

**CENTRETOWN CITIZENS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF OTTAWA**  
**2024 BYLAWS**

Approved by the membership at the Annual General Meeting of the 30th day of January, 2024.

A Bylaw relating generally to the transaction of the affairs of the Centretown Citizens Community Association of Ottawa.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- To maintain and improve the residential and community character of Centretown, in the City of Ottawa;
- To provide support for Centretown citizens in striving toward the attainment of objectives which are compatible with the aims of the Corporation;
- To continuously monitor and assist in the implementation of the proposals of the Centretown Development Plan;
- To improve interaction between the various groups and individuals in Centretown and to coordinate various citizens' activities; and
- To accept donations, gifts, grants, legacies and bequests;

**ARTICLE 1: DEFINITIONS**

1.1 **The Act:** The *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010*, S.O. 2010, c. 15.

1.2 **The Association:** The Centretown Citizens Community Association of Ottawa.

1.3 **Board of Directors ("the Board"):** The President and Directors elected by the Membership pursuant to Article 5 or appointed pursuant to Article 4 of this Bylaw, to manage the affairs and property of the Association.

1.4 **Centretown:** That area of the City of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada bounded by the Ottawa River, the Rideau Canal, Highway 417 (the Queensway) and Bronson Avenue. The Association recognizes that this is unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

1.5 **Charter of Respect:** The Charter of Respect of the Centretown Citizens Community Association, as enacted and amended from time to time by the Board of Directors

1.6 **Code of Conduct:** The Code of Conduct of the Centretown Citizens Community Association, as enacted and amended from time to time by the Board of Directors

1.7 **Committee or Working Group:** Subordinate bodies to the Board as set out in Article 8 of this Bylaw

1.7.1 **Special Committees:** Created by the Board to perform a specific function for a limited period of time.

1.7.2 **Standing Committees:** Created by the Board to perform a continuing function until the committee ends.

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- 1.8 **Executive Committee:** The Officers collectively, as set out in Article 6 of this Bylaw.
- 1.9 **Groups and Organizations:** Includes both unincorporated and incorporated bodies respectively.
- 1.10 **Member:** Member of Association
- 1.11 **Members' Meeting:** Either an Annual Members' Meeting as set out in section 9.1.1 below or a Special Meeting convened by the Directors pursuant to section 9.1.2 below.
- 1.12 **Officer:** Any of the President, Vice-President, Chair, Corporate Secretary, Membership Secretary, or Treasurer.
- 1.13 **Written Notice:** As set out in various Articles of this Bylaw, shall only include notice by postal mail, email and/or facsimile as set out in Article 11.2 of this Bylaw.

#### **ARTICLE 2: HEAD OFFICE**

- 2.1 The head office of the Association shall be in Centretown at a location the Board shall from time to time determine.
- 2.2 All documents pertaining to the Association or its various committees and sub-committees, whether hardcopy or computerized documents shall be lodged at the head office of the Association within sixty (60) days of creation or approval, whichever is later.
- 2.3 Articles of Incorporation, Minutes, Financial Records and Policies shall be retained pursuant to the Archival Documents Policy.
- 2.4 Any Member may, upon written request to the Corporate Secretary, request to review Association documents, with the exception of Minutes for sessions that were *in camera*.
- 2.5 Requests by Members to view documents shall be reported to the Board at the next Board meeting after receipt of the request and arrangements shall be made for the Member to review documents, either in hardcopy or computerized document, prior the second Board meeting after receipt of the request.

#### **ARTICLE 3: MEMBERSHIP**

- 3.1 Membership in the Association is open to:
- 3.1.1 Individuals who support the objectives of the Association, have reached the age of eighteen (18) years and who either reside, work, or own at least one (1) business or property in Centretown; or
- 3.2 Membership in the Association shall be contingent on the payment of a membership fee, the amount of which shall be determined, from time to time, by the Board.
- 3.3 Expiration of Membership: Shall expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31) following the most recent payment of a membership fee. A Member may purchase or renew their membership at any time by paying the membership fee determined by the Board.

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3.4 Members have the right to:

- Attend and speak at all General or Special Meetings;
- Seek election to the Board;
- Join any Standing or Special Committee;
- Chair any Standing or Special Committee with the approval of the Board; and
- Exercise one (1) vote at all Special Meetings and General Meetings.

3.5 A Member shall cease to be a Member:

3.5.1 if the Member resigns from the Association by delivering a written resignation to the President or Membership Secretary;

3.5.2 if the Member ceases to meet the qualifications of Article 3.1;

3.5.3 if the Member has failed to renew their membership and pay the required membership fee pursuant to Article 3.2;

3.5.4 If Members, at a Special General Meeting, or the Board pass a resolution terminating a membership pursuant to Article 3.6; or

3.5.5 on death

3.6 Discipline of Members: The Members, at a Special Meeting, may pass a resolution authorizing disciplinary action or the termination of a membership for: contravening these bylaws, significant or repeated contraventions of the Charter of Respect, or any other conduct requiring discipline.

3.6.1 The Board may also pass a resolution authorizing disciplinary action or the termination of a membership for: contravening these bylaws, significant or repeated contraventions of the Charter of Respect, contraventions of the Code of Conduct, or any other conduct requiring discipline.

3.6.2 The Member whose conduct is at issue must be provided 15 days' written notice before the Members, at a Special Meeting, or the Board may pass the above-mentioned resolution.

3.6.3 The notice shall set out the reasons for the disciplinary action or termination of membership.

3.6.4 The Member receiving the notice is entitled to provide oral and written submissions addressing the disciplinary action or termination not less than 5 days before the end of the 15-day notice period. The Board shall consider the submissions of the Member before making a final decision regarding disciplinary action or termination of membership.

3.6.5 Disciplinary action may include the removal or limitation of any right of a Member, or such other actions that are deemed necessary in the circumstances.

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3.6.6 An expelled member may only be re-admitted if the board passes a resolution to do so

3.7 Membership may not be transferred except to the Association.

#### **ARTICLE 4: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

4.1 The property and affairs of the Association shall be managed by the Board.

4.2 The Board shall consist of the President and twelve (12) Directors.

4.3 Neither Board Members nor the President shall receive any remuneration for their services.

4.4 The office of a Board Member or the President shall be vacated:

4.4.1 if the President resigns from office by delivering a written resignation to a member of the Executive Committee.

4.4.2 if the Board Member resigns from office by delivering a written resignation to the President or to the Corporate Secretary;

4.4.3 if the Board Member or President is found to be incapable of managing property under the *Substitute Decisions Act*, the *Mental Health Act* or by a court in Canada or elsewhere;

4.4.4 if, at a Special General Meeting duly called for such purpose upon not less than fourteen (14) days' nor more than thirty (30) days' written notice setting out the reasons such removal, a resolution is passed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote that the Board Member or President be removed from office;

4.4.5 if the Board Member or the President is or becomes an undischarged bankrupt;

4.4.6 on death;

4.4.7 if the Board Member or President ceases to be a Member of the Association;

4.4.8 if the Board Member is absent from three (3) consecutive board meetings, unless otherwise authorized by the Board; or

4.4.9 If the Board Member or President puts their name forward as a nominee or candidate for political office at the municipal, provincial or federal level pursuant to Articles 16 and 17 of this Bylaw.

4.5 If a vacancy occurs in a Director position for any reason, the Board may appoint a Member to fill the vacant position for the remainder of that position's term.

4.6 Every Director and Officer of the Association and their heirs, executors and administrators and estate and effects, respectively, shall from time to time and at all times be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of the Association from and against:

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4.6.1 All costs, charges and expenses whatsoever that such Director or Officer sustains or incurs in or about any action, suit or proceeding that is brought, commenced or prosecuted against the Director or Officer in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever made, done or permitted by the Director or Officer in or about the execution of the duties of the Director or Officer’s office; and

4.6.2 All costs, charges and expenses that such Director or Officer sustains or incurs in or about or in relation to the affairs of the Association except such charges or expenses as are occasioned by the Director or Officer’s own wilful neglect or default or failure to act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interest of the Association.

**ARTICLE 5: ELECTIONS**

5.1 All candidates for the Board shall be Members of the Association.

5.2 Not less than one (1) month before the Annual General Meeting, the Board shall establish a Nominating Committee to solicit nominations for positions for the Board.

5.3 At each Annual General Meeting, the membership shall elect a President for a one (1) year term.

5.4 At the first Annual General Meeting after the 2024 Bylaws have been approved by the membership, the members shall elect half of the Directors for a two-year term and half of the Directors for a one-year term. After this time, newly elected Directors shall be elected for two-year terms.

5.5 The Nominating Committee shall ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that candidates from all areas of Centretown stand for election.

5.6 The currently-sitting President and Board Members whose terms have expired shall be eligible for re-election to any vacant office.

**ARTICLE 6: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

6.1 The Executive Committee consists of the President, Vice-President, Chair, Corporate Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and any other officers as deemed necessary.

6.2 The Officers, with the exception of the President, shall be Directors of the Board and shall be selected by the Board at the first Board meeting after the Annual General Meeting, either by election or appointment, for a one (1) year term ending at the first Board Meeting after the next Annual General Meeting.

6.3 Two or more offices of the Association may be held by the same person.

6.4 The Board may, at its discretion, remove any Officer or appoint Directors to fill any vacancies on the Executive Committee, except for the President.

6.5 The responsibilities of the Executive Committee shall include:

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| 6.5.1 | the formulation of policies for approval by the Board in matters not specifically delegated to a Committee;                 |
| 6.5.2 | the day-to-day administration of the Association in matters not specifically reserved for the Board or a Committee;         |
| 6.5.3 | other matters referred to it by the Board; and  |
| 6.5.4 | reporting its actions and decisions in writing to the Board meeting immediately following each Executive Committee meeting. |

#### **ARTICLE 7: DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**7.1 President:** the President shall:

- have the right of a vote;
- be the spokesperson of the Association in matters relating to the actions and positions of the Association unless they delegate such responsibility;
- be a member *ex officio* of all committees and working groups unless the Board otherwise stipulates;
- direct the preparation of an annual statement from the board (board or governance report) for presentation at the AGM and inclusion in the annual report; and
- be a signing officer for all financial transactions together with the Treasurer and one other Officer selected by the Board.

**7.2 Vice-President:** the Vice-President shall:

- assist the President in the general functioning of the Association;
- shall chair the Executive Committee meetings;
- ensure there is a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the board; and
- at the direction of the President, have all the powers and perform all duties of the President

**7.3 Chair:** the Chair shall:

- preside over all Board and General Meetings
- ensure the effective functioning of Board, General and Special meetings and the respect of the code of conduct
- Only cast a vote in the case of a tie

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#### 7.4 **Corporate Secretary:** the Corporate Secretary shall:

- keep minutes of the Annual and Special General Meetings;
- keep minutes of meetings of the Board;
- submit required documentation pertaining to incorporation;
- keep records of and table all correspondence to and from the Association at meetings of the Board;
- be responsible for delivering all records and other documents relating to the Association to their successor on ceasing to hold office;
- give notice of meetings to the Board;
- act as the Association's archivist;
- ensure that all reports are prepared and filed as required by law or requested by the Board; and
- be responsible for information requests received from Members.

#### 7.5 **Membership Secretary:** the Membership Secretary shall:

- be responsible for ensuring that a list of membership is maintained and up-to-date;
- relay to Committee Chairs, without delay, the names and contact information of any person who consents to the release of their information and who has advised of an interest in joining a Committee or in the work done by a Committee;
- ensure that the membership list is used for the Association's activities only and not to be shared outside of the Association without the member's consent;
- maintain security of systems and applications used to administer the Association's membership;
- shall give notice of meetings of the Association to the membership; and
- shall be responsible for arranging public notice of Association meetings as required and as determined by the Board, with due regard to privacy issues.

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7.6 **Treasurer:** the Treasurer shall:

- maintain all finances and financial records of the Association;
- be a signing officer for all financial transactions, together with the President and one other Officer selected by the Board;
- provide periodic statements of the financial situation of the Association for the information of the Board;
- provide financial statements, signed by the Treasurer and the President, to the Membership at the time of the Annual General Meeting;
- maintain the security of systems and applications used to administer the Association's finances and financial records;
- ensure no privacy breaches or fraudulent activities;
- ensure compliance with regulatory bodies;
- advise the Board on financial sustainability of the Association; and
- perform such other duties as from time to time directed by the Board.
- The Treasurer may call for and initiate an audit of the Association's finances and financial records at an Annual General Meeting or a Special Meeting, by majority vote.

7.7 Every director and officer in exercising his or her powers and discharging his or her duties to the Association shall:

- 7.7.1 Act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the Association; and
- 7.7.2 Exercise the care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances.

7.8 Every director and officer shall comply with:

- 7.8.1 The Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and the regulations; and
- 7.8.2 The Association's articles and Bylaws.

7.9 No provision in a contract, the articles, the Bylaws or a resolution relieves a director or officer from the duty to act in accordance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and the regulations or relieves him or her from liability for a breach of the Act or the regulations.

#### **ARTICLE 8: COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

8.1 The Board may create committees and working groups.

8.2 The membership of a committee may only include Members of the Association, while the membership of a working group may include non-Members.

8.3 All committees or working groups must have written terms of reference that have been approved by the Board. A committee or working group that does not have approved terms of reference may only meet to prepare their terms of reference for approval.



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8.4	A committee or working group's terms of reference must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include reference to the requirements in Article 8.8, 8.9, 8.11, 8.12 and 8.13;</li> <li>• State that compliance with the Association's Code of Conduct is mandatory;</li> <li>• Describe the objectives of the working group or committee;</li> <li>• Outline the composition of its membership and the rights of non-members, if any, to attend and participate in its proceedings; and</li> <li>• Provide any other information that the Board determines is appropriate.</li> </ul>
8.5.	A committee or working group may determine its own organization, operations and priorities, subject to any conditions contained in its terms of reference, in these Bylaws, or in a direction from the Board.
8.6	With the exception of the Executive Committee, a Member of the Association may join the membership of any working group or committee.
8.7	With the exception of the Executive and Nominating Committees, no committee or working group has priority or precedence over any other committee or working group.
8.8	Every committee or working group must have a minimum of three (3) members, which constitute quorum.
8.9	The Chair of any committee or working group must be a member of the Association.
8.10	Each Board member must be a member of at least one committee or working group.
8.11	Each committee or working group must regularly report on its activities in writing to the Board.
8.12	Where a committee or working group anticipates producing revenue or incurring expenses of \$200.00 or more, it must submit a written budget for approval by the Board. Such budgets may only be for a period of less than twelve (12) months.
8.13	If the chair of a committee or working group puts their name forward as a nominee or candidate for political office at the municipal, provincial or federal level, they are deemed to have resigned from that position.
<b><u>ARTICLE 9: MEETINGS</u></b>	
9.1	<b>General Meetings:</b>
9.1.1	The Association shall hold an Annual General Meeting, open to the public and publicly-advertised, at intervals of no more than fourteen (14) calendar months. The Board will decide the date and place of the Annual General Meeting. The place of the Annual General Meeting must be within Ontario.

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9.1.1.1 Notice: Subject to the Act, not less than 10 and not more than 50 days prior to a Members’ Meeting, written notice must be given in the manner specified in the Act and the Notice Section of this Bylaw to each Member, each Director and to the auditor or person appointed to conduct a review engagement.

9.1.1.2 Voting members have the right to submit a proposal to be discussed at a members’ meetings, and the board must include it in the notice of meeting unless:

- it is sent to them less than 14 days before the meeting,
- it does not significantly relate to the business of the non-profit,
- it appears the member is abusing their right to submit a proposal for publicity, or
- for any other exceptional situation listed in the ONCA.

If the board has to include the proposal in the notice, the member also has a right to include a statement up to 500 words at their own expense unless the members vote to cover the cost. (s.56)

9.1.1.3 The only persons entitled to attend a Members’ Meeting are:

- the Members
- the Directors
- the auditors of the Association (or the person who has been appointed to conduct a review engagement, if any) and
- others who are entitled or required under any provision of the Act or the articles to be present at the meeting.
- Any other person may be admitted only if the Chair of the meeting invites them or the majority of the Members present at the meeting consent to their being there.

9.1.1.4 A Members’ Meeting may be conducted by telephone or electronic means or in a hybrid manner with some Members attending in person and others attending by telephone or electronic means. The telephone or electronic means must allow all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting.

A Member participating in the above ways is deemed to be present at that meeting. Members’ Meetings may be held entirely by phone or electronic means.

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9.1.2 The Directors may at any time call a Special or General Meeting. The Board will convene a Special Meeting on written request of not less than 10% of the Members for any purpose connected with the affairs of the Association that does not fall within the exceptions listed in the Act or is otherwise inconsistent with the Act, within 21 days from the date of the deposit of the request.

9.1.3 At any Annual General Meeting or Special Meeting, only Members may put forward motions and vote.

9.1.4 In advance of any Annual General Meeting, the Directors will determine how members may vote at the meeting, which may include voting by electronic means.

9.1.5 Quorum for the transaction of business at an Annual General Meetings or a Special Meeting shall be 25% of the Members.

9.1.5.1 If a quorum is present at the opening of a meeting of the Members, the Members present may proceed with the business of the meeting, even if a quorum is not present throughout the meeting.

#### 9.2 Board Meetings:

9.2.1 The Board shall meet regularly, preferably on a monthly basis, but in no event shall there be less than eight (8) Board meetings in a twelve (12) consecutive month period.

9.2.2 A Director may participate in a meeting of the Board by telephone or electronic means. The telephone or electronic means must allow all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting.

9.2.3 A Director participating in the above ways is deemed to be present at that meeting. For greater certainty, Board meetings may be held entirely by phone or electronic means.

9.2.4 All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public, unless matters relating to personnel, litigation or other sensitive issues are being discussed, in which case the Board shall move *in camera* to deal with that issue.

9.2.5 Written notice of all meetings of the Board shall be given to each Board member, preferably with an agenda, by the Corporate Secretary, the President or their delegate at least five (5) days in advance of the date of the meeting.

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- 9.2.6 Notice of a meeting is not necessary if:
- all of the Directors are present, and none objects to the holding of the meeting,
  - those absent have waived notice or have otherwise signified their consent to the holding of such meeting, or
  - a quorum of Directors is present and it would be the first meeting of a newly elected or appointed Board immediately following the annual meeting of the Association.

9.2.7 All Board meetings shall be presided by the Chair. If the Chair is absent, the Directors present will choose a Director to act as the Chair.

9.2.8 At Board meetings, only the President and Directors may put forward motions and vote.

9.2.9 A majority of Board Members holding office, at least one (1) of whom is an Officer, shall constitute quorum for Board meetings.

9.2.10 Wherever possible, the Board has discussions and makes decisions at Board meetings. In exceptional circumstances, however, decisions may be taken by email or postal mail. The Board shall, at all times, have in place a policy setting forth both the conditions under which such decisions may be undertaken and the rules governing the taking and recording of these decisions.

#### 9.3 **Executive Meetings:**

9.3.1 The Executive Committee shall meet regularly, preferably on a monthly basis, but no event shall there be less than six (6) Executive Committee meetings in a twelve (12) consecutive month period.

9.3.2 Written notice of all Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be given to each Officer, preferably with an Agenda, by the Vice-President, or his or her delegate, at least five (5) days in advance of the date of the meeting.

9.3.3 Quorum for the Executive Committee shall be a majority of the serving Officers.

#### **ARTICLE 10: AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The agenda for the Annual General Meeting shall include, but not be limited to:

10.1 Written reports giving an overview of the goals and accomplishments over the period from the previous Annual General Meeting and for the coming year from the following individuals:

10.1.1 The President;

10.1.2 The Treasurer;

10.1.3 The Corporate Secretary;

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10.1.4 The Membership Secretary; and

10.1.5 The Chair of each Standing Committee and any Special Committee, if constituted.

10.2 Bylaw amendments and resolutions, if any;

10.3 Election of the President; and

10.4 Election of Directors.

**ARTICLE 11: ERRORS OR OMISSIONS**

11.1 No error or omission in notice of any meeting or any adjourned meetings shall invalidate such meeting or make void any proceedings taken thereat and any member may at any time waive notice of any such meeting and may ratify, approve and confirm any or all proceedings taken or had thereat.

11.2 For the purpose of sending notice to any Member, Director or Officer, it shall be sufficient if such notice is sent to that person's last postal address and/or email address recorded on the books of the Association.

**ARTICLE 12: FINANCES AND PROPERTY**

12.1 The Board may delegate to one or more of its Officers or Directors the authority to sign contracts, agreements, leases or any other transactions on behalf of the Association or to certify copies of any instrument, resolution, Bylaw or other document of the Association to be true copies thereof.

12.2 Despite section 12.1, the signatures of at least two Officers or Directors are required for any contract, agreement, lease or other transaction of a financial nature, except to make a deposit to an Association account.

12.3 The financial year of the Association ends on 31 August in each year or on such other date as the Board may from time to time by resolution determine.

The seal of the Association, if any, will be in the form determined by the Board.

12.4 All expenditures from Association funds shall be authorized by a motion of the Board. Such motions shall specify the maximum amount authorized, the period of authorization and the purpose or activity to be funded.

12.5 The Association shall maintain an account at a financial institution chosen by the Board. Funds generated by the Association and proceeds of any activities carried on in the name of the Association shall be turned over promptly to the Treasurer for deposit to the Association's account.

12.6 The President, Treasurer, and one other Officer selected by the Board shall be signing officers. All financial transactions of the Association, except deposits to Association accounts, shall require the signature of at least two (2) signing officers.

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12.7 An approved signing authority cannot move a motion to approve a payment to themselves or sign a cheque to themselves. In the instance where a payment is required to one of the two signing authorities, the 3rd signature will be used in place of the unauthorized signature.

12.8 When a new President is elected or a Treasurer is no longer a member of the Board, the outgoing President or outgoing Treasurer retain their signing authority until new signing authorities are established at the Association’s financial institution.

**ARTICLE 13: BYLAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS**

13.1 For the purpose of amending this Bylaw or creating new Bylaws or Articles, written notice of motion shall be provided to all Members at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the date of the Annual or Special General Meeting at which the matter will be actioned.

13.2 The Members may from time to time amend this Bylaw with a simple majority of the votes cast at a Members’ Meeting.

13.3 The Board may adopt rules, regulations or policies as it sees fit provided they are consistent with this Bylaw and any applicable legislation.

13.4 In all matters not governed by this Bylaw or any other set of rules, regulations or policies of the Association, Robert’s Rules of Order, current edition, shall govern.

**ARTICLE 14: DISSOLUTION**

14.1 Upon the dissolution of the Association and after the payment of all debts and liabilities, its remaining property shall be distributed to or disposed of to charitable or incorporated non-profit organizations of a nature consistent with the objectives of the Association and which carry on their work in Centretown.

14.2 A copy of all Association documents, with the exception of *in camera* minutes, whether in hardcopy or computerized document, shall also be lodged with the Archives of the City of Ottawa.

**ARTICLE 15: CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

15.1 Any Board Member or Officer who has a financial interest in any contract or transaction to be approved by the Board shall declare such an interest at the Board meeting at which the contract or transaction will be discussed and shall absent themselves from the meeting during the discussion of that item and refrain from voting on that item.

15.2 Each Board Member or Officer shall consider that their primary allegiance in the conduct of business of the Association shall be to the Association. If the Board members’ membership in any other Group or Organization would affect his or her judgment on any item before the Board, the Board member shall declare that membership and shall refrain from voting on that item.

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15.3 Any Board Member, Officer or Committee Chair who puts their name forward as a nominee or candidate for a municipal, provincial or federal political office shall be considered to be in a position of conflict of interest.

**ARTICLE 16: POLITICAL STATUS**

16. The Association shall not endorse, appear to endorse, financially support or appear to financially support the nomination or the candidature of any person or political party with respect to any municipal, provincial or federal political office, not including representing the Association on any advisory body at any level of government.