



TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee

October 8, 2024

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Location: City Hall, Committee Room 2 – 100 Queen Street West

MEETING MINUTES

Organization	Participants
TAC Members	<p>Present Online: Jorry Cross, Tabitha David, Petra Jeffers, Doug Maybank, Samantha Mogent, Susel Munoz, Charmaine Roye, Tameka Richards,</p> <p>Present In-Person: Robert Bezanson, John Corso, Ines Garcia, Debbie Menezes, Karlene Nation, Catherine Wilkinson.</p> <p>Not present: Rosemarie Hibbert, Tracy Izzard, Shabnam Sheikh.</p> <p>Regrets: Sara Abdulla, Abdul Rahman, Karlene Nation</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 Christine Aina, Manager, Tenant Engagement (Acting) Gail Johnson, Manager, Community Safety & Support</p> <p>Present Online: Junior Taylor, Manager, Community Safety & Support</p> <p>Not Present: Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement</p>
City of Toronto Staff	<p>Present In-Person: Emily Gaus, Manager, Housing Secretariat (Acting)</p>

	Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, Housing Secretariat Natalie Wythe, Programs Coordinator Housing Secretariat Not present: Jag Sharma, Deputy City Manager (Co-Chair) Jenn St. Louis, Manager, Housing Secretariat
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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

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

- TCHC Staff confirmed that the T4 issue that arose a few months ago should not impact TAC members' current RGI as all members are below the \$499 threshold.
- The updates to the amended minutes for July were presented to the TAC.
- A TAC member asked if TCHC is looking at creating a charitable foundation per KPMG’s recommendation.
- TCHC Staff: Acknowledged that this was raised, and another housing corporation has explored this option, however, TCHC is still in the early stages of discussions.

Group discussion on the Tenant Engagement Governance System – TCAT Feedback

- TAC Member: This is a lot of volume of work for CSCs, and they will have difficulty managing the added workload.
- TCHC Staff: Support of the CSCs will always be at a building level but hoping to build up tenant leadership to be equipped with training/resources to hold meetings, take minutes, and develop leadership.

- TAC member: I don't support the "community liaison" or "community rep" title, there should be a vote on the name. 12 meetings are far too many, as currently, we are struggling to have 2 meetings.
- TCHC Staff: We can revisit the name change at the end of the presentation.
- TAC Member: Once the new hybrid program comes into play for the participatory budget, how will tenants access them, how does that happen?
- TCHC Staff: Pre-planning at the beginning of the year will ensure this process.
- TAC Member: Why do we have to rename anything? What is the purpose of redesigning titles?
- TCHC Staff: The name changes were a suggestion put forth by tenants as the name tenant rep was not reflective of their role.
- TAC Member: As tenant reps, we used to meet often with TCHC support. As time has gone on TCHC has slowly removed themselves without communication or support for the tenant reps.
- TCHC Staff: TCHC is moving to a district manager role, so the tenant councils will be lined up with the building operation manager bringing support back to this layer.
- TAC Member: Not sure if the purpose of tenant councils was represented on the slide. We need to commit to documenting the conversations that took place within meetings, so the public is aware of the discussions that are happening. There should always be a takeaway from the meetings to inform communities.
- TAC member: When we went to council meetings, it was a training tool so if we requested certain groups to come in, it was to build knowledge, skills and networking. This was slowly filtered out and we were left to govern ourselves.
- TAC Member: How do the regions and buildings work in the new model?
- TCHC Staff: It will be similar to the previous Operating Unit model.
- TAC Member: How will the new model align with the property superintendents and the regional council?
- TCHC Staff: 9 subregional councils make sense, align it with the regional district managers who will attend the meetings (can't

commit to 6 but maybe 4). Each region has 3 districts, each district has 2 subs with supervisors.

- TAC Member: Tenant reps are volunteers and there is a time commitment between building meetings, council meetings, and City meetings. How many reps would be on each of these tenant councils?
- TCHC Staff: The goal is to have 1 elected representative attend the tenant council per building so it would be about 30 reps
- TAC members expressed concern that the number of reps is far too high. There is a desire to have proportionate representatives.
- TAC Member: The TCATs need to have more substance and opportunities and encourage new tenants to get involved. We should not create restrictions.
- TAC Member: Are TCATs replacing tenant forums?
- TCHC Staff: Not necessarily, however, conversations are happening about considering having tenant forums in non-election years.
- TAC Member: there used to be issues-based groups for tenants to discuss. TCAT is more staff presentation-led. Does it have to be a part of the model, or can it be separate from the model?
- TCHC Staff: The decision to keep TCATs was informed by the July consultation where TAC members wanted to keep TCATs in the model. In addition, the TCATs are an opportunity for tenants to engage without a big-time commitment, like other roles.
- TAC Member: What is being proposed is very good, it provides everyone with the opportunity to participate.
- TAC Member: Tenant issues groups will not be successful without support from staff.
- TCHC Staff: Previous issues-based groups met followed by a forum where tenants met with staff afterwards; this model was not successful as very few continued beyond one year.

General feedback after the Presentation:

- TAC Member: There needs to be formal training for tenant reps. Having multiple tenant reps with no accountability or structure does not help. We also need to educate tenants on the role of tenant reps; they are not maintenance or 24/7 support. If a tenant wishes to run for tenant rep, they need to know what they are

running for and what the commitment is. This communication needs to go out before the election, so tenants who choose to run are well informed of the commitment.

- TCHC Staff: Our goal is for elected tenant reps to have a sense of responsibility to communicate back to the buildings, especially at tenant councils. We are also looking for a formal way of tracking attendance and participation.
- TCHC Staff: Both potential tenant reps and general tenants must be informed of the role, we will look into having this conversation with tenants.
- TAC Member: We need to create clear guidelines and responsibilities for tenant reps, it's a volunteer role however it would be great for TCHC to show their appreciation for their contributions at the end of the year. For example, there is an honorarium at TAC meetings; whereas tenant reps are doing the jobs of the CSCs and don't receive any appreciation.
- TAC Member: There should be a permanent poster in the buildings with the tenant rep's name, specific hours, role description, and emphasizing it is a volunteer position. I'm not against the TCATs, however, it appears to be an exclusive club only for tenant reps and does not include non-tenant reps.
- TCHC Staff: Confirmed TCATs was not the only tenant consultation available to tenants, TAC was consulted, and there will be a request for further input from tenants regarding whether the models will work.
- TCHC Staff: Based on your comments we agree TCATs must not be limited to only tenant reps. The previous model took 3 years to gather input from all tenants and it was very complex. There was a substantial amount of tenant engagement that was conducted to get to where we are now.
- TAC Member: When we tried to arrange meetings, we were advised everything needs to be run by the CSC including approval of what was talked about.
- TCHC Staff: Agreed that this was inappropriate, TCHC does not wish to control the narrative, and tenants are encouraged to bring their ideas to meetings.
- TAC Member: 4 tenant reps may be too many for a community assuming that some folks may not deliver their share of work.

There have been instances where tenant reps feel they are the face of all issues (for example: maintenance issues). Because of this tenant reps are harassed, and tenants seek immediate action from TCHC through them, we need to create guidelines to ensure this does not happen to tenant reps.

- TCHC Staff: This is one of the reasons for changing the name of the role. To get an understanding of what the role should look like and ensure communication with tenants is better. Tenants will be held accountable for their actions towards tenant reps.
- TAC Member: Tenant reps are burned out; we must find a way to keep people engaged.
- TAC Member: My main concern – by holding the tenant rep title, folks can become a target as the elected official and be blamed for everything in the building. There can be a power struggle amongst staff and tenant reps; this can polarize the community.
- TAC Member: When tenants don't see someone in the building such as the custodian or CSC, the tenant rep is expected to know where they are. No notifications or information is flowing to the reps to answer these questions.
- TCHC Staff: Is 30 a reasonable number of reps at one table?
- TAC Member: I recommend cutting this number in half.
- TAC Member: In my community, we had 25-30 tenant reps and often had a manager and security for monthly meetings which went well. However, if there are 6 reps, only 2 are realistically doing the work.
- TAC Member: Can we have one meeting with all the tenant reps first to streamline the issues/focus and then subsequently meet with TCHC staff?
- TAC Member: The only issue is the frequency; I suggest every 3 months to provide time for progression and to move on to another issue.
- TCHC Staff: We can start with fewer meetings and over time add more as needed.
- TAC Member: In my community, our tenant council was a high-functioning independent council that was supported by staff. The tenant council managed their budget and initiatives. We should empower people who stepped up to be tenant reps to work independently from staff. Tenant councils were great, and

relationships were strong, we must be cognisant of how the changes to the model will impact these councils as they have already been affected by the current structure being dismantled.

- TAC member: Requested reconsideration of the circle design for the new model and preferred a traditional pyramid design as opposed to the 2 options available.
- TCHC Staff: The circle design was intentional to demonstrate equality and unifying force between all layers of the new system.

Wrap-up and Action Items

1. TCHC Staff to follow up with a TAC member's comments regarding a CSC not supporting tenant meetings.
2. TCHC Staff to follow up with TCHC staff at the TAC member's building regarding staffing issues.
3. TCHC to reconsider the name of community liaisons.
4. The design of the new model is to be included in the communication going out to tenants for additional input.
5. Any additional feedback is welcome, members may email Christine and Alejandra.
6. The next TAC meeting will be held on **November 12, 2024.**