TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee
July 15th, 2024
6– 8 p.m.
Location: City Hall, Committee Room 4 – 100 Queen Street West

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance:

Organization	Participants
TAC Members	**Present Online:** Sara Abdella, Jorry Cross, Tabitha David, Petra Jeffers, Samantha Mogent, Susel Munoz, Tameka Richards, Charmaine Roye, Shabnam Shekh **Present In-Person:** Robert Bezanson, John Corso, Ines Garcia, Tracy Izzard, Doug Maybank, Debbie Menezes, Karlene Nation, Catherine Wilkinson **Not present:** Rosemarie Hibbert, Abdul Rahman
Non-Voting Members	**Not Present:** Marcel Charlebois, Tenant Board Director Ubah Farah, Tenant Board Director
TCHC Staff	**Present In-Person:** Sean Baird, Chief Executive Officer; (Co-Chair) Nadia Gouveia, Chief Operating Officer (Acting) Janelle Estwick, Executive Assistant Joseph Greer, Manager, Community Safety and Support Gail Johnson, Manager, Community Safety and Support Junior Taylor, Manager, Community Safety and Support

	Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement Christine Aina, Manager, Tenant Engagement (Acting)
City of Toronto Staff	**Present In-Person:** Jag Sharma, Deputy City Manager (Co-Chair) Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat Emily Gaus, Manager, Housing Secretariat (Acting) Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, Housing Secretariat **Not present:** Jenn St. Louis, Manager, Housing Secretariat

Welcome, Introductions, Land, and African Ancestral Acknowledgments

- TCHC's CEO Sean Baird introduced himself and co-chair Deputy City Manager Jag Sharma for the evening and welcomed all TAC members.
- TCHC's CEO read the Land and African Ancestral Acknowledgements.
- TAC members, TCHC staff, and City of Toronto Staff were asked to introduce themselves.
- TCHC Staff member addressed the passing of CSC Mike Morgan and directed any questions or concerns to the East's Manager of Community Safety and Support Gail Johnson.

Review of the TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee's Agenda, Minutes, and Action Items:

- TAC members reviewed and approved the agenda, previous TAC meeting minutes, and action items.
- A TCHC staff member addressed the timelines regarding the new proposed models which the TAC will vote on. The preferred model will then be brought to TCATS and returned to the TAC in September.
- A TAC member asked TCHC staff to provide the TAC with a glimpse into the Tenant Engagement System statistics so that

members could make an informed decision regarding the potential new models.

- TCHC Staff member confirmed that 70% of tenants chose the community model based on active TCAT, and regional participation is 40-50%
- TAC member stated that the current building committees in their community do not work and that there's very low attendance within the committee. What is the proposal around building representatives in the new models?
- TCHC staff redirected the TAC member's questions to the following exercise where TAC members would get the chance to review and vote on a preferred Tenant Engagement System Model.

Tenant Engagement System Proposed Models Overview:
TCHC staff presented the three proposed Tenant Engagement models. TAC members had the opportunity to ask for clarification about each model being presented. Below is a summary of the discussion:

Model 1: Clarifications & Questions
- TAC member: Do community circles elect tenant councils?
- TCHC Staff member: Community circle votes for two representatives into the tenant council, they should be relaying information back to tenants
- TCHC Staff member: Going from a building representative to a regional representative, community circles made up of tenant volunteers are considered a part of the tenant engagement system.
- TAC member: How many tenant representatives can be elected?
- TCHC Staff member: There will be 9 tenant councils with 30 tenants.
  TCHC Staff member: The application and selection of the TAC in this model is open for discussion, in TAC's current form the selection is by TCHC and City of Toronto staff.
- TCHC Staff member: In the current state, tenant reps should be bringing information back to the communities. Community circles are local and are for each property

- TCHC Staff members summarized themes for further discussion: accountability, everyone is a volunteer in this system and is subject to the volunteer conduct.

Model 2: Clarifications & Questions:
- TAC member: Please explain the difference between "community" and "building".
- TCHC Staff member: Both words are used interchangeably. However, the language needs to be clearer. There needs to be a differentiation between "building" and "community".
- TAC Member: For larger communities/buildings will there be a discussion on the number of tenant reps per building? I prefer the model where tenant reps are elected and held accountable.
- TCHC Staff member: The current model is one to two tenant reps for 250 units.
- TAC member: Why would we limit the amount of tenant reps a community wants?
- TCHC Staff member: We can think about the ratio, if the number is too high, we can adjust it. We must also keep in mind that some communities may have different needs than others when it comes to tenant and community reps.
- TAC member: What is the difference between TCAT and council?
- TCHC staff member: Current TCATs are regional forums where tenants can provide input on the presented item. In Model 2 tenants have access to TCATS regardless of if they're a tenant rep.
- TAC members expressed concern about staffing capacities to accommodate and support each proposed model.
- A TCHC staff member reassured the TAC that this exercise was to get an idea of what would work best from a tenant perspective and that funding and staffing would be addressed once a preferred model is chosen.
- TAC member: Can we combine some of the features from the tenant rep model with the community model? For example, if someone is elected but others express interest, can they still be included to participate on the committee?
- TCHC staff member: This is a great idea something we can investigate.

Model 3: Clarifications & Questions:
- TAC member: This model does not include tenant roles for participation and decision-making at the building level. Current staff capacity and funding will not be able to support this version.
- TCHC staff member: What would be the best approach to maximize the resources to make the models work despite our current constraints?
- TAC member: The tenant forum is not related to the model it is more of an opportunity for tenants across all portfolios to gather and exchange historical information. Forums were designed by staff for tenants as opposed to tenants being a part of the organization and development. Our concern still lies with limited staffing capacity as we are currently struggling now. Why suggest a model that we may not be in the position to properly deliver?
- TCHC staff member: In this model, CSCs would support community development work on the ground, 3 additional staff brought on to support the Tenant Councils, and the City-wide forum would be supported by the centralized team.
- TCHC staff member: Our goal is to choose the model that best supports and maximizes tenant engagement. Regardless of the model we choose if we need more resources to support it this is something we will factor in.
- TAC member: Expressed frustration that system models change frequently. Tenants get used to one model and then must readjust to a new one, losing the positive qualities of the previous model.
- TCHC staff member reassured the reason for the models, and systems changing consistently is to ensure the system is scalable and that we move towards a model that works for not just one tenant group but all.
- TAC member: Ensure clarity on how representatives are chosen (i.e. election, acclamation) given the impact on transparency and accountability.
- Discussion on a number of community representatives for buildings with a larger number of tenants, with suggestions for the model to reflect proportional representation.
- TAC member: Request to discuss term limits as part of the current review.

- Several members highlighted a preference for community representatives to be elected.
- Many TAC members expressed interest in blending some of the qualities from the other models into the third model such as TCATS.
- TAC member: TCATs are important to the community and are still needed regardless of the model chosen as well as Tenant council meetings. We need to ensure that community meetings are happening more frequently across all communities and that they have the resources to do so.
  TAC member: What's the difference between the Community Circle and the Tenant Committee?
- TCHC staff member: Community Circle is at the building level and tenant Committee is at the city level
- TAC members agreed that the proposed Community Circle offers a more open and inclusive structure as current committees are more formal.
- TAC member: Buildings may not need more than two tenant reps for 250 tenants. Tenant elections are important and should stay.
- A TCHC staff member responded to TAC members' concerns regarding funding constraints stating: In Models 2 and 3, we are looking at City-wide elections, so there will be costs associated with that. TCHC is putting together a business case to simplify how funding will be distributed more sustainably.
- TCHC staff member: An overly simplified model may alienate some communities as each community has different needs.
- TCHC staff member: It has been brought to our attention that the current tenant engagement isn't working very well. The purpose of this exercise is to select which model would work best. Once we have a co-designed model, we can identify the cost required for the new model.
- TAC member: 70% of our buildings agree with the building committee model so let's ensure we have that element of whichever is the selected model.
- TCHC staff member: We must keep in mind not all building committees are working.

- TAC member: Our communities are suffering; due to safety issues and financial hardship many tenants do not have capacity to engage in issues around community engagement.
- TAC member: Has TCHC considered that when we request funding grants, the money is used to organize training in our communities? Can tenants be asked to run the workshop and training instead of a vendor?
- TCHC staff expressed interest in the idea and confirmed they have had tenants run workshops and training.

Tenant Engagement System Model Preference Results:

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
6	5	6

Action Items and Wrap-Up
- Proposed alternate model will be presented at the September TCAT and then brought back to TAC for additional input based on the TCAT feedback.
- A TCHC staff member summarized the TAC member's call for simplicity, accountability, and inclusion to be incorporated in the final chosen model.
- DCM Jag Sharma echoed the importance of having a democratic process in place for making informed decisions that affect and advance Tenant priorities when choosing a Tenant Engagement model.
- TAC members were invited to participate in the CSU review and TCHC strategic directions working sessions led by third-party consultants (voluntary with honorarium).
- **Reminder** there is no August meeting, the next TAC meeting is on September 11.