



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 virtual Public meeting on November 24, 2020, via WebEx, commencing at 9:19 a.m.

TSC Directors Present:

Linda Jackson, Chair
John Campbell
Amanda Coombs
Debbie Douglas
Ubah Farah (9:21 a.m. – 12:11 p.m.)
Councillor Paula Fletcher
Councillor Frances Nunziata
Brian Smith
Linda Jackson, Chair

TSC Directors Absent:

n/a

Management Present:

Kevin Marshman, President & Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”)
Sheila Penny, Chief Operating Officer (“COO”)
Darragh Meagher, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary
Cynthia Summers, Commissioner of Housing Equity
John Angkaw, Senior Director, Business Operations
Jill Bada, General Manager, Seniors Housing Unit
Lindsay Viets, Director, Strategic Planning & Stakeholder Relations
Richard Grotsch, Tenant Resolutions Officer

Ceilidh Wilson, Assistant Corporate Secretary

Guests Present:

Michel Mersereau, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Giuliana Carbone, Deputy City Manager
Jenn St Louis, Manager, Tenants First, City of Toronto
Emily Gaus, Policy Development Officer, Tenants First, City of Toronto

A quorum being present, Ms. Jackson, 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 TSC meeting, noted the Acknowledgement of the Land and notified everyone that due to the need for social distancing to limit the spread of COVID-19, TCHC's holding this TSC meeting virtually.

COVID-19 Update

TCHC's COVID-19 response is now in its eighth month, and the Chair thanked employees for the exemplary work they are doing to deliver essential services and support TCHC tenants.

Many of TCHC's communities are among the hardest hit by the virus, and employees have stepped up to support tenants who are self-isolating and help agencies deliver food and other essentials to seniors and vulnerable tenants.

In particular, the Chair recognized the contributions of staff who work in TCHC buildings. Given the resurgence of COVID-19 cases, TCHC's maintaining the extended 10-hour shift schedules that are enabling TCHC to deliver enhanced cleaning protocols that are preventing the spread of the virus and keeping people safe.

Lastly, the Chair thanked everyone at the company for setting a good

example by following public health advice at work and at home.

DEPUTATIONS

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

- Item 4 – Tenants First Update (*Janet McLeod, Susan Gapka and Cheryl Duggan*)
- Item 7 – Chief Operating Officer’s Report on Tenant Services and Initiatives (*Cathy Birch*)

The following written deputations were received in relation to the following items:

- Item 4 – Tenants First Update (*Anita Dressler, Janet McLeod and Cheryl Duggan*)
- Item 7 – COO’s Report on Tenant Services and Initiatives (*Nicole Corrado*)

ITEM 2A APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

The agenda was approved with the following change:

- The TSC re-ordered the meeting agenda in order to consider Item 4 – Tenants First Update as the final item, beginning at 11:15 a.m.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Mr. Campbell and carried, the TSC approved the Public meeting agenda for the TSC’s November 24, 2020.

ITEM 2B 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.

Mr. Campbell declared a conflict of interest with Item 6 – TCHC Provision of Internet Access to All TCHC Households due to the fact that he is working for

a company that has a client that is interested in this matter of internet access.

**ITEM 2C CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TSC
MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2020**

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

**ITEM 3 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
AND ACTION ITEMS UPDATE**

The above-captioned action items list was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

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

- Action item: Governance staff to include the briefing note addressing item #14 on the action item list re: Community Safety Unit (“CSU”) demographics in the materials of the next TSC meeting.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Ms. Douglas and carried, the TSC received the matters reported as Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update for its information.

ITEM 5A OCHE QUARTERLY UPDATE (Q3 2020) TSC:2020-39

The above-captioned report (TSC:2020-39) was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

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

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- The OCHE terms of reference stipulate that quarterly reporting to the Board is required.
 - The Commissioner has recommended looking at potentially loosening the criteria for referrals to OCHE to be used as a resource to TCHC with less rigid rules.
 - Concern was raised regarding 16 month timeframe for TCHC to refer files to the OCHE. This area is starting to improve, but it is an ongoing issue that the arrears collection process (“ACP”) will help to resolve.
 - The current arrears collection process is complicated, has many steps, and is not followed consistently. TCHC and OCHE are working together to redefine roles and clarify/simplify the process.
 - A targeted effort was made to address hardened arrears (e.g. arrears at least one year old).
 - It is expected that with the new ACP, the timeframe for referrals to OCHE will improve, but it will take some time to see improvements as the process ramps up.
 - Under the new ACP, the new referral target will be two to three months.
 - It was recommended that the quarterly report be refined to focus on the key metrics that are regularly discussed at TSC meetings.
 - Concern was raised that the TSC is just hearing about hardened arrears.
 - Action item: Management to report back to the TSC re: the performance measures that were in place for dealing with arrears when the former Asset Management division was responsible for tenancy management.
 - By this time next year, the goal is to have a 75% reduction in arrears not managed at this juncture.

*Motion
carried*

ON MOTION DULY MADE by Councillor Nunziata, seconded by Mr. Campbell and carried, the TSC received the information contained in Report TSC:2020-39 for its information.

ITEM 5B OCHE 2021 WORK PLAN

TSC:2020-40

The above-captioned report (TSC:2020-40) was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

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

- The 2021 plan has much more collaboration with TCHC to achieve objectives and interdependencies were clear.

The TSC provided recommendations to amend the OCHE's work plan, including:

- Be less prescriptive (e.g. providing at least one process improvement per quarter).
- Limit the frequency of surveying employees to annual or bi-annual.
- Bring the content of the work plan up to a higher level.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Mr. Campbell and carried, the TSC unanimously approved the 2021 Work Plan for the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity, as set out in Attachment 1 to Report TSC:2020-40, and recommended its approval by the Board of Directors.

ITEM 6 TCHC PROVISION OF INTERNET ACCESS TO ALL TCHC HOUSEHOLDS

TSC:2020-42

The above-captioned report (TSC:2020-42) was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

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

- Key proposition: the City of Toronto, through TCHC, must intervene in the provisioning of basic fixed at-home internet services to low-income households;
- Study methodology and data collection;
- Ways of characterizing internet access barriers;

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- Three prevailing government approaches to addressing the digital divide;
 - The role of COVID-19 in exposing the urgent need for municipal intervention in provisioning at-home internet services in low income households; and
 - Achievable outcomes of including internet in rent-geared-to-income (“RGI”) units.

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

- Mr. Mersereau’s study collected data from residents at three TCHC seniors buildings.
- Internet access via schools and libraries is temporary and limited.
- The federal government sets the regulatory framework for internet providers.
- It is arguable that the provision of internet is similar to providing a basic utility to tenants, such as heat and water.
- It was suggested that the feasibility study also look at literacy issues.

Motion carried

ON MOTION DULY MADE by Councillor Nunziata, seconded by Ms. Douglas and carried, the TSC approved the recommendations outlined in Report TSC:2020-42 to approve and forward to the Board of Directors (the “Board”) for approval the following:

1. Authorize a study to determine the feasibility of providing access to the internet in all TCHC buildings (the inclusion of townhouses and individual homes to be determines depending on the technology available) and to bring the findings back to the Board for consideration. The study will explore:
 - The feasibility of participating in the City of Toronto’s (the “City”) provision of Wi-Fi connectivity to vulnerable communities;
 - A TCHC solution;
 - Third party delivery with TCHC covering costs; and

- A model for common space internet access and in-unit based access;
and to bring the study findings back to the Board for consideration;
- 2. Authorize the establishment of an inter-departmental group of staff to set the terms for and to administer the feasibility study; and
- 3. Authorize the appropriate staff to take the necessary actions to give effect to the above recommendations.

Due to a stated conflict of interest, Mr. Campbell did not vote on this matter.

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER'S REPORT
ON TENANT SERVICES AND
INITIATIVES**

ITEM 7

TSC:2020-43

Verbal deputation was received from Cathy Birch with respect to this item. Written deputation from Nicole Corrado was received with respect to this item and was circulated to the TSC prior to the meeting.

The above-captioned report (TSC:2020-43) was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

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

- TCHC's Operational Performance Measures, looking specifically at vacancies, arrears, crimes against persons and pest control;
- Tenant Complaints Process Update;
- In-Suite Repairs Update;
- Violence Reduction Program Update; and
- Tenant Engagement Refresh Update.

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

Vacancies:

- Some strategies to lower the RGI vacancy rate to 1.5% include resuming leasing in the Seniors Housing Unit, filling hard-to-rent units via a rapid rehousing project, suspending the Overhoused waitlist, and employing rental campaigns in buildings with high vacancies.

Arrears:

- Arrears were up to \$15.2M in September 2020, \$10.6M (64%) of which are managed arrears. Of the \$10.6M, approximately \$430K are late rent payments.
- TCHC staff are working with OCHE staff to bring the percentage of managed arrears to 75%.
- The new arrears collection process (“ACP”) was just signed off on between OCHE and TCHC, and a training plan is in development.
- Action item: At the December 15, 2020 Board meeting, Management to provide a report on:
 - the number of commercial tenants who participated in phase 1 of the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program;
 - the number of commercial tenants who took part in TCHC’s rent deferral program;
 - current commercial rent arrears; and
 - whether commercial tenants are eligible for the current subsidy.
- There was a \$4.7M increase in arrears during the COVID-19 pandemic. The TSC recommended communicating to tenants that rent still needs to be paid during COVID-19.

Crimes Against Persons:

- The number of crimes against persons increased in September 2020 vs. September 2019. However, the proportion of shootings and homicides on TCHC property relative to the City of Toronto has decreased from 2017 and 2018.

Pest Control:

- Demand pest control treatment has continued during COVID-19.

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- Action item: Management to report back to the TSC with the number of repeat pest control treatments, broken down by the number of repeat treatments (e.g. two treatments, three treatments, more than three treatments for the same unit) and clarifying which types of treatments require more than one treatment to be successful.
 - Each building had a static pest control schedule and treatment will take place within one week of a tenant submitting a request.
 - TCHC works with Toronto Employment and Social Services (“TESS”) and Toronto Public Health (“TPH”) to access funding to coordinate preparation assistance and furniture replacement.
 - Where a building has an increase in the number of treatment requests from more than 8% of the building in a quarter, we would look at taking an integrated pest management approach to addressing the pests.

Tenant Engagement Refresh Update:

- For phase 1, 57 buildings were identified as ready to proceed with tenant elections.
- 42 of the 57 buildings selected the building or townhouse model of leadership, with 84 representative positions available. 69 positions have been filled.
- 15 of the 57 buildings selected the tenant rep model of leadership, with 36 representative positions available. 25 positions have been filled.
- We are on track to complete phase 1 by year-end.

Action item: General Counsel & Corporate Secretary to poll TSC members for input into what information they want included in the Chief Operating Officer’s Report on Tenant Services and Initiatives on a go forward basis, and the COO to implement such changes in future iterations of the report.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Mr. Campbell and carried, the TSC unanimously approved receipt of the information in Report TSC:2020-43 being the Chief Operating Officer’s Report on Tenant Services and Initiatives and the Attachments thereto on Pest Management, Arrears and Vacancies and management provide future reports based on the input from Committee members as the information that is required.

ITEM 4 TENANTS FIRST UPDATE

TSC:2020-38

Verbal deputations from Janet McLeod, Susan Gapka and Cheryl Duggan were received with respect to this item. Written deputations from Anita Dressler, Janet McLeod and Cheryl Duggan were received with respect to this item and were circulated to the TSC prior to the meeting.

The above-captioned report (TSC:2020-38) was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

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

- Achievements to date;
- City Council report overview;
- TCHC mandate;
- 2021 mandate directions/actions;
- Integrated Service Model (“ISM”);
- Four key ISM innovations;
- ISM phased implementation;
- Accountability Framework (“A/F”) for ISM;
- Seniors Housing Corporation (“SHC”);
- Phased creation of corporation;
- Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity (“OCHE”);
- Single family homes (scattered portfolio);
- Engagement with tenants in single family homes; and
- Single family homes (RFP update).

Ms. Carbone and Ms. St Louis were available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The City worked with Sunnybrook Hospital to establish 25 key indicators to monitor as a measure of success.
- The City does not provide food/meals directly to residents, but may look at leveraging existing programs to support those types of needs.
- There are several issues to be addressed at 145 Strathmore Blvd.

While these issues will not be resolved immediately upon implementation of the ISM on December 11th, supports and programs will be brought in within the first 30-60 days to improve the tenancy experience and increase supports available to tenants.

- The City and TCHC have been working very closely to implement Tenants First.
- The recommendation to change the process to appoint Tenant Directors to the TCHC Board came out of the City Manager's review of the governance of the City's Agencies, Boards and Commissions. The new process aims to put rigor behind Tenant Directors as full Directors on the Board, not tenant representatives sitting on the Board. This will be made clearer in the updated Shareholder Direction.
- The interview panel for Tenant Directors will consist of a member of the Public Appointments staff, a former Tenant Director and another City staff, who will make recommendations to the City's Nomination Committee.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Councillor Nunziata and carried, the TSC received the information contained in Report TSC:2020-38 for its information.

TERMINATION

The public meeting terminated at 12:12 p.m.

Secretary

Chair, Tenant Services Committee