



**TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee
September 11th, 2024
6– 8 p.m.**

Location: City Hall, Committee Room 1 – 100 Queen Street West

MEETING MINUTES

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

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| | <p>Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, Housing Secretariat</p> <p>Natalie Wythe, Programs Coordinator Housing Secretariat</p> <p>Not present:</p> <p>Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat</p> <p>Jenn St. Louis, Manager, Housing Secretariat</p> |
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Welcome, Introductions, Land, and African Ancestral

Acknowledgments

- TCHC’s CEO Sean Baird started the meeting by reading the Land Acknowledgement and African Ancestral Acknowledgment
- Emily Gaus asked TCHC staff, City of Toronto staff and TAC members to introduce themselves.

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

- Sean introduced the business for the evening reviewed the July meeting minutes and asked TAC members for approval.
- A TAC member expressed the minutes did not distinguish the difference between each Tenant Engagement model that was presented in July's meeting. Additionally, there were a few points the minutes missed regarding the importance of tenant elections and TCATs.
- Sean asked if anyone was opposed, and the agenda for the evening was approved.
- The previous TAC meeting's action items will be discussed at the end of this evening's meeting.

Former Participatory Budget Presentation

- Sean introduced Christine Aina as this evening's presenter and mentioned there is a budget request associated with the re-design of the funding program.
- Christine gave an overview of the work that has been done so far with collecting data for the Participatory Budget (PB) re-design and the outcome of the data collected.

- Christine mentioned that the PB renaming campaign will be live as of this evening and all are encouraged to participate.
- The new funding program will be an amalgamation of The Tenant Action Funds (TAF) and Participatory Budgeting (PB) into one funding program.

Feedback and Questions from TAC

- TAC member: what is the proposed budget?
- TCHC staff confirmed it is \$20 dollars per unit. Depending on whether the proposal is approved.
- TAC member: We are being asked to dream about what we want in our communities however we need to know the full budget before purchasing a desired item. Additionally, why are communities only able to apply for one funding request a year?
- TCHC staff: We will clarify this as we move forward. The first meeting is to encourage tenants to put in their requests at the beginning of the year and for the community to come together to discuss priorities. This doesn't mean the decision is set in stone.
- TAC member: What is the timeline? How long does TAF stay in place until it changes and what happens in the interim?
- TCHC staff: For 2024, we are still funded for TAF. If approved, our goal is to move forward with the new funding program in Q1 of 2025.
- TAC member: What if one building is larger than the other? And both want to purchase the same item however for the smaller building this will consume most of their budget. How could they afford the same things?
- TCHC staff: We tested this theory in the focus groups and confirmed that this situation made small buildings get together to think about how to spend the money and prioritize community plans. It made them seek affordable options and external funding. This won't cover the cost of everything, but it brings people together to critically think.
- TAC member: How much staff support will this program have?

- TCHC staff: Staff support is built into the program model along with external partners' support and opportunities for tenants to learn from experts in their communities.
- TAC member: There seems to be a gap for smaller communities with less funding to fall between the cracks and not have their priorities fulfilled.
- TCHC staff: We are aware of the barriers smaller communities may face and will keep this in mind moving forward.
- TAC member: Will we have to use the TCHC vendor list to obtain services or items for our initiatives?
- TCHC staff: In terms of the vendors, we are still tied to the current process and procedures. We are looking into alternatives such as seniors housing and how they obtain their goods and services.
- TAC member: I don't want to make suggestions to the vendor process for the new program until we are certain procurement can make these changes.
- TCHC staff: We will be working with the Tenant Staff Working Group which will include a representative from Finance and Procurement to address vendor and funding concerns.
- TAC member: Can we use tenant vendors as this empowers them and supports their business?
- TCHC staff: This is something we are working towards to support local tenant vendors.
- TAC member: Tenants are scared to be vendors due to the impact on their /Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) annual reviews. Being a vendor can impact someone's rent, how do we empower them without causing financial harm?
- TCHC staff: If a tenant is paying subsidized rent and their income increases so will their rent, however, this is something that should be celebrated and is fair. We can see how our procurement rules can hinder tenants, we will share that tenant vendors have a place at TCHC.
- TCHC staff: We can only do so much with the rules that are in place, this doesn't mean we can't look at our process and make suggestions for change. Although we are not there yet this can be a discussion in the future.

- TAC member: Will the new funding program include the TAF budget?
- TCHC Staff: The way the business case was sent to the City we asked for Participatory Budget and TAF budgets to be combined.
- TAC member: Will this include funding for capital projects?
- TCHC member: The new program's focus is on initiatives that benefit the whole community.
- TAC member: My building is small which means our funding would be significantly less.
- TCHC staff: There are more components to the new program other than funding that supports buildings with less budget.
- TAC member: How do we hold tenants accountable for not reporting back on their initiatives?
- TCHC staff: We will bring this question to the tenant staff working group, we are still working on the accountability piece. As an example, if a building doesn't report back, they won't participate next year.
- TAC member: That is not fair to penalize the whole building for one person's actions.
- TCHC Staff: If the future model is in place 7 members from the building would be responsible for reporting back.
- TCHC staff: We need to develop a balance between flexibility and accountability. The parameters that you are describing would not be in this model.
- TAC member: What happens to unused funds from a building?
- TCHC Staff: All unused building funds will be pooled together. Buildings can apply for extra funding from this pool of money.
- TAC member: Who's doing the funding accounting for the buildings who's keeping track?
- TCHC Staff: The engagement CSCs will be ordering services and goods on behalf of tenants. The first meeting of the year is only an eligibility check, not an approval process. It is to check if we can move forward with ordering.
- TAC member: Can a tenant be set up as a supply's purchaser? One tenant from each building can purchase supplies and be reimbursed.

- TCHC Staff: We can check if this is possible with procurement.
- TAC member: Vendors are going to be a problem the current ones we have are too expensive and inaccessible.
- TAC member: Can we partner with community agencies and external supports to assist with tenant initiatives?
- TCHC staff: Collaboration between TCHC and external organizations happens through the Programs and Partnerships team (PAP). This is something we can look into.
- TCHC staff: Some of our communities are more mobilized than others, what the building needs is beyond what this program can offer at the moment. We need sustainable long-term programming; we can take that away and bring it to the team.
- TAC member: Can we implement external funding workshops, and would this be facilitated with TCHC staff or tenants?
- TCHC Staff: We are going to see if CSC co-facilitates this meeting and the program and what their participation looks like as a whole.
- TAC member: I want to suggest comparing notes across communities to see what people are spending funding on and how we can approach this program better.
- TCHC Staff: Agreed and the report back needs to be shared. We need notifications in the building telling people about the program's progress in the past year and how funding was used.
- TAC member: \$20 a unit doesn't work across the board. TCHC misspends money with expensive vendors when they can save with low-cost vendors.
- TAC member: The role of the CSC needs to be clarified. We need transparency and accountability when it comes to how funding is being spent and how external funding by tenants is handled.
- TCHC Staff: We can't tell tenants to not seek external funding, we can't track money that's not tied to TCHC.
- TAC member: What if a tenant obtains external funding for a community event and uses it on themselves? Can we hold them accountable?
- TCHC Staff: We can discuss this offline to ensure we can give you the correct answer.

- TAC member: Tenants should know they cannot use the TCHC logo legally without permission we should educate tenants on this. Let's trust our tenants more and revisit issuing cheques to tenants to make purchases on behalf of the funding programs.
- TAC member: when does the feedback from the tenant staff working group go to the board?
- TCHC Staff: On November 25, 2024, at TSC we will also include the TAC's feedback as well as the tenant staff working group feedback.
- TAC member: In my community, we have mixed buildings and townhouses how would funding work for us?
- TCHC Staff: We will look into this and get back to you.
- TAC will there be an eligibility list for the funding program?
- TCHC Staff: We hope to develop this with the Tenant staff working group.
- TAC member: The CSU consultants did not allow all tenants to voice their feedback please ensure this does not happen again.
- TCHC Staff: We will bring this back to the consultants.

End of TAC meeting wrap-up

- Voting for the new Participatory Budget (PB) name is now live.
- The Tenant staff working groups are on September 16, 2024, and the October date is TBD.
- Reminder, we have upcoming virtual meetings on September 18, 2024, for the CSU consult and October 1, 2024, for the Strategic plan.
- The next TAC meeting is on Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Action Items:

- Amendment to previous TAC minutes to be shared with TAC members for the next meeting.
- Updates on policies for Tenants using TCHC logos for fundraising.
- Updates on reimbursing Tenants directly for costs associated with fundraising/community initiatives.