



Tenant Services Committee

931 Yonge Street,
Toronto, M4W 2H2

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The Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”) of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (“TCHC”) held a hybrid Public meeting on March 28, 2023, via Webex and at City Hall, Committee Room 1, 100 Queen Street West, commencing at 9:45 a.m.

TSC Directors Present: John Campbell (Chair)
Marcel Charlebois
Ubah Farah
Councillor Paula Fletcher
Mohammed Haque

TSC Directors Absent: Councillor Lily Cheng
Debbie Douglas

Management Present: Jag Sharma, President & Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”)
Nadia Gouveia, Acting Chief Operating Officer (“COO”)
Darragh Meagher, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary
Lily Chen, Chief Financial Officer (“CFO”)
Jessica Hawes, Acting Chief Development Officer (“CDO”)
Barbara Shulman, Chief People & Culture Officer
Allen Murray, Vice President, Facilities Management
Paula Knight, Vice President, Strategic Planning & Communications
Melanie Martin, Interim Commissioner of Housing Equity (“CHE”)
Richard Grotsch, Senior Director, Business

Operations
Ceilidh Wilson, Assistant Corporate Secretary

A quorum being present, Mr. Campbell, serving as Chair, called the meeting to order, and Ms. Wilson served as recording secretary.

ITEM 1 CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, the first TSC meeting taking place in-person at City Hall and virtually via Webex.

DEPUTATIONS

The Chair polled for any deputations to be heard at the meeting. The following verbal deputations were presented:

- Item 5 – Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update (*Catherine Wilkinson*)
- Item 6 – Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity (“OCHE”) Bi-Annual Update – July to December 2022 (*Catherine Wilkinson*)

The following written deputation was received:

- Item 7 – Annual Review of Community Safety Advisory Sub-Committee and Tenant Services Committee Charters (*Jacqueline Yu*)
- Item 8 – Community Safety Advisory Sub-Committee (“CSAC”) Chair’s Report (*Jacqueline Yu*)

ITEM 2 APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Haque, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC unanimously approved:

1. the Agenda for its Public meeting of March 28, 2023; and
2. all matters on the Agenda, with the exception of Items 5, 6, 10A, 10B, 10C and 10D.

ITEM 3 CHAIR’S POLL RE: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Chair requested members of the TSC to indicate any agenda item in

which they had a conflict of interest, together with the nature of the interest.
No conflicts were declared.

ITEM 4 CONFIRMATION OF TSC PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2023

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Haque, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC confirmed the above-captioned minutes as amended.

ITEM 5 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS UPDATE

A verbal deputation was received from Catherine Wilkinson with respect to this item.

Mr. Meagher and Ms. Gouveia were available to answer questions of the Committee. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The nature of TCHC’s Participatory Budgeting (“PB”) program shifted from tenants having input on capital projects in their communities to a program where tenants could order items from a catalogue for their communities. It was noted that the latter is not participatory budgeting in the classic sense and should therefore be referred to as something else.
- Management confirmed that while the PB program was initially related to capital items, once the capital plan was fully funded, the program shifted to a focus on purchasing lower cost items for communities.
- As part of the review of the program, the PB title is under review. The plan is to review the program in 2023, with recommendations being brought to the TSC and the Board in 2024.
- It was confirmed that any references to the PB program are referring to the program historically known as PB, which management acknowledge may have been misnamed.
- As part of the report back on the program, Management will provide information regarding the difference between traditional participatory budgeting and TCHC’s program wherein tenants purchase community items from a catalogue.

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- The Committee directed that Action Items #1 and #2 remain on the action item list.
- Action item: Management to report back to the TSC with the overarching plan to review the program formerly known as participatory budgeting and the anticipated timelines to bring a report to the TSC.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC received the updates provided as Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HOUSING EQUITY (“OCHE”) BI-ANNUAL UPDATE – JULY TO DECEMBER 2022 TSC:2023-13

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

A verbal deputation was received from Catherine Wilkinson with respect to this item.

Ms. Martin was available to answer questions of the Committee. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The Committee asked that the number of tenants engaged with the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity (“OCHE”) be included in the report rather than percentages.
- 464 referrals were sent from TCHC to the OCHE from July to December 2022, 353 of which were resolved by the OCHE. The remaining 111 are not necessarily unresolved; there is a 45 day period to report out on files received, thus these referrals will be captured in the next bi-annual report.
- Beginning in 2023, OCHE stopped accepting referrals that should have been resolved by local staff and now sends those files back to staff. These files will be reported on in the next bi-annual report.
- Files with a local repayment agreement or where the tenant is able to access the Housing Stabilization Fund are sent back to TCHC to resolve.

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- Approximately 60% of files are being returned to TCHC staff, which raised concern amongst Committee members.
- The new arrears collection process (“ACP”) requires that local staff make direct contact with the tenant within the first month that the tenant is in arrears, however the data is showing that this is not happening. Tenant Services Coordinators (“TSC”) are allocated to hub locations rather than going out for doing door-to-door contact. Management are looking to increase door-to-door contact in 2023, while balancing the interests of tenants being able to access their TSC at their local hub.
- The OCHE receives a fairly consistent volume of referrals from the three regions on a weekly basis, which has allowed for the Early Resolutions Officers (“ERO”) to be allocated geographically. It is anticipated that this will help to build relationships with local staff and provide more effective service to tenants.
- There is varying success with repayment agreements and tenants often breach their agreement. Staff work with tenants to get back on track with their repayment agreements, and where this is not possible, these files will be referred to the OCHE. Operations tracks repayment agreements, whether there are breaches, and whether staff are following up.
- Action item: Management to report back on how arrears are reflected in TCHC's budget, and whether arrears are written off.
- It was clarified that tenants on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program are supported by the OCHE, however there is a requirement that TCHC has made an attempt to resolve their arrears locally prior to their file being submitted to the OCHE.

*Motion
carried*

ON MOTION DULY MADE by Mr. Haque, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-13, being the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity (“OCHE”) Bi-Annual Update for July to December 2022, and forward it to the Board of Directors for its information.

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY
ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE AND TENANT
SERVICES COMMITTEE CHARTERS** TSC:2023-20
ITEM 7

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

A written deputation was received from Jacqueline Yu with respect to this item and was circulated to the TSC.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC unanimously approved the Community Safety Advisory Sub-Committee (“CSAC”) and the Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”) Charters, as set out in Attachments 1 and 2 to Report TSC:2023-20, and forwarded them to the Governance, Communications and Human Resources Committee and the Board of Directors for approval.

**COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE (“CSAC”) CHAIR’S
REPORT** VERBAL REPORT
ITEM 8

No comments or remarks from the CSAC Chair were received.

**2023 PUBLIC COMMUNITY SAFETY
ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PLAN** TSC:2023-06
ITEM 8A

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC unanimously approved the 2023 Community Safety Advisory Sub-Committee (“CSAC”) Work Plan provided as Attachment 1 to Report TSC:2023-14, and forwarded it to the Board of Directors for its approval.

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM UPDATE
ITEM 8B – Q3 & 24 2022 TSC:2023-15

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-15, being the Violence Reduction Program Update for the third and fourth quarters of 2022, for its information.

COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT 2022 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE TORONTO POLICE SERVICES BOARD (“TPSB”)
ITEM 9 TSC:2023-11

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-11, being the Community Safety Unit 2022 Annual Report to the Toronto Police Services Board, and forwarded it to the Board of Directors for its information.

TCHC’S OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES
ITEM 10A TSC:2023-16

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Ms. Gouveia was available to answer questions of the Committee.

Highlights of the discussion include:

- TCHC’s vacancy rate is the lowest it has been in the past four years. The vacancy rate hit 2% in November 2022, ahead of schedule, and the goal is to maintain this level into 2023.
- \$25M of total arrears are categorized as rent and parking arrears. This is an \$8M increase since December 2022, and it will likely continue to increase, but strategies are in place to slow the growth.

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- Other housing providers are seeing similar trends in their arrears. This will be a focus area in 2023, and staff will take a lean six sigma approach to understand the increase in arrears and how to address them.
- Commercial arrears are managed by Facilities Management. These do not get addressed by the OCHE.
- Action item: The next iteration of the Operational Performance Measures report to include information related to commercial arrears data.
- Rent and parking arrears are coupled together because these are typically arrears with current tenancies, which are managed by Operations.
- Not all tenants pay for parking; it varies community by community. Parking generally is more expensive at downtown locations.
- TCHC has both underground and surface level parking, with the majority being underground parking lots.
- Action item: Management to provide the TSC with a report on the extent of parking arrears, total parking revenues, and a strategy to charge for and address parking arrears.
- There is a dedicated parking enforcement team in the Community Safety Unit (“CSU”) who will respond to requests where parking concerns have been flagged. Special Constables also have municipal licensing enforcement status to perform parking enforcement at TCHC properties.
- It was suggested that management explore the possibility of limiting the number of parking spaces issued to households that have multiple vehicles to ensure all tenants who drive are able to secure a parking space where needed.
- Almost all vacancies that are filled are with applicants on the centralized waiting list and through RentCafé. Bachelor units receive the lowest number of bids, at around 16 bids per unit, and the number of bids increases for larger bedroom sized units.
- The CSU parking enforcement team can issue tickets for certain offences, including illegal parking.
- CSU staff have access to tenant parking spot assignments. Where someone is parked in another tenant’s parking space, CSU will attempt to contact the vehicle owner and if they are not successful, the vehicle can be towed.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Haque, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-16, being the Operational Performance Measures report, for its information.

ITEM 10B TENANT COMPLAINTS UPDATE TSC:2023-17

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-17, being the Tenant Complaints Update, for its information.

ITEM 10C TENANT ENGAGEMENT REFRESH UPDATE TSC:2023-18

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Ms. Gouveia provided the TSC with a presentation regarding this matter, highlights of which include:

- Review of TCHC Tenant Leaders list;
- Review of TCHC tenant leadership;
- TCHC end-of-year regional forums;
- Key survey results;
- TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee; and
- Tenant Advisory Committee: Next steps.

Ms. Gouveia was available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The Committee recommended reviewing feedback from past tenant satisfaction surveys to see if there are patterns in tenant responses related to the services they receive, community safety, etc. and identify if that information can help inform recommendations to improve the overall tenant engagement system.
- It was confirmed that the tenant Directors on the TAC will not be individually providing feedback to the TCHC Board of Directors (the

“Board”), but rather the TAC as a whole will provide reports to the Board.

- The community action plans were developed two to three years ago, with little follow-up given the COVID-19 pandemic. Tenants have voiced dissatisfaction related to the lack of momentum and opportunity to action the plans developed. Tenants also voiced concern that TCHC did not respond fast enough to establish community-specific action plans.
- The tenant forums were the first opportunity to bring tenant leaders together post-COVID-19, and while the initial discussions at the forums were challenging, a lot of momentum has been built subsequent to the forums.
- Local community action tables are planned to take place in the next few months, which are more open house style. The hope is to do a city-wide forum to present the recommended changes before bringing a report back to the TSC in the fall of 2023.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Haque, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC unanimously recommended that:

1. The Board of Directors approve the development of terms of reference for the Tenant Advisory Committee by TCHC staff, the City and the Tenant Advisory Committee with consideration of the recent efforts and approach by Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation in establishing its Senior Tenant Advisory Committee;
2. The Board of Directors approve the implementation of an additional recruitment for the Tenant Advisory Committee, by TCHC in conjunction with the City, which targets tenants who are not currently involved in TCHC’s Tenant Engagement System;
3. The Board of Directors approve the commencement of meetings with the new and current Committee members beginning early in the second quarter of 2023;
4. The Board of Directors approve the appointment of a TCHC Tenant Director to the Tenant Advisory Committee

to liaise between the Tenant Advisory Committee and the Board of Directors through such process as the Board shall determine;

5. The Board of Directors approve the appointment of the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services and TCHC's President and CEO as joint co-Chairs of the Tenant Advisory Committee on a transitional basis to provide leadership and establish an effective Committee which will provide the basis for stronger voices from tenants within Toronto Community Housing Corporation, supported by staff from TCHC and the City; and
6. The Board of Directors request TCHC's President and CEO consult with the City's Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services in relation to the report back to the City's Planning and Housing Committee, in the first quarter of 2024, on the progress of the new Tenant Advisory Committee, including the Terms of Reference that were developed.

ITEM 10D 2022 ANNUAL UNIT INSPECTIONS REPORT TSC:2023-19

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Ms. Gouveia and Mr. Grotsch were available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- Unit condition issues have been automated in the HoMES system such that as soon as a unit inspection is classified as a fail, HoMES will automate a work order for the Community Services Coordinator ("CSC") to do a follow-up with the tenant. Some instances will result in a warning letter to the tenant, but where the unit condition issues are more significant, 14 days after the letter is issued, a follow-up inspection will take place. Where the unit condition issues are more significant, multiple engagements with the tenant may be required, which can include joint visits with Toronto Public Health.

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- This report will be updated when presented to the Board to include the resolution rate for the most severe cases of unit condition issues (e.g. level 7-9 on the scale).
- Two of the biggest concerns related to unit condition issues are fire life safety and pest management.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Haque, seconded by Councillor Fletcher and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-19, being the Tenant Complaints Update, for its information.

TERMINATION

A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Mr. Charlebois and seconded by Councillor Fletcher. The TSC resolved to terminate the public meeting at 11:22 a.m.

Secretary

Chair, Tenant Services Committee