a regular member of the Steering Committee;
- (b)** Facilitating communication and cooperation between their represented Neighbourhood and the Steering Committee, other Neighbourhood Chapters, Working Groups, and the general membership;

- (c) Choosing dates and times for Neighbourhood Chapter meetings;
- (d) Securing venues for Neighbourhood Chapter meetings;
- (e) Issuing notices of Neighbourhood Chapter meetings;
- (f) Taking minutes of Neighbourhood Chapter meetings;
- (g) Maintaining a list of Neighbourhood Chapter members;
- (h) Making available any minutes or reports to the Steering Committee.

**6.5.2** In the absence of the Neighbourhood Chapter Representative from a meeting, a Neighbourhood Chapter may appoint another member to fill the role of Neighbourhood Chapter Representative.

### **Neighbourhood Chapter Procedure**

**6.6** Except where specified by these Bylaws, each Neighbourhood Chapter shall establish its own procedures for operation and shall report them to the Steering Committee.

### **Relationship of Neighbourhood Chapter to Steering Committee and Membership**

**6.7.1** Each Neighbourhood Chapter shall be represented by at least one seat on the Steering Committee.

**6.7.2** Each Neighbourhood Chapter shall report regularly on its activities to the VTU Steering Committee and at least once per year at the AGM to Membership.

### **Inactive Neighbourhood Chapters**

**6.9.1** A Neighbourhood Chapter which hosts no meetings for 3 consecutive months shall be considered inactive.

**6.9.2** Inactive Neighbourhood Chapters shall be either listed as inactive or removed from VTU directories at the discretion of the Steering Committee. Neighbourhood Chapter Chairpersons shall forfeit their credentials and member contact lists to the Chapter Coordinator should the Neighbourhood Chapter become inactive as per 6.9.1

**6.9.3** The Neighbourhood chapter shall cease to be inactive if VTU members re-

establish the chapter in accordance with 6.1.

## Part 7 — Public Statements or Activities of the VTU

### **Compliance with Purpose and Objectives**

**7.1** All public statements made or activities undertaken on behalf of the VTU by a member or a Working Group or a Neighbourhood Chapter must comply with the purpose and objectives of the VTU.

## Part 8 — Conflict Resolution

### **Establishing Conflict**

**8.1.1** Where any member or members have acted in violation of the VTU's Constitution or Bylaws, another member may request that a Conflict Resolution Committee form to decide on what action should be undertaken.

**8.1.2** Requests for conflict resolution must be made in writing to the Steering Committee.

### **Conflict Resolution Committee**

**8.2** Conflict Resolution Committees are formed by the Steering Committee, and are composed of 4 members. Conflict Resolution Committees are temporary in nature. The purpose of a Conflict Resolution Committee is to seek resolutions to individual conflicts, and to restore trust, respect, and accountability between members. Once conflicts are deemed to be resolved by the Conflict Resolution Committee, the Conflict Resolution Committee is disbanded.

### **Forming a Conflict Resolution Committee**

**8.3.1** The Steering Committee is responsible for calling for the formation of a Conflict Resolution Committee, which is composed of 4 members. Conflict Resolution Committee members must be VTU members in good standing, and must not be involved in the conflict in question.

**8.3.2** The member who requested Conflict Resolution action (the offended member) may choose 2 members for the Committee.

**8.3.3** The offending member may choose the other 2 members.

**8.3.4** The Steering Committee must inform the offending and offended members of their right to choose 2 Conflict Resolution Committee members each. Failure to do so nullifies the final decision of the Conflict Resolution Committee.

**8.3.5** Where an offending or offended member does not choose 2 Conflict Resolution Committee members, the Steering Committee must choose the additional members.

## **Process**

**8.4.1** The Conflict Resolution Committee may meet with the offending and offended parties as many times as the Conflict Resolution Committee deems necessary.

**8.4.2** The Conflict Resolution Committee's decision for action must be made by consensus. Once a decision for action is made by the Conflict Resolution Committee, it is the duty of the committee to ensure resolution is carried out.

**8.4.3** If the Conflict Resolution Committee deems it necessary, the Steering Committee must hire a professional mediator who is not a member of the VTU to mediate the conflict.

## **Opting out**

**8.5** If either of the offending and offended members do not consent to participate in the Conflict Resolution process, other options for resolution may be explored. However, the offence will still be recorded.

## **Record of Conflict**

**8.6.1** All conflict resolution requests ("instances of conflict") and, where applicable, resolutions, must be recorded for future reference.

**8.6.2** Members with more than two instances of conflict recorded as an offending member may be expelled from the VTU under 2.4.





## Appendix A — Steering Committee Election Process

### 1. Size

- a. Part of the Steering Committee shall be elected by the general membership at the AGM (“Elected Steering Committee members”);
- b. The rest of the Steering Committee shall be composed of 1 member of each of the Working Groups (“Working Group Representatives”) and Neighbourhood Chapters (“Neighbourhood Chapter Representatives”);
- c. The number of Elected Steering Committee members shall be 9.

### 2. Working Group and Neighbourhood Chapter Representatives

- a. Each Working Group and Neighbourhood Chapter may select up to 1 member to act as its Representative;
- b. Working Groups and Neighbourhood Chapters may use any method they wish to select their Representatives.

### 3. AGM Election Ballot

- a. A ranked ballot system will be used;
- b. A valid ballot will have candidates uniquely ranked from 1 – 9, or no rank;
- c. The ballot shall indicate which Equity Liaison position a candidate is running for, if any, as in section 4 of this Appendix;
- d. Equity wins a tie with non-equity, and housing vulnerability (as defined in section 4(b)(i) of this Appendix) wins a tie with non-housing vulnerability;
- e. Ties that are not broken by the rule in section 3(d) of this Appendix shall be broken by the returning officer’s ballot;
- f. The returning officer’s ballot must be a ranked ballot with uniquely ranked candidates from 1 – 9.

### 4. Liaisons

- Liaison positions are filled by members from Working Groups or with a self-identified connection to an Equity-Seeking Group.
- Liaison positions are responsible for representing all members of the VTU.
  - a. Working Group Representative
    - i. Each Working Group must select 1 member to be on the Steering Committee.
    - ii. Working Group Representatives are appointed by the Working Groups.
  - b. Equity Liaison
    - i. 2 Elected Steering Committee members must be persons with lived experience with housing vulnerability, defined as homelessness, single room occupancy tenancy, or living in social housing. This should be noted on the ballot.
    - ii. A minimum of half of Elected Steering Committee members must also act as representatives of equity seeking groups. Those groups include, are not

limited to, and in no particular order:

1. Persons with lived experienced with housing vulnerability;
  2. Indigenous persons;
  3. Racialized persons;
  4. Persons with disabilities;
  5. LGBTQ2IA+ persons.
- iii. These minima only apply where sufficiently many candidates have a self-identified connection to these groups.

## 5. Nominations Announcement

- a. The announcement for nominations must clearly state the Liaison positions and encourage individuals from those groups to run as candidates

## Sample Ballot

**Instructions:** Please indicate your selections for the Steering Committee by placing a unique number from 1 – 9 beside their name. You may make up to 9 selections.

### Candidates

- \_\_\_ Liz Gupta (e)
- \_\_\_ Margie Notaro (e)
- \_\_\_ Xavier Koenig (e) (hv)
- \_\_\_ Gregory Winter
- \_\_\_ Felix Ainsley (e)
- \_\_\_ Brody Howard
- \_\_\_ Kenneth Doyle
- \_\_\_ Olaf Jardine (e) (hv)
- \_\_\_ Fred Trail
- \_\_\_ Nigella Peterson (e)
- \_\_\_ Michael Fraser
- \_\_\_ Eun Cho (e)
- \_\_\_ Terry Bates
- \_\_\_ Shirin Pastore (e) (hv)
- \_\_\_ Gabriella Rotolo (e)
- \_\_\_ Olga Lucic (e)
- \_\_\_ Brandon Richelieu
- \_\_\_ Ron Seward

Legend:

(hv) – Lived experience with homelessness, single room occupancy tenancy, or living in social housing.

(e) – Interested in Equity Liaison position.

## Sample Election Result – Application of the Rules Election Rules

**based on above criteria:**

- A. Max of 9 ppl elected to Steering Committee
- B. Max of 7 ppl without lived experience with homelessness, single room occupancy tenancy, or living in social housing
- C. Max of 4 ppl that are non-equity

Ranking	Votes Alone	Name	Equity	Housing vulnerability	# Votes	Elected?	Order elected
1		Xavier Koenig	Yes	Yes	98	Yes	1st
2		Gregory Winter	No	No	92	Yes	2nd
3		Terry Bates	No	No	91	Yes	4th*
4		Margie Notaro	Yes	No	91	Yes	3rd*
5		Michael Fraser	No	No	89	Yes	5th
6		Kenneth Doyle	No	No	87	Yes	6th**
						No, Rule C max reached	
7		Fred Trail	No	No	87		-**
8		Liz Gupta	Yes	No	76	Yes	7th
9		Felix Ainsley	Yes	No	70	Yes	8th
						No, Rule C max reached	
10		Brody Howard	No	No	62		-
						No, Rule B max reached	
11		Eun Cho	Yes	No	59		-
12		Olaf Jardine	Yes	Yes	51	Yes	9th
						No, Rule A max reached	
13		Gabriella Rotolo	Yes	No	51		-
						No, Rule A max reached	
14		Shirin Pastore	Yes	Yes	50		-
						No, Rule A max reached	
15		Olga Lucic	Yes	No	48		-
						No, Rule A max reached	
16		Nigella Peterson	Yes	No	40		-
						No, Rule A max reached	
17		Ron Seward	No	No	32		-
						No, Rule A max reached	
18		Brandon Richelieu	No	No	30		-

\* Note that Equity wins a tie.

\*\* Note that the Returning Officer's ballot ranked Kenneth Doyle ahead of Fred Trail, so Kenneth Doyle wins despite the tie.

**Result:** Rules govern maximums and minimums, and provide the minimum level of representation as if done via 3 different ballots in this example (i.e. Open, Housing Vulnerability, Equity).

## Appendix B — Map of the Lower Mainland

