



TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee
Wednesday, December 4, 2024
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Location: 100 Queen Street West, Committee Room 4

MEETING MINUTES

Organization	Participants
TAC Members	Present In-Person: Sara Abdula, John Corso Ines Garcia, Karlene Nation, Robert Bezanson. Present Online: Jorry Cross, Petra Jeffers, Debbie Menezes, Doug Maybank, Susel Munoz Abdul Rahman, Charmaine Roye, Tameka Richards, Shabnam Shekh, Catherine Wilkinson. Not Present: Tracy Izzard, Rosemarie Hibbert
Non-Voting Members	Present Online: Marcel Charlebois Tenant Board Director. Not Present: Ubah Farah, Tenant Board Director.
TCHC Staff	Present In-Person: Sean Baird, Chief Executive Officer; (Co-Chair) Nadia Gouveia, Chief Operating Officer Jenelle Estwick, Executive Assistant Gail Johnson, Community Safety and Support Manager Junior Taylor, Community Safety and Support Manager Christine Aina, Manager, Tenant Engagement (Acting) Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement.
City of Toronto Staff	Present In-Person: Emily Gaus, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat

	Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, Housing Secretariat Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat Not present: Jag Sharma, Deputy City Manager (Co-Chair)
--	---

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:

- All TAC members approved the agenda for the evening and the November meeting minutes.
- TCHC Staff Member provided an update on the following action items:
 - HSC Clarification premiums, tenants can choose to pay monthly or annually.
 - TCHC is engaging with TES to potentially provide auto payments for tenants that are on ODSP/OW. This conversation is ongoing, the TAC will be updated on its progress.
- CEO Sean thanked TAC members for their contributions during their 18 months and stated their work will be reported to the board on December 12th.

Tenant Advisory Committee 2024/2025 Overview Presentation

- Manager of Tenant Engagement Christine Aina led the presentation, which covered an overview of the TAC, highlighting where they've been and what they have accomplished in 2024, and highlighted what's coming up in 2025.
- TAC Member: Looking for an update from the tenant insurance team on how they incorporated the feedback provided by TAC into reaching a larger tenant audience regarding insurance.

- TCHC Staff: We currently don't have a direct update. We can ask the Risk Management team to provide an update next year.
- TAC Member: On the presentation slide it just says "progress" How do we know if the progress/action has been completed or pending?
- TCHC Staff: We can update the slide to be clearer.
- TAC Member: Will the Tenant Action Funds program (TAF) be cancelled next year as LIFT is expected to be in place in 2025? What's the budget for LIFT?
- TCHC Staff: It depends if the business case for the LIFT program is approved. The TAF budget will be the budget for LIFT as this program is taking over the previous tenant funding program (TAF). TCHC has also put forward a business case requesting additional funding to be added to support the new tenant funding program (LIFT).
- TCHC Staff: TCHC still has funding available for TAF which is a part of the Tenant Engagement fund of \$250k. I will connect with the Tenant Engagement manager to develop clear messaging around this for the general tenant population.
- TAC Member: The TAC has an identity crisis. This is due to not being well known amongst tenants and staff. Tenants feel that we are hiding our business and there's no public TAC information available. How can we better communicate the TAC's existence, purpose and work to tenants and staff?
- TCHC Staff: As of 2024 the TAC meeting minutes are now posted and public on the Tenant Engagement/TAC section of TCHC's website. TAC member identities in the minutes are not disclosed.
- TCHC Staff: We can talk about how to communicate the TAC's role to the public, and we can work on a communication strategy.
- TAC Member: The Human rights program we discussed at the beginning of the year, is currently in place, where can tenants get more information on the Human rights policy update/status?
- TCHC Staff: The policy went to the board in July of 2024, and it was adopted. If you're looking for more information, we can connect you with staff that can better support you.

- TAC Member: If you are filing a Human rights complaint, you must be cautious as it can backfire on you. I have experienced this. The service hubs in the presentation, are these the current hubs? The Hubs are often closed due to staffing limitations and tenants are unable to drop off time-sensitive documents. We need a solution to this matter.
- TCHC Staff: We're going to have a larger discussion regarding the hubs in the new year.
- TCHC Staff: We do recognize there needs to be improvement to the hubs. We are looking into clustering some hubs to improve service hours and staffing, however we will need to go through the board first.
- TAC Member: Are you looking into hiring more staff to support the hubs?
- TCHC Staff: To clarify we are not adding additional staff we are clustering the hub by relocating existing staff to certain hubs, which will improve staffing levels where they are needed most. Unutilized hubs will be repurposed.
- TAC Member: This just sounds like your clustering hubs for staff convenience, not tenants. Clustering is going to force tenants to have to travel to get tenant-facing service.
- TCHC Staff: The intention is to provide equitable service, if we could add new staff we would, which is why we are clustering. Part of the updated model is to have a satellite system in tenant buildings to have access to their tenant service coordinator. I think the updated model is closer to providing great service.
- TAC Member: Why can't the new supervisors and managers you want to add to the districts be hubs staff instead? What's the timeline for this decision?
- TCHC Staff: In the content realignment no new staff are being added, we are re-purposing current staff and they all won't be at the same site. We are struggling to keep all locations open because staff have in-person community commitments. We are looking at unutilized hub locations to see if we can give them to a

community agency. There will be an updated report going to the board in Q2 2025.

TCHC Staff asked how they can better support the TAC moving forward.

- TAC Member: Our CSCs don't seem to understand our role in the TAC, it would be beneficial for the CSC to be tied into this process.
- TAC Member: If we were to have breakout groups of all 18 of us it would be difficult, and you can miss valuable cross-learning and communication.
- TAC Member: The downtown location for TAC is difficult for some folks to get to consider changing the in-person location.
- TCHC Staff: The reason we settled on downtown is because of the available technology to make these meetings hybrid.
- TCHC Staff: This is an open question for everyone, if there is anything we can do to make meetings more accessible please share.
- TAC Member: Is there a checklist for staff members to go through so they know how to support TAC members?
- TCHC Staff: We can have a checklist of the things we know, however, if there's anything we are unaware of please let us know. Our tenant participant coordinator is the main point of contact for TAC members and will continue to check in with you.
- TAC Member: We need to be mindful of how members treat each other and hold each other accountable. I can only speak about my experience and not others and we need to be mindful of that to encourage a safe non-judgemental environment for all.
- TCHC Staff: This is something that we can take away and be mindful of because we all have different opinions.
- TAC Member: I feel like we should announce TAC to the public, and include us in the newsletters, like how the Tenant Engagement manager was introduced in the tenant newsletter.
- TCHC Staff: I believe there was a TAC communication in the newsletter, we can double-check. We welcome communicating the TAC's purpose and work through the newsletter.

- TAC Member: TAC serves a significant purpose; we've learned a lot from each other. I was under the impression that some of our conversations were confidential which is why I don't share with people in my community that I'm on the TAC. I feel not all information should be shared out of respect. It should be made clear what we can and cannot share.
- TAC Member: We should have a year-end overview of items covered by the TAC to share with all tenants. It could be a summary/outcome list of items in simple bullet points.

Looking at the future of the TAC, what possibilities do you see for agenda-setting beyond the current mandate?

- TAC Member: We should have meetings where people can talk about their communities and highlight their successes and struggles.
- TAC Member: We don't know about this new LIFT program, and we haven't been informed about it.
- TCHC Staff: The LIFT Program (The new tenant funding program) came to TAC twice this year for feedback. The tenant engagement team held focus groups in each region over the summer and had a general survey go out to all tenants to collect feedback on the potential new funding program. We can consider bringing this item back before we launch.
- Non-voting Member: The TAC could keep in mind the data collected from the surveys that go out to communities. They can review them and see which are the top areas of concern for tenants and discuss them in meetings moving forward. Streamline vendors who can provide services to communities.
- TAC Member: I think tenants need more information on how Rent Geared to Income (RGI) is calculated. The process needs to be explained better, so tenants understand. We should focus on this. People are struggling to pay their rent and don't understand why their rent has increased, we need this information in plain language.
- TCHC Staff: I will take this back with our team and connect with you.

- TAC Member: Our discussions should be based on issues all tenants go through; we should pick which issue has the highest percentage and choose or have a voting system to select which issue to address. This way we amplify tenant voices.
- TAC Member: There appears to be a disconnect between TAC, agenda items and what's happening on the ground. We often speak theoretically but it has no bearing on communities. We need to strengthen and increase communication between TAC and the general tenant population, so they are aware of our role and work. This will help us gain a sense of our work in helping tenants on the ground level.
- TCHC Staff: As we go about the new Tenant Engagement model this can be incorporated. There's an opportunity to explain and communicate the value of the TAC and how your voices shape policies.
- TAC Member: Can the TAC be a part of the planning for volunteer appreciation events? I believe the TAC can utilize these events to bring more awareness and discussion around TAC and allow tenants to see the TAC.
- TCHC Staff: Clarified that what the TAC member was discussing was the Tenant Action Tables (TCAT) End of year celebration for tenant, building and community representatives. There is an opportunity in the new model that supports this integration.

TAC Priorities Voting Outcome

- Each member must vote on their top 3 priorities for 2025
- 14 TAC members voted on the Tenant Engagement priorities should be numbers 2,3,5.
- 1 TAC member voted only to focus on numbers 2 and 5.
- 2 TAC members voted for priorities 3 and 9
- 1 TAC member voted on priorities 5,3 and 9.

Voting Discussion

- TAC Member: If number 9 doesn't end up in the top 3 we should consider breakout rooms to create a conversation around this item.
- TCHC Staff: This could potentially be a working session item.

- TAC Member: (1) should the honorarium be increased for 2025? At a previous meeting, a member brought forward that there's a lot of expertise in the tenant community for certain jobs/communicating with the broader group. (2) Worthwhile to see if tenants can be paid through engagement initiatives.
- TCHC Staff: We can gather input from other members; Keep in mind we do have a budget. We can speak on these items doesn't mean we'll have the ability financially to make it happen.
- TAC Member: I think our work here is valuable, and we should be paid what we are worth. Utilized tenant expertise for paid positions.
- TAC Member: I am concerned about the timeline of LIFT/TAF; residents want answers about the program changes I think we should talk about this first to notify tenants as soon as possible.
- TCHC Staff: We do have a Tenant Staff Working Group (TSWG) meeting next week to develop a communication plan we are actively working on.
- TAC Member: I think tenant-paid positions could work if we collaborate with other organizations that can support them financially. They could fund honorariums and maybe create paid positions for tenants.
- TAC Member: Our honorarium is not considered income because it's below the \$499 amount and if we go over a certain amount we will be taxed/considered income. We should be mindful of other members' financial situations.
- TAC Members: I agree external organizations are great and can financially support TCHC initiatives.

Actions items and wrap up

- The Insurance team to provide a progress update to TAC
- TCHC Staff to follow up with the Tenant engagement manager to create Tenant Funding program status communication.
- TCHC staff to investigate how to further communicate TACs work with the broader tenant audience.