



TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC)
Tuesday, October 21, 2025
6 to 8 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, Committee Room 2
100 Queen Street West

Meeting minutes

Organization	Participants
TAC members	Present online: Robert Bezanson, Jorry Cross, Tabitha David, Ines Garcia, Petra Jeffers, Doug Maybank, Debbie Menezes, Nasser Noashad, Charmaine Roye, Beisa El-Tawashy Present in-person: Nasra Ahmed, Ghassan Fayad, Karlene Nation Not present: Peggy L Ernest, Samuel Kisitu, Shazzaneiy Mohamed, Kafiya Noor Regrets: Virginia Alexander
Non-Voting members	Not present: Marcel Charlebois, Tenant Director Ubah Farah, Tenant Director Ziva Ferreira, Tenant Director
TCHC staff	Present in-person: Sean Baird, Chief Executive Officer (Co-Chair) Christine Aina, Manager, Engagement Refresh (Acting) Gail Johnson, Manager, Community Safety & Support (East region) Libin Ali, Program Coordinator, Tenant Engagement Pablo Vivanco, Director, Tenant Engagement and Community Development Not present: Nadia Gouveia, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Janelle Estwick, Executive Advisor to the COO

	<p>Joseph Greer, Manager, Community Safety and Support (West region)</p> <p>Junior Taylor, Manager, Community Safety and Support (Central region)</p> <p>Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement</p>
City of Toronto staff	<p>Present in-person:</p> <p>Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, City Housing Corporations Relationship Unit</p> <p>Earl Phillips, Programs Coordinator, City Housing Corporations Relationship Unit</p> <p>Not present:</p> <p>Jag Sharma, Deputy City Manager (Co-Chair)</p> <p>Emily Gaus, Manager (Acting), City Housing Corporations Relationship Unit</p> <p>Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, City Housing Corporations Relationship Unit</p> <p>Natalie Wythe, Programs Coordinator, City Housing Corporations Relationship Unit</p>

Welcome, Introductions, Land, and African Ancestral

Acknowledgments:

- TCHC's CEO Sean Baird started the meeting by reading the Land Acknowledgement and African Ancestral Acknowledgment.
- Pablo Vivanco, Director, Tenant Engagement and Community Development introduced TCHC staff, followed by Zanib Habib who introduced the City of Toronto staff.
- Pablo welcomed TAC members to introduce themselves.

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

- Motion to approve the July and September meeting minutes and in addition to correcting the spelling of TAC member's last name on both sets of minutes.

Community Garden Consultation Update and Revised Policy Presentation:

- **TAC member:** When people order supplies for gardening, is it being tracked so there's not recurring orders of reuseable items? It's nice to have it on paper but there must be true accountability because there are tenants that are not upkeeping their garden and having garbage everywhere.
- **TCHC staff:** There is inventory tracking to prevent double orders. As for the upkeeping of the garden, that's what we want to make clear on the policy, what tenants are responsible for and what staff are responsible, as there's accountability for both.
- **TAC member:** In my community we have a terrace, I want to ask who would I reach out to for when it will be reopened or confirm if tenants can access it? I've been trying to push for my community to make this space accessible to tenants because it's beautiful and not being used so who do I reach out to? There are people who rent out the rec room but there has been garbage, food wastes, cigarette butts that go into my flower garden and I'm drafting a petition to get tenants to sign.
- **TCHC staff:** We can follow up with you offline regarding this issue.
- **TAC member:** I'm not sure what's new in the updated Garden policy. If we tell tenants of the new policy, that's very text heavy, they're not going to know what to focus on. What's new? What should they focus on in the updated policy? In terms of rolling this out, it must be simplified because I'm not grasping what the new updated messaging is for the residents. There is going to have to be some training for those that are going to use plots in our communities and what their responsibilities are. Additionally, I suggest having cameras as we had some vandalism in our space, so maybe some cameras would be useful.
- **TAC staff:** Thank you, that's great feedback and we will find ways to make this information more accessible and digestible for tenants.
- **TAC member:** Engagement and participation of tenants should be key in the policy. Tenants don't have a role or say in where flowers go. There should be a focus on tenant participation.
- **TCHC staff:** We hear your frustrations, and this is the reason why we have brought the policy to TAC—to ensure these issues don't

continue to arise. The policy aims to have positive outcomes for tenants and staff.

- **TAC member:** I'm just having a hard time understanding the LIFT (Local Initiative Funding for Tenants) funds. I'm going to use my community for an example. With TAF (Tenant Action Funds) we'd have more money than LIFT. Is housing going to add any beautification gardens to the communities as well? Or is that the job of what's left over from LIFT money? Are there any other vendors you know that would be good to use for next spring? Is there any way that Toronto housing can partner with the City of Toronto because they have greenhouses and access to funding for gardening that can support TCHC tenants.
- **TCHC staff:** We are currently looking at vendor lists for community garden supplies and partnerships and developing business cases to see what budgets/funds can be used for 2027.
- **TCHC staff:** LIFT funds are in no way a reduction in what TCHC does in terms of beautification etc. However, communities can use those funds towards gardening.
- **TAC member:** Regarding food gardens, starting next year I will be starting a veggie garden on our properties. As a lot of people aren't very respectful in the community, what are the rules and regulations around fencing? Where would I get funding for that?
- **TCHC staff:** At the moment we will defer to other staff that can speak to that within the policy. We are looking into requesting funding for 2027 from the City for gardens, so tenants do not have to use LIFT funds.
- **TCHC staff:** Spoke to allocation of LIFT funds and re-confirmed that LIFT budget has increased to \$1 million from the original \$250,000 TAF amount. The funds are not being redirected to other business areas and are solely for tenant use.
- **TAC member:** I want to reiterate some of the earlier points mentioned. Everyone should be on the same page from the supers down to the tenants. Vendor choices are very limited. Advocating to make the process easier so there is more choice in vendor selection. I suggest storage space in each community for garden equipment to prevent theft.
- **TCHC staff:** We acknowledge that there have been issues, but TCHC does not want this (Gardens) to be a point of contention or

conflict. We encourage folks to report incidents when they do occur.

- **TAC member:** In our complex we have three big buildings and we're struggling to have enough cleaners as is. We have a very busy superintendent. So instead of throwing in a very over worked super into the conflicts of the gardening, maybe we can include the Engagement CSCs in these conversations.
- **TCHC staff:** Absolutely, there's going to be a role for the CSC and the Engagement staff on how the community gardens are to be used or just support for starting a garden. There will be a role and the weight will not just be placed on the building staff because as you mentioned, they are overworked.
- **TAC member:** Thank you for acknowledging, because to minimize conflicts it can get complicated so there needs to be some serious training and consequences because if you're not upkeeping the gardens then the person responsible needs to be removed.
- **TAC member:** I think that gardening is a very good initiative. It is time to refine the structure and policies to better support it.
- **TAC member:** I noticed here there's conversation about tensions in meetings; I want to contribute that it is an educational issue. I don't want to undermine the intelligence of anyone. But I don't know if the TCHC staff are equipped to handle the issues that come up in community. We have various tenants who exhibit anti-social behaviour.
- **TCHC staff:** I've have heard stories about the conflicts that happen and I just want you to know that if these issues occur, please flag it up so that it can be addressed.

Garden Policy Discussion Q&A:

- **TCHC staff:** What's the simplest way to write this policy so staff and tenants can understand and use it confidently from day one?
- **TAC member:** Be very straightforward, keep it short with a clear message about the roles, what to abide by, what's acceptable and what's not. I also have a question as well. Last year I had connected with LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests) and there was a tenant who had a mental health episode, and they decided to rip out the garden. I want to know, if in the revised policy, situations like this will be addressed? Will there be

consequences/repercussions for tenants or non-tenants who destroy gardens?

- **TCHC staff:** I don't think that the garden policy is going to talk specifically about tenants who are destroying gardens and the consequences that may follow. That's not the intention of the garden policy. The policy is supposed to be a permissive piece of how we make gardening a positive experience for tenants in their communities. I don't mean to dismiss what you're saying, we know disruptive things happen and sometimes it manifests in vandalism. However, we need to improve the way we manage problematic behaviours. I think that's something everyone can agree on that we would like to be better at; how we manage those kinds of behaviours. Additionally, don't want to suggest that that's an easy thing to do. We do provide support for those who struggle, however it's not always linear. We can provide the right support so people can thrive, but sometimes people will fall back and will need help to get back up again. There are behaviours that are disruptive and antisocial, and we need to make sure we are taking appropriate action. I would say that starts with reporting either at the local level and CSU (Community Safety Unit). From a tenancy management perspective on managing poor behaviours, we need to have clear reports and history about what has happened for us to take concrete action, and these things take time. Changing behaviours is a difficult thing to do and our goal is to address anti-social behaviours first before we pursue banning somebody from a program, or evicting somebody from the property. This doesn't mean we can't utilize these options; however, they are rare tools only for extreme circumstances.
- **TAC member:** Getting a community harvest party or plant days where you can engage and be informed all at the same time.
- **TAC member:** Infograph to be posted on the poster boards in the common area of the building.
- **TAC member:** Using simple language that's accessible to all tenants.
- **TAC member:** Simplifying the policy to ensure it is digestible.
- **TCHC staff:** What's the best way to roll out the policy so people feel informed, included, and motivated to follow it?

- **TAC member:** I don't know if any community has signage in their gardening space, but if they don't, maybe you can have a sign that states: "This garden belongs to TCHC," stating that TCHC assigned tenants to it. Then, have a separate sign that states the rules, roles, and responsibilities for the tenants that tend to the garden. In addition, a contact list if any issues arise with water, etc.
- **TCHC staff:** What supports or partnerships may enable the growth of community gardens?
- **TAC member:** I wanted to suggest a community garden model that we can aspire to, like the Jane and Finch garden (the Farm) which is absolutely impressive. So maybe speak to some of those folks to help us think of the policies and to guide us in this process of policy revision.
- **TAC member:** Partner with community colleges.
- **TAC member:** We need expertise, and for other communities that are doing well, we can visit their gardens and see what is going well and what needs to be done better.

Wrap-up and action items

1. September & July meeting minutes to be updated with TAC member's name correction before publication.
2. Connect offline with TAC member about issues with the Garden Space.
3. Updates to Allocation of LIFT funds to come back to TAC.