



TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee
June 12th, 2024
6– 8p.m.
Location: Virtual - Webex

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance:

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

	<p>Not present: Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement Christine Aina, Business Planner, Tenant Engagement</p>
City of Toronto Staff	<p>Present Online: Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, City of Toronto Staff Emily Gaus, Manager, Housing Secretariat (Acting) Earl Phillips, Programs Coordinator, City of Toronto Staff</p> <p>Not present: Jag Sharma, Deputy City Manager (Co-Chair) Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, Housing Secretariat Jenn St. Louis, Manager, Housing Secretariat</p>

Welcome, Introductions, Land, and African Ancestral Acknowledgments

- TCHC’s CEO Sean Baird introduced himself and Emily Gaus as Co-Chairs for the evening and welcomed all TAC members.
- Sean read the Land and African Ancestral Acknowledgements.
- TAC members were asked to introduce themselves and which community they are from.
- TCHC and City of Toronto Staff were asked to introduce themselves.

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

- Emily asked TAC members to review and approve the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting.
- There was a motion to approve the meeting Agenda.

- The agenda was approved by a TAC member and seconded by another member. All TAC members favour of approving the agenda.
- Emily asked TAC members to review the minutes from the May meeting.
- There was a motion to approve the previous TAC meeting minutes acknowledged by a member and seconded by another member. All TAC members were in favour of approving the Minutes.
- Action items were deferred due to staff experiencing technical challenges.

Tenant Engagement System Implementation Plan (Review)

- Nadia presented the Tenant Engagement System Implementation Plan review as per the slide deck.

Nadia asked members to consider the following 4 key questions:

- 1) Should different buildings have different models of representation (e.g. tenant reps, building committees, no representation)? If yes, how should this be selected?
- 2) Should all tenant leaders be elected (tenant reps and committee reps) through a building-wide vote?
- 3) How do we ensure diversity in our tenant leaders?
- 4) What are some strategies for engaging diverse tenant groups in decision-making in your communities?

TAC Breakout Rooms Feedback

- The following is a summarized version of the discussions and feedback provided by the TAC.

Question 1) Should different buildings have different models of representation (e.g. tenant reps, building committees, no representation)? If yes, how should this be selected?

- TAC members discussed this question within the breakout group and had the following suggestions:

- Need for streamlined consistency with CSCs across all buildings as tenants' experiences vary.
- Tenants need better awareness and transparency of available funding and its uses. Improved communication about tenant programming is essential to prevent tenants from paying out of pocket.
- Regular in-person meetings involving CSCs, tenant reps, tenant volunteers, and building management are crucial, considering tech barriers and depersonalization faced by tenants.
- Resources and communications on tenant programs and initiatives should be regularly updated through platforms like the Tenant Loop and TCHC Website.
- Implementing specific models unique to each building is preferable as it caters to the priorities and needs of the building.
- Avoid reverting to previous models where only tenant reps had decision-making powers, which excluded other tenants.
- The current vendor application process is too restrictive, limiting tenants' budgeting options. Suggestions include hiring more CSC staff and simplifying the vendor application process.

Question 2) Should all tenant leaders be elected (tenant reps and committee reps) through a building-wide vote?

- TAC members made the following suggestions to answer this question:
 - Staff appointing tenant reps is seen as unfair as it excludes other interested tenants. In communities with low engagement, CSC support can help recruit and encourage participation.
 - The model should be democratic, like City Council elections, with campaigns and voting.
 - Question about whether the new model would change the current restriction of only allowing two tenants to attend certain meetings. This aspect will be reviewed.

- TAC member informs that membership in the Health and Wellness Committee is based on interest without the need for a vote.
- Tenant reps should be screened for criminal behaviour before elections.
- There is concern that voting might become a popularity contest rather than a democratic process.
- The reintroduction of tenant councils could help generalize approaches and improve communication between tenants and CSCs.
- New reps may lack the connections and knowledge of previous reps. Requirements for representatives should include past community-building experience.
- Need to clarify tenant representative and staff roles, with support to guide new representatives.
- There needs to be consistency in how tenant reps interact with other tenants. Improve communication, and update building bulletin boards.
- Tenant representatives need more training, and support, and be financially compensated for their time. Suggestions include tenant representative orientation and the onboarding process.

Question 3) How do we ensure diversity in our tenant leaders?

Question 4) What are some strategies for engaging diverse tenant groups in decision-making in your communities?

- TAC members made the following comments to answer these questions:
 - Agreement the tenant engagement model needs to be diverse in age, gender, background and abilities.
 - Communicate in the most spoken languages within each building, recognizing that English is often a second language for many tenants.

- Frontline TCHC staff can help identify and connect diverse tenants to available opportunities.
- Hosting events with food and refreshments from various cultures can help bring communities together.
- Addressing safety and day-to-day concerns is crucial in encouraging tenant participation.
- Community events and meetings should be widely advertised across all communication platforms.
- Celebrating tenant initiatives and participation in the newsletter can encourage more involvement.
- Providing relevant training and workshops to enhance tenants' opportunities and resources.
- TCHC should promote tenant programs and opportunities at community events and meetings.
- Increasing awareness that most tenant programs are accessible to all, not just tenant representatives.
- Hiring staff who reflect the diversity of people who live in the community and buildings.

Action Items and Wrap-Up

- Sean thanked TAC members for their participation and a successful meeting.
- Next steps: The feedback shared in the meeting will be used to develop the 3 governance models. Once complete the models will be returned to the TAC on July 10th.