



Tenant Services Committee

931 Yonge Street,
Toronto, M4W 2H2

Page 1 of 11

The Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”) of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (“TCHC”) held a virtual Public meeting on February 17, 2023, via WebEx, commencing at 9:16 a.m.

TSC Directors Present: John Campbell, Chair
Marcel Charlebois
Councillor Paula Fletcher
Ubah Farah

TSC Directors Absent: Councillor Lily Cheng
Debbie Douglas
Mohammed Haque

Management Present: Jag Sharma, President & Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”)
Nadia Gouveia, Acting Chief Operating Officer (“COO”)
Darragh Meagher, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary
Barbara Shulman, Chief People & Culture Officer
Jessica Hawes, Acting Chief Development Officer
Paula Knight, Vice President, Strategic Planning and Communications
Allen Murray, Vice President, Facilities Management
Melanie Martin, Interim Commissioner of Housing Equity
Summer Nudel, Senior Advisor, Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity
Richard Grotsch, Senior Director, Business Operations
Sonia Fung, Committee Secretary

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

ITEM 1 CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the TSC meeting and apologized for the late start.

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 and Miguel Avila-Velarde*)
- Item 6A – OCHE 2022 Work Plan Performance Appraisal (*Catherine Wilkinson*)
- Item 7 – Update on Tenant Led Improvements in Basement Spaces (*Catherine Wilkinson*)
- Item 8A – TCHC’s Operational Performance Measures (*Catherine Wilkinson*)
- Item 8C – Tenant Engagement Refresh Update (*Miguel Avila-Velarde*)
- Item 9 – 2023 Public TSC Work Plan (*Catherine Wilkinson*)

The following written deputations were received:

- Item 5 – Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update (*Jacqueline Yu, Miguel Avila-Velarde and David Ng*)
- Item 8A – TCHC’s Operational Performance Measures (*Jacqueline Yu and David Ng*)
- Item 8B – Tenant Complaints Update (*David Ng*)
- Item 8C – Tenant Engagement Refresh Update (*Jacqueline Yu, David Ng and Veronika Hering*)

ITEM 2 APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC approved the Agenda for its Public Meeting of February 17, 2023.

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 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TSC MEETING OF DECEMBER 1, 2022

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC confirmed the above-captioned minutes without amendments.

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

Written deputations were received from Jacqueline Yu, Miguel Avila-Velarde and David Ng with respect to this item and were circulated to the TSC.

Verbal deputations were received from Catherine Wilkinson and Miguel Avila-Velarde with respect to this item.

Mr. Meagher was available to answer questions of the Committee. Highlights of the discussion include:

- A review took place a few years ago to look at the legal and operational requirements of access to CCTV camera footage, which resulted in restrictions placed on access for certain staff. Superintendents currently have access to live footage, but cannot review archived footage without the assistance of the Community Safety Unit (“CSU”).

- Action item: Management to confirm the details of the operational review that contemplated the limitations to CCTV access by frontline operations staff, and report back on potential options to the measures that were implemented as a consequence of that review.

Motion carried

ON MOTION DULY MADE by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC received the matters reported as Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update, and referred Action Item 6 to the next meeting of the Tenant Services Committee for a further update as to the operational review that resulted in limitations to CCTV access by frontline operations staff, and to report back on potential options to the measures that were implemented as a consequence of that review.

**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF
HOUSING EQUITY (“OCHE”) 2023 WORK
PLAN – REVISED**

ITEM 6A

TSC:2023-04

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 Chair thanked Ms. Nudel for her time in the role of Interim Commissioner of Housing Equity (“CHE”), and welcomed Ms. Martin as the new Interim CHE.
- The Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity’s (“OCHE”) 2023 work plan has been revised to incorporate specific and measurable goals based on feedback from the Board of Directors (the “Board”) at its December 8, 2022 meeting.
- The revised work plan focuses on ensuring successful tenancies, training and reporting.
- There are approximately 150 Tenant Services Coordinators (“TSC”)

who deal with arrears. In each region, there are three Supervisors and one Manager who oversee the work of the TSCs.

- Approximately 60% of files are prematurely sent to the OCHE and subsequently sent back to TSCs for more work. Management are focused on ensuring TSCs are following the Arrears Collection Process (“ACP”) and effectively managing arrears, which in turn will reduce the number of files that are sent to the OCHE.
- OCHE will be reporting to the Board regarding whether the N4 checklist is working.
- OCHE will work collaboratively with Operations to track the effectiveness of the training that is underway, and to determine future training that TCHC staff may require to be successful with the ACP.
- Tenants may disagree with the OCHE’s recommended course of action and will opt to proceed through the Landlord and Tenant Board (“LTB”) to broker an agreement.
- Approximately 30-40% of repayment plans that are brokered through the OCHE are breached at some point. If there are extenuating circumstances leading to the breach, OCHE will provide an opportunity to re-enter into a repayment agreement, however if there is no rationale for the breach, their file will proceed through to the LTB.
- The work plan’s target to reduce the number of referrals to the OCHE by 30% equates to approximately 150 fewer referrals.

Motion carried

ON MOTION DULY MADE by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC reviewed and approved the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity’s 2023 Work Plan as set out in Attachment 1 to Report TSC:2023-04, and forwarded it to the Board of Directors for its review and approval.

**HOUSING EQUITY (“OCHE”) – 2022 WORK
PLAN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

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

*Motion
carried*

ON MOTION DULY MADE by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Councillor Fletcher and carried, the TSC reviewed and approved the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity’s 2022 Work Plan Performance Appraisal as set out in Attachment 1 to Report TSC:2023-03, and forwarded it to the Board of Directors for its review and approval.

**ITEM 7 UPDATE ON TENANT LED IMPROVEMENTS
IN BASEMENT SPACES TSC:2023-05**

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

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

Mr. Murray was available to answer questions of the Committee. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The \$30,000 outlined in the report is based on information provided by a third party consultant regarding the process to obtain a building permit, which includes the requirement to have drawings put together at a cost of approximately \$5,000 as part of the submission to the City of Toronto (the “City”), and an estimated construction cost of approximately \$25,000 to complete the renovations.
- The \$30,000 price was not meant to be punitive; it was meant to be realistic based on current construction costs and advice provided by the third party consultant.
- If tenants were able to meet the requirements outlined in the report, Management are recommending that they provide the funding for the estimated construction costs at the outset of the project.

- Management consulted with other housing providers, and unless the renovations were initiated by the landlord, the general feedback was that tenant led basement improvements were not supported.
- Management have not received any formal requests from tenants to undertake tenant led basement improvements.
- If work is undertaken in a basement space without the proper permits in place, both TCHC and the tenants of the space are at risk.
- Action item: TCHC Management to return to the Committee with a plan to implement a pilot that would permit the implementation of tenant led improvements in basement spaces.
- Beyond the costs to tenants to undertake a basement renovation, there will be a staffing cost as staff will be required to review plans, ensure compliance with requirements established by the City, ensure appropriate insurance is in place, etc. Based on the low number of requests anticipated, the costs outlined will reflect this in the report back to the TSC.
- It was recommended that the \$30,000 amount be variable based on the estimated construction costs and scope of the work required.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ubah Farah, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC directed TCHC Management to return to the Committee with a plan that would govern a pilot that would permit the implementation of tenant led improvements in basement spaces, identifying the costs associated with such a program.

ITEM 8A TCHC'S OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE TSC:2023-06
MEASURES

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

Written deputations were received from Jacqueline Yu and David Ng with respect to this item and were circulated to the TSC.

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

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

- TCHC does not have a specific parking arrears strategy; it is part of the overall Arrears Collection Process (“ACP”) when following up with tenants regarding arrears. Operations will explore if there is a customized approach that can be used with parking arrears.
- Where a tenant pays for parking, it is paid separately from rent.
- TCHC’s parking rates have overall been fairly static over the last several years, and are significantly lower than commercial parking rates. Operations is looking to raise non-tenant parking rates in 2023.
- TCHC has parking lots that are managed by Toronto Parking Authority (“TPA”) and are open for paid use by the public.
- Arrears increased throughout the pandemic. Operations are in discussions with the new Chief Financial Officer on ways to address arrears, as well as having conversations with the Service Manager regarding strategies to support tenants who are in arrears and in receipt of Ontario Works (“OW”) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (“ODSP”).
- Staff are still working through the new annual review process of having tenants submit their Notice of Assessment to determine appropriate rent rates; this continues to be a challenge.
- The Community Safety Unit (“CSU”) has a parking enforcement unit of seven staff. These staff can issue tickets and have unauthorized vehicles removed. Special Constables can also enforce parking.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Farah, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-06, being TCHC’s Operational Performance Measures report for November of 2022, for its information.

ITEM 8B

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

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

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded Councillor Fletcher and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-07, being the Tenant Complaints Update report, for its information.

ITEM 8C TENANT ENGAGEMENT REFRESH UPDATE TSC:2023-08

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

Written deputations were received from Jacqueline Yu and Veronika Hering with respect to this item and were circulated to the TSC.

A verbal deputation was received from Miguel Avila-Velarde with respect to this item.

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

- A report is going forward to the City of Toronto's (the "City") Planning and Housing Committee on February 28, 2023, through which the Service Manager is going to make recommendations on the tenant advisory council ("TAC"). The TAC is currently on pause pending further direction from the City.
- Management are in the process of hiring a role to review the tenant engagement system refresh.
- Not all 1,400 members of the tenant engagement system were elected; this is language that needs to be updated in the report to reflect how all positions were put in place.
- Management continue to work with the Service Manager around next

steps with the TAC, and are reviewing feedback from tenants at the three regional forums, from Board Directors, and from stakeholders on ways to improve the tenant engagement system.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2023-08, being the Tenant Engagement Refresh Update report, for its information.

ITEM 9 2023 PUBLIC TSC WORK PLAN TSC:2023-02

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

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

Mr. Meagher was available to answer questions of the Committee. Highlights of the discussion include:

- Due to budgetary constraints, TCHC will not be proceeding with the Air Conditioner Exchange Program in 2023. The remaining air conditioners that are planned for exchange are window units that are over balconies, and therefore are low risk.
- When exchanging air conditioners, staff ensured the replacement unit was of the same output, or British Thermal Unit (“BTU”), as the original unit. Where there are concerns, staff will meet with tenants to review the operation of the new air conditioner.
- Action item: Governance staff to work with the Vice President, Facilities Management and the Tenant Services Committee Chair to identify an opportunity for an update as to the status of TCHC’s Air Conditioner Exchange Program at a future Committee meeting.
- The Tenant Survey is completed every two years, and was last completed in the fall of 2021. Although originally planned for November of 2023, the next survey has been moved to take place in early 2024.

Motion **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms.

carried Farah and carried, the TSC unanimously approved, and recommended that the Board of Directors approve, the 2023 Public Work Plan as provided as Attachment 1 to Report TSC:2023-02.

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 11:13 a.m.

Secretary

Chair, Tenant Services Committee