



**TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee  
May 8th, 2024  
6– 8 p.m.**

**Location: 100 Queen Street West, Committee Room 1**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendance:**

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

	<p>Christine Aina, Business Planner, Tenant Engagement Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement.</p> <p><b>Not present:</b> Julio Rigores, Manager, Tenant Engagement</p>
<p>City of Toronto Staff</p>	<p><b>Present In-Person:</b> Emily Gaus, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat Jenn St. Louis, Manager, Housing Secretariat Ruth Antwiwaa, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat</p> <p><b>Not present:</b> Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, Housing Secretariat</p>

**Welcome, Introductions, Land, and African Ancestral Acknowledgments**

- TCHC’s CEO Sean Baird introduced himself and Jag Sharma DCM 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:**

- Jag asked TAC members to review and approve the agenda.
- 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 online and in-person were in favour of approving the agenda.
- Jag asked TAC members to review the minutes from the April meeting.

- There was a motion to approve the previous TAC meeting Minutes. acknowledged by a member and seconded by another member. All TAC members online and in person were in favour of approving the Minutes.
- Jag asked Christine to review the completed action items from the April 16th TAC meeting with the group.
- These Action Items included:
  - Sending the Ombudsman report to TAC members.
  - Emailing the Human Rights policy slide deck questions to TAC members for further input.
- Christine informed the TAC members they may have received an email notification from procurement to participate in a vendor survey. TAC members were asked to ignore the survey if it did not pertain to them.

### **Former Participatory Budgeting Visioning Exercise**

- Sean introduced this item and informed TAC members that Toronto Community Housing is continuing to move forward on the redesign of the former participatory budgeting (PB) program.
- When the program was first introduced, it designated funding for tenant-involved decision-making in capital projects at TCHC. Over time, the program evolved to give tenants the opportunity to make decisions about purchasing non-capital items (like furniture, gardening supplies, exercise equipment, and more), specifically for common area spaces in their buildings.
- With the former participatory budgeting program on hold, Tenant Engagement Staff have been asked to lead its redesign.
- Sean introduced Christine and Gail to lead the Participatory Budgeting Visioning Exercise through a presentation deck.
- TAC members expressed a few concerns surrounding the program's current/available funding, such as whether capital projects may be funded through the Participatory Budget and how will the resources be distributed.
- Nadia confirmed before the program was placed on hold, the available amount for participatory budgeting was \$800,000.

- Christine confirmed that discussions regarding funding, allocation and process will occur as part of the program redesign.
- Proceeding the presentation, TAC members were divided into two groups for the Visioning exercise.
- The two groups were asked the following three questions:
  - What would the ideal PB Program look like?
  - How do we increase Tenant Engagement amongst underrepresented groups?
  - How do we know the program is successful?

### **1) What would the ideal PB Program look like?**

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

- Explore different ideas on how best to maximize the amount of money available to the program.
- TCHC should create clear guidelines and procedures for eligibility.
- Is there a way to repurpose unused funds from one community to fund another community that may need additional resources?
- TCHC should consider seeking donations from other organizations to further support tenant initiatives and stretch the program funding.
- TCHC should define the funding amount for the program and how these funds will be distributed.
- There should be clear communication between TCHC and tenants to ensure that tenants understand the benefits of the program, including timelines, and relevant staff support.
- The importance of giving tenants and communities local decision-making autonomy
- TCHC should investigate creating additional opportunities for tenants to come together to make decisions regarding the program.
- Tenant applications for funds within PB should be reviewed and scored in private instead of being presented in front of the community for voting. This method would focus on the application and proposed initiative itself.

- TCHC should clearly distinguish what falls under this tenant directed funding program and what is considered as capital repair.
- TAC members also suggested not using a supply catalog for the new program as it limits tenants from having access to more affordable and sustainable options.
- TCHC should investigate increasing the variety of vendors, including tenant vendors, to give more affordable vendor options for tenants.
- Utilizing tenant leaders to assist with the program process, from application to in-person meetings.
- There are some buildings within TCHC where residents and communities are more focused on safety and capital repairs, because of these concerns, residents are prevented from being able to think about the future of a tenant-directed funding program as their current needs are not being met.
- TCHC staff should go to individual communities and seek out what tenant and community priorities can be addressed through the tenant-directed funding program.
- TCHC staff could educate tenants on budgeting and spending. This can increase opportunities for tenants to gain and strengthen skills.
- TCHC should consider using the PB program for non-capital repairs/projects and focus on smaller requests that can be easily accomplished.
- Lastly, various TAC members stated that any outstanding capital repairs in their building and requests regarding maintenance and safety, and access to community spaces with regular upkeep are not being addressed.

## **2) How do we increase Tenant Engagement amongst underrepresented groups?**

TAC members made the following suggestions to answer this question:

- The main concern for many tenants is safety. To have effective tenant engagement it needs to be in a safe and accessible place, it can be difficult to host events outside of the community.

- Improving communication and transparency between TCHC and tenants needs to be at the forefront of redesigning the former program and in general.
- Facilitating participation within the community and reflecting on what worked best with the program in the past and applying those things to the redesign.
- TCHC should find ways to minimize barriers and include tenants who may not be able to attend meetings.
- Look into providing incentives to tenants such as gift cards.
- Place program information in designated areas of tenant buildings.
- Program outreach should be done by CSCs and other frontline staff. Tenant leaders can help facilitate and communicate with CSCs on behalf of tenants if needed.
- There should be an onsite feedback drop box for tenants to submit their feedback and suggestions on the program to further increase participation.

### **3) How do we know the program is successful?**

TAC members made the following comments to best answer this question:

- Understanding that not all communities are at the same level, and some may need additional support.
- TCHC can follow up with tenants who did not apply to the program and ask why they didn't participate in the PB survey or activities, and how can they make the program more appealing to tenants.
- As communication between TCHC and tenants improves, tenants will have a better understanding of the program's timelines and eligibility.
- Tenants require ongoing support and access to community space to facilitate community development for this to program to be successful.

### **Action Items and Wrap-Up**

- Jag thanked TAC members for their participation and a successful meeting.
- Jag reminded the TAC to bring forth further ideas to Christine and to complete the former Participatory Budgeting survey.