

**Deputation - Gita Hashemi**  
**Item 6E - Q1 2026 Tenant Engagement Refresh Update**  
**TSC Public Meeting- June 4, 2026**

**Deputation to Toronto Community Housing Corporation**  
**TENANT SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
June 04, 2026

Re: Tenant Community Gardens Policy, Version: 1.0  
Policy Owner: Operations \ Approval: Board of Directors  
Effective Date: February 17, 2026  
[https://torontohousing.ca/sites/default/files/2026-04/tchc\\_community\\_garden\\_policy\\_1.pdf](https://torontohousing.ca/sites/default/files/2026-04/tchc_community_garden_policy_1.pdf)

**Key points: Lack of consultation, inadequate information and late notice for the policy change, adverse effects on engagement and wellbeing at 220 Oak St Community Garden**

**Proposal: Add a grandfather clause**

I live at [REDACTED] Street Housing Co-op adjacent to [REDACTED] St TCHC building. I have been one of the most active participating gardeners in our shared community garden since 2008. I have helped in maintaining and improving the garden and engaging the TCHC residents at [REDACTED] St.

On May 29<sup>th</sup> I was informed of the new policy cited above that would expel myself and a few other co-op residents from the garden.

This policy was brought in without any consultation with the community and consideration of how it might affect the social engagement and relations between TCHC residents and their long-time neighbours and co-gardeners.

Also, the policy was communicated AFTER the gardening season had already started as in previous years on Victoria Day weekend. Implementing the policy at this point means the labour-intensive work I have already done in cleaning and preparing the ground and planting seeds and seedlings which have been growing for the past few weeks will go to waste.

Most importantly, this garden started as a 'community initiative' and a 'community garden' that involved residents of [REDACTED] and the coop working together from the start. **Together the two groups reclaimed a wasteland and turned it into a garden.**

I am personally responsible along with two other co-op members and a [REDACTED] residents for writing the city grant that allowed us to build the shed, the fence and the paving stones.

Even though the grant went in under the auspices of TCHC. It wasn't about ownership for us but about working together for something that has meant so much to all of us. As a **community initiative**, the garden was meant to bring us together and break the invisible borders separating the neighbours.

The garden has been the space where we have developed friendships, shared knowledge and traditions and seeds and harvest. Together we have grown food in the 'community plots' that has been offered to TCHC residents only.

Year after year, myself and a few other co-op residents who are in the garden have participated in clearing the plots that [REDACTED] residents have used. We have done that as our contribution toward building a stronger community in our shared neighbourhood. In turn we have benefited from what TCHC residents have brought in.

**What happens to this community and to our neighbourly relations if you ignore this shared history and take the shared space and make it exclusive?**

**Why draw borders after we worked so hard together to break them?**

This doesn't serve either group but I think it actually hurts the [REDACTED] residents more. The few co-op members in the garden have shared gardening knowledge and skills and brought continuity of care to the soil and the environment that would not exist without us. We have built relationships that have been crucial in keeping the garden a space of wellbeing for all.

There are 28 plots in this garden. Only 8 are currently in use by co-op members. Every year, there are at least 5-6 plots that are allocated to [REDACTED] residents but remain unused. Sometimes we have watered and cared for other plots that are planted and then left uncared for.

This year **there are currently 11 plots that are not being used yet.** If you walk into the garden you can see from how tall the grass is that some of them have not been in use for a few years. Therefore, there is no shortage of plots because of the co-op members being in the garden.

To our community it looks like the policy makers were aware of this history and context and the effect this garden has had on the relationships and health of the residents of the two buildings and on the neighborhood as a whole.

The policy you have on paper has actual effects on our neighborhood. Those of us who have lived here for many years know that very well.

I respectfully ask you to reconsider the policy by taking into account this unique history and context, and **grandfather the co-op residents who have a plot already.**

Please keep this a **community garden.**

Sincerely,

Gita Hashemi

[REDACTED] Street  
[REDACTED] \ [REDACTED].com