

TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

BUILDING INVESTMENTS, FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 23, 2021

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Item 5 (Direct Award Implementation - Maintenance OPTIC)

I did red flag this agenda item to the staff members that are in charge of the TCHC CABR initiative in the hopes that they would step up for Black tenants and voice their concerns on the record. I can see this technology having disproportionately adverse implications for the Black community but that's not my area of expertise. It's CABR's. Hopefully they speak up for themselves.

Otherwise, I have a number of questions about the new technology.

Do all organizations that have Special Constables on staff require access to the Ontario Police Technology Information Cooperative (OPTIC)? Or is this an isolated ask from TCHC's Community Safety Unit?

Will TCHC finally use this system to possibly perform criminal background checks before handing over the keys to a unit in our communities? I would hope that any criminal background check would apply to those persons trying to squeeze onto an existing lease. (ie One tenant in my building lost his mother. When she died he wanted to keep his two-bedroom unit so he moved in a friend who happens to be a drug dealer. There was no background check performed on "the friend" before he was added to the lease. Now "the friend" wants to add his girlfriend to the lease.)

Will TCHC be performing criminal background checks on all current and future employees on an annual basis as a part of

the annual employee performance review with it a clear criminal record being a condition of continued employment? After all, they are working in an environment where many vulnerable persons live.

Will the new technology allow search capabilities that will make tenants attendance and testimony at Tribunal eviction hearings non-essential?

Along with the data collection capabilities will we be able to determine when, and under what circumstances, searches of OPTIC by TCHC's Special Constables were conducted?

Will the CSU be permanently dependent on the ITS budget for future funding of this new tech? I'm not impressed with this new TCHC pattern of pooling funds from otherwise unrelated sources. (i.e. CABR taking money from the Participatory Budget funding. Especially when we, the tenants, weren't even asked.)

Is the Community Safety Unit going to be sharing information with IT staff? No? Then it is a budget item that falls solely within the CSU funding paradigm.

Toronto Police Services aren't allowed to walk onto TCHC property without an express invitation. Yet we are building in a secret backdoor for information sharing between the two entities.

One final thought. Have you even considered that if you need such high level access to information from Toronto Police Services that it's not community hubs you should be installing

in our communities but more of those “Special” Constables?
Cuz I have.

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Item 6A (Annual Capital Project Management Update)

Under the heading on page two of Project Changes and Cost Control is the line “Change orders are a formal means of incorporating modification into a construction project contract, and are a key cost control measure ...” Cost control implies cost savings. Never in the time I have been eyeballing the Change Orders have companies come back to TCHC under budget with a cheque in hand saying that you gave them too much money.

It's certainly not a cost control measure unless you get to the root cause of those change orders. For that I have two suggestions. That Contractor Audit I have been requesting for a considerable amount of time now. It's not necessarily the fault of the current contractor that there are cost overruns.

That leads us to my second recommendation. The proper utilization of the new ITS system to record when capital work is completed on our sites and by which company.

Transparency leads to accountability.

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(Item 7C – Contractor Award: Commercial Laundry
Appliances)

Three requests I'd like to make with respect to this contract -

- 1) Tenants be refunded any outstanding balance on their Sparkle laundry card.
- 2) The Coinomatic laundry card be distributed (with their prepaid vending machine installed) prior to the washers and dryers being swapped.
- 3) The cost of washing and drying remain the same.

Is it too much to ask how old these machines are that they will be installing in our buildings?