



TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee
Thursday, March 20th, 2025
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Location: 100 Queen Street West, Committee Room 2

MEETING MINUTES

Organization	Participants
TAC Members	Present In-Person: John Corso, Ines Garcia, Debbie Menezes, Karlene Nation, Present Online: Robert Benzanson, Tabitha David, Petra Jeffers, Debbie Menezes, Doug Maybank, Charmaine Roye, Tameka Richards Regrets: Jorry Cross Not Present: Tracy Izzard, 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 Pablo Vivanco, Director, Tenant Engagement Christine Aina, Manager, Tenant Engagement (Acting) Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement. Junior Taylor, Community Safety and Support Manager Gail Johnson, Community Safety and Support Manager Not present: Nadia Gouveia, Chief Operating Officer, Jenelle Estwick, Executive Assistant

City of Toronto Staff	<p>Present In-Person: Jag Sharma, City Deputy Manager, Emily Gaus, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat</p> <p>Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat, Natalie Wythe, Programs Coordinator, Housing Secretariat</p> <p>Not present: Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, 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 and African Ancestral Acknowledgements.

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

- The city deputy manager, Jag Sharma, opened the floor for any questions regarding the agenda and previous meeting minutes, as there were not enough members for quorum to vote on the items.
 - **TAC Member:** Was there a discussion on TAF and funding allocation?
 - **TCHC Staff:** The increased budget for TAF has been approved, and the plan for TAF will be addressed in today's presentation.

Tenant Engagement and Tenant Advisory Committee 2025 Work Plan Presentation

- **TAC Member:** For tenant elections, are tenants running in each building?
- **TCHC Staff:** Yes, members of the tenant council will be elected from each building/townhome community to the tenant council. There will be 3 councils with 30 reps each. The local tenant circles are distinct from the tenant councils.
- **TAC Member:** Can current members apply to join/continue in the City-Wide layer?
- **TCHC Staff:** Yes, current members may reapply to the City-wide layer.

- **TAC Member:** Is this election for tenant councils? What's the status of elections for tenant reps? What is the status of the tenant rep system compared to the new tenant council system?
- **TCHC Staff:** Tenant reps are being replaced by tenant council members; elections for this position will take place in the fall. Our communications team will be sending out an email next week notifying current tenant reps. Local engagement will happen at the tenant circles.
- **TAC Member:** I'm still not clear on the tenant council. Are people running and competing for a spot?
- **TCHC Staff:** Yes, people will be running against each other. This will be a corporate-wide election.
- **TAC Member:** At the local level, I haven't heard anything regarding the tenant circles. When will this communication go out, and will community agencies in our building be included in the communication?
- **TCHC Staff:** The tenant circles are relatively new, and most communications regarding Engage Together have been electronic. We are amid communicating with CSCs and gathering input on envisioning what the challenges are/potential solutions for the circles.
- **TCHC Staff:** This is a big change for tenants; we don't want to leave the impression that tenants will have to go seeking this information. Significant communication is coming to tenants.
- **TAC Member:** Do we contact our CSCs for this information? Can we reach out to the engagement team?
- **TCHC Staff:** We do have the Tenant Engagement inbox and hotline; however, your first point of contact should be your engagement CSC.
- **TAC Member:** Please clarify tenant circles and tenant councils.
- **TCHC Staff:** The Engage Together model has 4 components: The Tenant Circles are in the building/communities open to all and supported by the engagement CSC. Tenants can discuss local priorities (where LIFT funds are decided). The next component is the Tenant Councils, elected council members from each community sit on the sub-regional council. Elections occur twice a year (open to all tenants). City-wide level is the TAC, and then we have the Tenant

Community Action Tables (TCAT), which will be transformed into a tenant forum that occurs twice a year.

- **TAC Member:** In the future, can tenant reps meet once a month? Is this cancelled? Is there a conversation about it?
- **TCHC Staff:** Tenant councils will meet once this year and, in the future, they will meet a minimum of 4x a year. We are open to adapting to the needs of the community.
- **TAC Member:** I bring this up because before the revitalization in my community, they would meet frequently, and once the revitalization started, tenants were removed from the conversation and external parties were prioritized.
- **TCHC Staff:** The Engage Together model is for TCHC tenants; the roles will remain for staff and tenants, and there will be no interchanging due to outside parties.
- **TAC Member:** The tenant council and TAC are the only components that require elections?
- **TCHC Staff:** The TCAT and tenant circles are open to all tenants, and for the tenant council's tenants must be elected, and for the city-wide layer, tenants can apply, and those meeting the criteria will be selected.
- **TAC Member:** How often do tenant councils meet?
- **TCHC Staff:** We have set a goal for 4 meetings per year; however, this depends on the community's needs.
- **TAC Member:** I'm concerned about tenant circles. How will TCHC be engaged with communities who typically do not participate in tenant engagement, such as Townhome communities?
- **TCHC Staff:** The tenant circles are going to be the most organic component of Engage Together because it's open to all and can adapt to the level of engagement of the community. Instead of TCHC managing, we are trying to attract interest. I hear you that there will be some communities where they will need more support to be engaged.
- **TAC Member:** Tenants have lost faith in tenant meetings because historically they've been let down, and it's hard to get tenants re-engaged. Some tenants are disappointed that there's no

management staff in the tenant meetings. Having management present at the meetings can help bring more participation.

- **TCHC Staff:** The goal is to improve the process as we begin operationalizing the tenant circles. There will be room for improvements as we go.
- **TAC Member:** If there's a low turnout for a meeting, and a decision is made for the entire building, do we decide based on who's in attendance?
- **TCHC Staff:** It's a judgment call based on which community it is and what the item for discussion is.
- **TAC Member:** Who is engaging with the townhouse communities? I don't see any engagement for them. How will they know about the tenant circles? We need superintendents to be active in their communities when it comes to engagement. We need to go back to the old way of engaging door to door, we need to use highly engaged communities as examples, and we need to stop treating some communities as favourites and leaving others behind. Some of the spaces in the communities are not accessible to tenants. Managers should go into highly engaged communities with hired youth and take note of what's working and how to implement it across other communities. We need to hire staff within our communities because people outside of TCHC won't understand our communities. We need to know who to go to for support; TCHC staff can't keep directing tenants to client care.
- **TCHC Staff:** I agree there needs to be a human touch to engagement and more programming within communities, hubs, and staff availability outside of Tenant engagement. I feel that your concerns will help us with the tenant circles, and keep in mind that some communities are disengaged.
- **City Staff:** The comment around youth is noted; there can be an integrated approach with the Youth Tenant Advisory Committee, who can support this engagement piece.
 - **TAC Member:** My complex has a "building committee" that meets once a month. What's their role in the new model?
 - **TCHC Staff:** The tenant circles are new spaces being created to focus on community development/engagement. If the building committee wants to continue, they can join the tenant circles or

continue as they are but will not be formally a part of Engage Together.

- **TAC Member:** I want to respond to the comment about superintendents. Supers shouldn't be involved in the engagement system as this falls outside of the scope of their job description. In my community, many feel isolated due to the lack of engagement because tenants are more concerned about security/safety. We need to hire more tenants within TCHC, as tenants would feel more comfortable seeing familiar faces, and we need access to community spaces.
- **TCHC Staff:** TCHC is working on a community economic development program that addresses your concerns about hiring TCHC tenants. I will bring this item back to TAC later in the year.
- **TAC Member:** Community agencies are a double-edged sword; they can be useful, but they can take away engagement because they take up a lot of tenant capacity. Do other buildings have the same challenge?
- **TAC Member:** In my community, agencies and public owners take up the space, and don't leave space for tenants.
- **TAC Member:** The agencies can do so much; they'll just do the bare minimum because no one is pushing them.
- **TAC Member:** Most of the agencies using TCHC spaces do not match the needs of the community/tenants. For tenant elections, can they run similar to a federal/provincial election?
- **TCHC Staff:** If you already have a lot of engagement at the tenant rep level, the tenant circle will be a continuity of it. The change is that there won't be one representative; the elected tenant council member will represent the local concerns at the tenant councils.
- **City Staff:** We can leverage the expertise from the city clerks and provide youth opportunities to participate in elections.
- **TAC Member:** Is TCHC going to be engaging with vendors regarding TAF and LIFT?
- **TCHC Staff:** It's part of the guidelines we are developing for LIFT.
- **TAC Member:** What part regarding vendors are you looking into?
- **TCHC Staff:** We are addressing the limited selection of vendors and looking into affordable alternatives within the LIFT launch.

- **TAC Member:** The issue is that a lot of our current vendors are unavailable due to TCHC non-payment issues.
- **TCHC Staff:** We are working on increasing cost-effective vendors and services.
- **TAC Member:** In terms of tenant engagement, people get engaged on local issues, or if they see things are running effectively, my question is, what's the timing between the current local committees and the tenant circles? I see a disconnect. If we have issues in our buildings, who do we go to for support? I don't see where all the committees tie in.
- **TCHC Staff:** There is an opportunity for there to be overlap between both; however, the current tenant committees no longer exist within the new tenant engagement system. If the committees wish to continue, they may do so outside of the engagement system or can join the tenant circles. For issues outside of tenant engagement, tenants will be redirected to the appropriate supports and subject matter experts.
- **TAC Member:** Will TCATs be like the meetings we had last year?
- **TCHC Staff:** This year, TCATs will open to all tenants and will continue to have a subject matter marketplace, which will include community partners and internal TCHC teams such as Fire, life and safety. This is to ensure that if tenants need support outside of TES, they can access that.
- **TAC Member:** My concern with these meetings is that tenants may bring personal issues unrelated to tenant engagement. With the vendor processing, can we approach corporate companies (e.g. Canadian Tire) for better prices?
- **TAC Member:** These tenant workshops/forums need sufficient time for tenants to ask questions and become engaged. When TCHCs brings lawyers to present material at tenant forums, they need to be briefed to speak in plain language to be understood by tenants.
- **TAC Member:** Suggests holding micro meetings ahead of large meetings/forums to consolidate questions. Other communities/tenant circles should adopt something like being prepared for TCHC workshops, forums or meetings.

- **TAC Member:** You mentioned 2 weeks' notice for the meeting, we need to ensure the materials are ready beforehand as not the day before the meeting, so tenants can review the materials.

Action Items and Wrap-up

- On April 28, 2025, TAC members are welcome to depute at the board; the topic of discussion will be the TCHC Human Rights complaint process.
- The City of Toronto is holding a virtual public consultation meeting on Wednesday, April 15, 2025. The Apartment Infill Study is looking to hear from tenants who have lived experience with infill development, including revitalizations. City staff to share further details with TCHC staff to distribute to the TAC.