



TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee
Wednesday, April 16th, 2025
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Location: 100 Queen Street West, Committee Room 1

MEETING MINUTES

Organization	Participants
TAC Members	Present In-Person: John Corso, Ines Garcia, Karlene Nation, Samantha Mogent Present Online: Robert Benzanson, Jorry Cross, Tabitha David, Petra Jeffers, Debbie Menezes, Susel Munoz, Abdul Rahman, Charmaine Roye, Tameka Richards Regrets: Doug Maybank
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 Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement. Melissa Rodrigues, Business Planner, Tenant Engagement Junior Taylor, Community Safety and Support Manager Gail Johnson, Community Safety and Support Manager Present Online: Nadia Gouveia, Chief Operating Officer,

	<p>Joseph Greer, Community Safety and Support Manager</p> <p>Not present: Christine Aina, Manager, Tenant Engagement (Acting) Gail Johnson, Community Safety and Support Manager</p>
City of Toronto Staff	<p>Present In-Person: Emily Gaus, Manager, Housing Secretariat Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat,</p> <p>Not present: Jag Sharma, City Deputy Manager,</p>

Welcome, Introductions, Land, and African Ancestral Acknowledgments

- TCHC's CEO Sean Baird started the meeting by reading the Land and African Ancestral Acknowledgements.
- Sean commemorated Tracy Izzard, who passed away on April 7th, 2025. Tracy's contributions to TCHC and her courageous battle with cancer were highlighted. TAC members were asked to pay respects in memory of Tracy, who will be dearly missed.

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

- Emily Gaus reviewed the TAC's agenda, minutes and action items, which were approved and motioned by TAC members.

Tenant Fund Distribution Policy – Presentation Feedback

- TAC Member: The LIFT program appears to be more complicated than the TAF. The TAF was specific (e.g. could not use the funds for a DJ or certain speakers). How will LIFT be different? Will it be expanded further? When funding is allocated, how is that different from the TAF?

- TCHC Staff: Eligible expenses include smaller equipment that supports social recreation, food/refreshments, audio equipment, and programming/activities provided by third parties (e.g. DJ would qualify). Allocations refer to the calculation of funding, which includes the number of beds x \$12.50. Most communities will see considerably more funds available.
- TAC Member: If two people decide they want a program, is that enough to be considered a priority for most tenants?
- TCHC Staff: LIFT is decided by the tenant circle through the Engage Together model. The tenant circle meetings are open to all tenants, and CSC's are providing 2-week notices to tenants in each building/community. The goal is for tenants to come together and list 6 priorities to invest in for the year. LIFT won't be implemented until July; tenants can apply to TAF in the interim.
- TCHC Staff: The tenant circles just started, formal submissions for LIFT won't occur until July. The goal is to have people come together before LIFT is in place to agree on their community priorities in advance so they can apply to the LIFT funds once available.
- TAC Member: Should there be a minimum number of tenants at the circles? How many times a year do the circles meet?
- TCHC Staff: The tenant circles meet 4 times a year; however, this depends on the community's level of engagement. There is no minimum number of people, as they are open meetings; the objective is to make this as participatory and inclusive as possible.
- TAC Member: Will the tenant circles provide their decisions/priorities to the CSCs? Is there any communication going out to the communities currently? Is LIFT better for communities monetarily?
- TCHC Staff: The \$12.50 was decided by looking at an equal distribution to bedrooms, based on what was approved through the City of Toronto budget. However, there is still a minimum of \$1000 for buildings (e.g. if you live in a small building), they will still receive \$1000. TCHC is preparing materials to outline this

information more clearly, and a final version will go to the Tenant Services Committee.

- TCHC Staff: There is no intention to reduce funding available; we increased the total amount of money for tenant funding by \$1 million.
- TAC Member: The tenant circle posters were ripped down in my building. I feel that there are limited forms of communication regarding the tenant circles outside of the posters. I don't see how LIFT addresses our current vendor issues, limited selection of purchasing items and having to pay high delivery fees. It feels like the only thing that changed about the tenant funding program was the name, and not addressing the actual concerns.
- TCHC Staff: Based on feedback from the last TAC meeting, TCHC is hiring youth senior program leaders (SPL's) to support the engagement, outreach and posters. We are actively working with procurement towards a solution this month, to increase the number/diversity of vendors, making it more tenant-friendly and responsive. TCHC needs to be able to account for the money being spent.
- TAC Member: LIFT is once a year for the whole community. In Regent Park, when people do things, it's not open to everyone; it tends to serve specific groups. How is this going to work? This could become a problem in communities, who would be responsible for obtaining the funding? Concerns are based on past experiences of tenants being excluded from programs, and requests that TCHC staff keep this in mind.
- TCHC Staff: To be eligible for LIFT funds, it must be open to all tenants and a priority that serves the entire community. Tenant circles will also work with the CSC's to confirm that the funds are being used for community development.
- TAC Member: Can tenants still apply for TAF? Can the LIFT funding be allocated to different things, for example, if one program doesn't need the full \$1000? Is the application process going to be different or still require signatures? The current TAF application is hard to fill out, with 13 pages of all the reasons tenants need this.

Instead, can the CSC implement an application for ongoing programs/events?

- TCHC Staff: Yes, tenants can apply for TAF currently for programs like gardening. When a community is allocated funding, it's not always for one priority, it can be distributed amongst a variety of priorities. The process for LIFT is not an application form, it's use will be determined by documenting the needs at a tenant circle.
- TAC Member: for seniors and youth, they look forward to summer programs, back-to-school programs, and gardening. We need more accountability for funding; who's responsible for holding the allocated funding once approved? There are communities where tenants are fighting to access programming/materials like gardening materials. Knowing LIFT can be allocated to multiple priorities, what are the limitations? What can it not go towards? Concerns that it will cause chaos amongst tenants. CSC's need to touch base on what works in their community and share with other communities. Community spaces need to be more welcoming for youth, seniors, and all community members. We can't just use funding on food and unnecessary electronics, there needs to be better ways to allocate money in these communities.
- TCHC Staff: Capital will not be funded by LIFT, for example, basketball courts/playgrounds would come from a different set of funding. The City has launched a local community initiative that will aim to align. In terms of accountability, TCHC staff will be working with tenants and procurement through vendors to purchase/pay for funding program items. After rolling out, there will be an evaluation of what LIFT funds are still available and to distribute any leftover funds. In the ideal future state, each community can access and use their allocation.
- TAC Member: For smaller properties, if there are two communities not using their allotted funding, there will be no carryover to the next year. Will there be an opportunity for other communities to access additional funding?

- TCHC Staff: We want funding to go towards productive use and work first with communities to support them to make use. If at that point, then yes, we could reallocate the funds.
- TAC Member: Can there be more clarification on what will not be funded?
- TCHC Staff: There are ineligible items such as alcohol, gifts, video game consoles, items provided to staff or partner agencies (e.g. mop, bucket, etc) and others.
- TAC Member: Is there a record of communities not engaging in funding? This is a sign that staff need to be in the buildings to communicate with tenants about the program. If it's only annual, can it be split up over different things?
- TCHC Staff: We are aware that there are communities that are not as heavily engaged. I agree with the approach, and TCHC will be supporting tenants through local staff.
- TCHC Staff: Regarding the allocation of funds, yes, the communities are listing up to 6 priorities, and it can happen at different times of the year. Despite the challenges with engagement, TCHC is still aiming high and hoping to have 90% of the tenant engagement circles operational by the summer.
- TAC Member: A challenge we still face, regardless of the new model and funding program, is that our current vendors are not accessible or cost-effective for tenants.
- TCHC Staff: This is at the forefront of thinking as we go through the nuts and bolts of procurement. TCHC is aware that the current vendor process is not working, and we are actively working on it with procurement.
- TAC Member: Quite often and over time, items purchased from tenant funding programs are stolen (e.g. projectors or TV's). If your building has tenants who may misplace items, you must be proactive about this and secure the expensive items.
- TCHC Staff: The inventory of items purchased is contemplated and considered within the LIFT guidelines. This is something considered in the background with staff who are monitoring the supplies and equipment.

Action Items and Wrap-up

- Pablo will be sending out a track changes version of the LIFT Guideline for members to provide comments.
- Next meeting will be on Thursday, May 15, 2025.