



Tenant Services Committee

931 Yonge Street,
Toronto, M4W 2H2

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The Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”) of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (“TCHC”) held a virtual Public meeting on November 27, 2023 via Webex and in-person at City Hall, Committee Room 2, 100 Queen Street West, commencing at 9:01 a.m.

TSC Directors Present: John Campbell (Chair) (in-person)
Marcel Charlebois (via Webex)
Debbie Douglas (via Webex)
Ubah Farah (via Webex)
Ziva Ferreira (via Webex)
Councillor Paula Fletcher (via Webex) (9:08 a.m. – 10:54 a.m.)

Management Present: Tom Hunter, President & Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”)
Nadia Gouveia, Acting Chief Operating Officer (“COO”)
Darragh Meagher, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary
Lily Chen, Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer (“CFO”)
Barbara Shulman, Chief People & Culture Officer
Jessica Hawes, Acting Chief Development Officer
Luisa Andrews, Vice President, Information Technology Services
Allen Murray, Vice President, Facilities Management
Paula Knight, Vice President, Strategic Planning & Communications
Melanie Martin, Interim Commissioner of

Housing Equity
Lindsay Viets, Director, Operations Planning &
Program Service
Mona Bottoni, Acting Senior Manager,
Corporate Services, Community Safety Unit
("CSU")
Ceilidh Wilson, Assistant Corporate Secretary

A quorum being present, Mr. Campbell, serving as Chair, called the meeting to order, and Ms. Wilson served as recording secretary.

ITEM 1 CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

DEPUTATIONS

The Chair polled for any depositions to be heard at the meeting. The following verbal depositions were presented:

- Item 5 – Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update (*Catherine Wilkinson and Ann-Marie Tomlinson*)
- Item 6 – OCHE's 2024 Work Plan (*Ann-Marie Tomlinson*)
- Item 7 - Chief Operating Officer's Reports (*Catherine Wilkinson*)
- Item 7B – Tenant Complaints Update (*Ann-Marie Tomlinson and Miguel Avila-Velarde*)
- Item 7C – Tenant Engagement Refresh Update (*Ann-Marie Tomlinson and Miguel Avila-Velarde*)

The following written depositions were presented:

- Item 5 – Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update (*Ann-Marie Tomlinson*)
- Item 6 - Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity's ("OCHE") 2024 Work Plan (*Ann-Marie Tomlinson*)
- Item 7 - Chief Operating Officer's Reports (*Veronika Hering*)
- Item 7B - Tenant Complaints Update (*Ann-Marie Tomlinson*)
- Item 7C – Tenant Engagement Refresh Update (*Ann-Marie Tomlinson*)

ITEM 2 APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded Ms. Ferreira and carried, the TSC unanimously approved the Agenda for its Public Meeting of October 5, 2023.

ITEM 3 CHAIR'S POLL RE: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Chair requested members of the TSC to indicate any agenda item in which they had a conflict of interest, together with the nature of the interest. **No conflicts were declared.**

ITEM 4 CONFIRMATION OF TSC PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 5, 2023

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Farah, seconded by Ms. Charlebois and carried, the TSC confirmed the above-captioned minutes as amended.

ITEM 5 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS UPDATE

Verbal deputations were received from Catherine Wilkinson and Ann-Marie Tomlinson with respect to this item.

A written deputation was received from Catherine Wilkinson with respect to this item and was circulated to the TSC.

Mr. Meagher, Ms. Gouveia, Ms. Viets and Ms. Bottoni were available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- Briefing notes in meeting materials correspond to action items listed. Regular agenda items needing consideration from the Committee are presented as reports.
- The tenant transfer process can be quite challenging. The goal of the Crisis Transfer team and Accommodation team is to expedite these transfers as quickly as possible since they often entail urgent situations. The primary constraint is the availability of units, and challenges arise out of the demand for larger unit sizes and the limited number in the portfolio. Additionally, considering safety

concerns further limits the transfer of families to eligible locations.

- Action item: Management to provide the average wait time to transfer, broken out based on transfer category.
- Where there is an incident involving a tenant that requires tenancy management, the incident will be recorded on the tenant's file and the tenant is notified by letter. Depending on the severity of the incident, it can lead to escalating circumstances affecting their tenancy. In cases of egregious offenses, it may also lead to evictions.
- Some incidents will go unrecorded. The Operations team is encouraged to follow procedures and engage in the tenancy management process, especially regarding escalating issues. It is crucial to maintain proper documentation.
- The briefing note included in today's package proposes that site staff have 14-days of access to go back and review CCTV footage. Building staff often require access to past footage (e.g. when an incident takes place over the weekend) to address any concerns with tenants. Where footage older than 14-days needs to be reviewed, site staff will need to request access through the Community Safety Unit ("CSU"). Operations will endeavor to put policies in place regarding staff access to CCTV by Q1 of 2024.
- The responsibility of tenancy management does not lie with CSU. Tenancy management is overseen by the Tenant Services Coordinator, who ultimately to the Regional General Manager.
- CSU is primarily responsible for documenting escalating anti-social behaviour or potential criminal activities, including maintaining records of violent incidents, particularly for health and safety purposes related to specific tenant units.
- The responsibility for writing letters to tenants and keeping files related to tenancy management is within the purview of the Tenancy Management team. If a situation escalates to the point of potential eviction, it is handled through the Tenancy Management pillar.
- CSU's involvement is specifically triggered in cases related to CCTV footage retrieval beyond 14 days or situations that may lead to a potential criminal investigation. CSU is not involved in every case where a tenancy management issue is escalated.
- Action item: Management to provide a report outlining the relationship between Tenancy Management staff and Community Safety Unit staff in relation to addressing tenancy management matters

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- Action item: At a future Tenant Services Committee meeting, a report to be provided regarding the administration of the Tenant Advisory Committee (“TAC”), incorporating feedback from members of the TAC.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Ferreira and carried, the TSC received the matters reported as Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update as of October 5, 2023.

ITEM 6 OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HOUSING EQUITY’S 2024 WORK PLAN TSC:2023-44

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

A verbal deputation was received from Ann-Marie Tomlinson with respect to this item.

A written deputation was received from Ann-Marie Tomlinson with respect to this item and was circulated to the TSC.

Ms. Martin, Ms. Gouveia and Ms. Viets were available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- In 2022, the OCHE mandate expanded to include all TCHC tenants, leading to significant changes in the referral flow to the OCHE. Given this, the OCHE spent the majority of 2023 working with TCHC to implement strategies for managing the referral flow and evaluating case management practices.
- In 2024, OCHE plans to stay the course in delivering meaningful, appropriate, and helpful support to TCHC, specifically in eviction prevention for rent arrears. To accomplish this, OCHE has set up four goals in their work plan: ensuring successful tenancies and eviction prevention; staff training and capacity building; reporting to the Board of Directors; and systemic improvements and upgrades to create efficiencies for both OCHE and TCHC.
- TCHC has its Arrears Collection Process (“ACP”), where if a tenant falls two months behind in arrears, they are to be served with an N4 Notice and staff are to attempt to work with the tenant to resolve their

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- arrears. If unresolved, it triggers a referral to the OCHE.
- Once a file reaches the OCHE, they work intensively with tenants within 45 days to resolve the matter, engaging in case management to facilitate repayment agreements, direct payments or reducing the arrears.
 - OCHE initiated case conferencing this year, which is an open forum for frontline staff to meet with Early Resolution Officers by region to seek assistance, especially regarding OCHE and the ACP, with an aim to resolve matters without needing a referral to OCHE.
 - Through these case conferences, data has been compiled throughout the year to inform next year's training.
 - Tenant Service Coordinators regularly monitor arrears, aiming to identify any tenant falling behind in rent payments within a month's time, sometimes sooner. Proactive measures are taken because rectifying arrears becomes more challenging as they accumulate.
 - Efforts focus on resolving issues locally as much as possible. Referrals to the OCHE within the first month are not frequent because initial focus remains on TCHC engagement and management of the situation with tenants.
 - Repayment agreements primarily aim to pay back arrears that have accumulated over time. The tenant pays the current rent as per the agreement, and the repayment amount is addressed subsequently to fulfilling the rental fee for that particular month.
 - Rent increases, often based on factors such as changes in household income, are assessed during annual rent reviews.
 - TCHC is collaborating with OCHE, the Service Manager and TCHC's Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer to develop a proposal related to arrears forgiveness, which would be presented to the Board for approval before proceeding. Current discussions are related to a strategy to address arrears that arose during the COVID period, and the TSC recommended considering a strategy for a go-forward basis as well.
 - When a tenant notifies staff that they have had a change in income that impacts their ability to successfully pay their rent, staff will work with the tenant as quickly as possible to assess their situation and identify if it qualifies for a change in rent amount.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Farah, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC Committee approved the OCHE 2024 Work Plan, as set out in Attachment 1 to Report TSC:2023-44, and recommend its approval by the Board.

ITEM 7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER’S REPORTS

A verbal deputation was received from Catherine Wilkinson with respect to this item.

A written deputation was received from Veronika Hering with respect to this item and was circulated to the TSC.

TCHC’S Q3 2023 OPERATIONAL
ITEM 7A PERFORMANCE MEASURES TSC:2023-46

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Ms. Gouveia, Ms. Viets and Ms. Bottoni were available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- While the Rapid Rehousing Program (“RRP”) operates separately from the regular waitlist, the RRP requires that applicants are on the centralized waitlist.
- RRP applicants are typically using the shelter system. The RRP creates a pathway to transition individuals directly from shelters while ensuring they have the necessary supports in place to successfully remain housed. The City of Toronto (the “City”) manages the selection process for the program, employing comprehensive criteria to govern the process.
- There are seasonal trends that impact the fluctuations in crime against persons and properties. For instance, there tends to be more criminal activity during the summer months when more people are outdoors, potentially contributing to these fluctuations. Analyzing the data from each year will help provide insights into these trends overtime.
- If a tenant experiences a damage to property incident, it should be reported to CSU to investigate and document the incident. Any

repairs that are required should be reported to Operations to look into and follow-up on as required.

- Operations is presently conducting a review of units that have been taken out of circulation, which includes those used for tenant, staff, and agency use. This involves a unit-by-unit review to understand each unit's individual use.
- Prior to a unit being taken out of circulation, approval is required from the Service Manager. A form is required, detailing the reasons for withdrawal and it must be endorsed by the Service Manager before the unit can be taken out of circulation.
- In various communities, there have been instances where units were withdrawn from circulation to create programming spaces.
- Collective bargaining agreements, particularly with CUPE 416, stipulate specific obligations such as dedicated staff space, property storage, and access to facilities like showers onsite, based on the nature of the work and operational needs.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-46, being TCHC's Operational Performance Measures Report for the third quarter of 2023, for its information.

ITEM 7B TENANT COMPLAINTS UPDATE

TSC:2023-47

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Verbal deputations were received from Ann-Marie Tomlinson and Miguel Avila-Velarde with respect to this item.

A written deputation was received from Ann-Marie Tomlinson with respect to this item and was circulated to the TSC.

Ms. Gouveia was available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- Operations reports to the Regions regarding complaints trends on a quarterly basis. This process has shifted to a more dynamic system where a newly established automated dashboard provides monthly

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- updates, offering real-time data access and a more responsive approach to addressing complaints.
- The dashboard is a new data tool that provides both the centralized team and the Regional teams with detailed information on resolution rates, the status of unresolved complaints, local complaints, and specific complaint types at various levels.
 - The expectation is that complaints should be resolved locally, with the opportunity to escalate through local management prior to submitting a complaint through the centralized Solutions team, who is responsible for addressing escalated complaints.
 - There are specialized staff in the Solutions team trained to assist tenants in navigating the complaint process. The Solutions team investigates complaints and forwards findings to the regional teams for follow-up, ensuring accountability and action within the respective regions.
 - Based on feedback from the Tenant Advisory Committee, Operations has developed tenant-focused tools such as posters and pamphlets that provide information regarding who the local supervisors are in their area, their contact details, and the complaint escalation process.
 - The HoMES system is used by staff as repository where staff can input notes and comments regarding tenant issues and follow-ups.
 - When a tenant contacts the Client Care Centre (“CCC”) and requests a follow-up, the CCC inputs these notes into the tenant’s file in HoMES. These notes are then directed to local staff to follow-up and address the complaint.
 - Everything reported in this report is specific to the work done by the centralized Solutions team. The report includes unique complaints, but not necessarily unique complainants.
 - Action item: The next iteration of the Tenant Complaints Update report to include a year-over-year comparison of the complaints data and trends.
 - Complaints addressed by the Solutions team often relate to process fairness, customer service experiences, or staff conduct rather than work orders. Instances of dissatisfaction with staff engagement or vendor related issues are common types of complaints received by the centralized complaints team.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Ferriera, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-47, being Tenant Complaints Update, for its information.

ITEM 7C TENANT ENGAGEMENT REFRESH UPDATE TSC:2023-48

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Verbal deputations were received from Miguel Avila-Velarde and Ann-Marie Tomlinson with respect to this item.

A written deputation was received from Ann-Marie Tomlinson with respect to this item and was circulated to the TSC.

Ms. Gouveia was available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- Due to budgetary constraints, TCHC does not currently have the ability to allocate funding to community-led initiatives such as local community planning tables. The Tenant Action Fund is available to TCHC tenants and primarily funds small-scale community projects.
- Historically, TCHC had a social investment fund that supported community-led initiatives and programs, however this fund ended approximately seven years ago.
- TCHC provides letters of support to agencies applying for funding to provide programs and services within TCHC communities as well as to tenant groups to support their initiatives. The Programs and Partnerships team could consider writing letters of support for other initiatives on a case-by-case basis.
- TCHC currently does not provide honorariums to participants in the Tenant Engagement System. This matter has been identified as a topic for review as a part of the ongoing Tenant Engagement System Review. Operations will bring forward a recommendation related to this issue when the final report regarding the Tenant Engagement System Review is presented.

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Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Douglas and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-42, being the Tenant Engagement Refresh Update, for its information.

TERMINATION

A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Mr. Charlebois and seconded by Ms. Douglas. The TSC resolved to terminate the public meeting at 10:54 a.m.

Secretary

Chair, Tenant Services Committee