**Beyond Participation – PMG Hall May 28, 2019. Presented by: Co-operative housing Federation of Toronto (Presenter: Michelle Arscott)**

**Key takeaway:** Participation is not a co-op principle, BUILDING COMMUNITY IS. However, encouraging community involvement is important in a co-op as it helps make it more democratic, spreads the work of managing the co-op and gives members the opportunity to learn new skills.

**What makes it hard for members to be involved:** Group discussion identified committees/projects may be stale, cliquish, unwelcoming (new members have to attend 3-4 meetings before being allowed to join). Accessibility, be it language, notice and time of meetings, information on different committees and even location (for people with disabilities) are all challenges at City Park. Limited time of some Members has to be recognized and opportunities to only volunteer for a day or two is a reality for some and should be encouraged.

**Encouraging Community Involvement - Making it easier for members to be involved:** Group discussion identified that while City Park has a good number of committee/projects and member events, a combination of better information on these committees/projects and outreach to inform Members to let them know of opportunities to volunteer ranging from 1 day help in an event, serving on a committee/project and even on the Board of Directors.

**Recommendations for consideration:** Posting City Park’s website address boldly on the lobby and laundry room information boards. Improve information on website. Improve visibility (font size etc.) of postings on City Park’s information boards. Consider need for an accessibility committee/project with a focus on ways to facilitate participation in committee/projects, Board meetings and Members meetings (Examples: finding ways to better link volunteer to help someone with disability get to a meeting, consider offering free child care service to help Members with children attend the Annual General Members Meeting or a General Members Meeting)

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