

**Charles Street Student Family Housing
Minutes Joint Committee Meeting – February 1, 2022**

Present: **Management Members** - Gloria Cuneo - Director, University Family Housing, Apostolo Zeno - Assistant Director, University Family Housing, John Companion - Manager, Building Operations & Services, Victoria Orr - Manager, Residence Life & Admissions, Maureen Lynch - Residence Life Coordinator, Community and Recreation.

Present: **Tenants' Executive:** Ammar Bowman-Naseer - President - Tenants' Association Executive, Farhana Islam - Vice-President - Tenants' Association Executive.

Absent: Michael Kaev - Senior Property Operations Coordinator, Helen Katz - Residence Life Coordinator, Communication & Education, Fernando Calderon Figueroa – Secretary, Tenants' Association Executive.

Minutes: Penny Wilson – Business Officer, University Family Housing.

New Action or Carried Forward Items:

Arrows on Walls: Ammar reported his observation of arrows on walls in pencil: 5th floor between 508 and 506 arrow pointing east, 5th floor between 503 and 505, paint colour changing. Penny emailed this observation to John shortly after the meeting. John to respond.

TE Communications Assistance and Strategies: Carried forward. Gloria asked Ammar and Farhana to contemplate ways in which our team can assist the Tenant Executive in their communication efforts i.e., how can we help disseminate information/increase the TE's profile in the residence facility. Gloria asked them to take this away and give it some thought. In addition, Ammar and Farhana to let us know if they prefer we table the communications piece at a future JCM or set up a dedicated meeting to discuss communication strategies.

Construction Noise complaints: John requested that if Farhana and Ammar are getting noise complaints to please forward them to him so that he can investigate as they are happening.

Waitlist Process for Transfers: The management team committed to providing periodic updates on their efforts to clarify and provide transparency for the unit transfer waitlist process. This will be studied first and there will be a separate discussion with a few tenants who are invested in this process.

Greenhouse Gases/ Carbon Footprint: John and his operations team will reach out to Scott Hendershot of the Sustainability Office to get advice on how to proceed. John will report back at next meeting.

Longer Term Action Items – Will be brought forward to Action Items When New Information Available

Flexibility about Payment Options for Rent/Deposits for International Students – (entire Payment Automation issue):

Apostolo shared progress and next steps. We have engaged with team members across the University to arrive at solutions for the payment by credit card of first and last month rent particularly to assist those who may live in remote areas. The plan is to have an on-line payment portal live on our website with a link to Moneris. This on-line portal will also be available to current tenants to use a credit card for monthly rent. In addition, we will operate a Point-of-Sale (POS) terminal in the Residence Office to handle smaller payments and in-person payments (rent arrears, laundry cards etc.). We are working with our Marketing team to build out the website and working

with the Ancillary Services Finance team to secure the Moneris accounts and devices. We are looking to roll this out in early March and will be sending out a communication to tenants at that time.

Pay Per Use Services (Photocopying, Scanning, FAX):

Gloria said we would like to provide this level of service at some point and have been in touch with service providers. However, we are not sure what the overarching appetite would be for this service and given that the equipment is very costly, and there are questions around how do we service this need (provide paper etc.). We are not sure of the degree to which our student families would want printing services. Given the cost, and unknown level of uptake we have added a question to our bank of survey questions to get a better sense of what type of services our tenants would find most beneficial.

Status of Action Items from December 1, 2021

- **Heat at 30 CSW:** Gloria asked John to raise this issue with the Building Engineers to ensure they have done their due diligence and to give everyone the additional confidence that the building heating systems are operating as they should.
 - ✓ John did contact the building engineers and they verified all heating systems were operating as they should. John also had TAC Mechanical check the gas regulators and received verification these were operating as intended as well.

- **Website Posting re future shutdowns:** Going forward, Apostolo and Nikki to include a note for awareness regarding the times when service elevators may be booked so residents can schedule laundry accordingly i.e., if coming from another building and during the time the elevators have capacity restrictions. (John added that there are no elevator bookings for tomorrow at 35 CSW).
 - ✓ This is a useful suggestion that has been incorporated going forward. We have a main landing page with a quick summary of any news and events such as disruptions to elevators.

- **JCM Meeting December 21st:** Ammar and Farhana to discuss with Fernando and let Penny know if there is a need for this meeting or if an alternate date works better. This is the last scheduled meeting. Typically, Penny schedules January to June early in the new year when we return from the break.
 - ✓ December 21st meeting was cancelled.

- **Communications Assistance/Strategies:** Gloria asked Ammar and Farhana to contemplate over the next month or so ways in which our team can assist the Tenant Executive in their communication efforts i.e., how can we help disseminate information/increase the TE's profile in the residence facility. Gloria asked them to take this away and give it some thought. In addition, Ammar and Farhana to let us know if they prefer we table the communications piece at the next JCM or set up a dedicated meeting to discuss communication strategies.
 - ❖ Ammar, Farhana and Fernando have not had a chance to meet on this topic. Ammar asked that we carry the item forward.

Building Operations – John

Heating Issues: John mentioned that often heating issues arise because of earlier tenants who have closed their valves. This is not a good practice. It is recommended we keep valves open as they are designed to heat the whole unit and allow the systems to function as they should.

Update on Construction work at 30 Charles/730 Yonge: John has reported previously about the staff turnover at the project contractor (loss of both the Project Manager and the Site Supervisor). This has resulted in delays in the project. The schedule calls for work to be completed in February but realistically it is looking

like June. The good news is that there was not a lot of noise in December. We did send out a communication on work in the back corridor/garbage loading area at 30 Charles. This too is behind. Yesterday they started on the floor area - - John knows because they set off the alarm by using a leaf blower instead of a vacuum.

John will continue to be vocal in the bi-weekly meetings with the contractor. John went into the building last week and removed a "Do Not Enter" sign posted on the garbage door which was not acceptable as tenants must have to have access to the garbage room. Although the garbage and loading room is behind schedule it is not noisy. They will be prepping the floor before applying an epoxy coating and they are simply moving stuff around to ensure the garbage area is accessible for our cleaning staff etc. John will continue to send updates on the progress. Once the floor is done the disruption to tenants should be minimal.

Farhana said people have questions about the hours of work. John said we are very explicit with the contractor, and that noisy work can only be done between 9:00 am and noon and this is stated in the contract. John said if people are hearing noise it is possible it is from our unit upgrades. John monitors noise complaints and they are investigated immediately. John asked Farhana and Ammar if they are getting noise complaints to please forward them to him so that he can investigate as they are happening – See Action Items. Investigating them after the fact does not yield the desired result.

John described what would constitute noisy work as drilling into concrete for mechanical systems or the installation of the porcelain tiles on the exterior of the building will be noisy (drilling causing vibrations). There may be some tin work for HVAC on the retail side. They will need to bring a crane onto podium deck at 730 Yonge side to get the mechanical system on the roof. John will keep the tenants informed.

Farhana asked what are the hours of work for the apartment renovations. Gloria said they would be in the units from 9:00 or 9:30 am to 5:00. If people are hearing this, please report it to the office so we can find out if a contractor is earlier than the designated hours as we want them to adhere to our times.

Access Controls at 30 & 35 Charles:

John said there have been a few complaints concerning vagrants getting in and packages being stolen in December and early January. John gets the incident reports on a daily basis so he is aware. He has had Campus Safety on site, and they are doing a full investigation including having plain clothes people place packages and monitoring with cameras trying to catch someone in the act. John just spoke to Campus Safety and their investigation is ongoing. John said these are professional thieves. Video surveillance has been passed to the Toronto Police. The Campus Safety investigation is still ongoing and they will be back on site.

Our Security guards are in the lobby as a deterrent, but may not always be in the lobby for a number of reasons: they are required to do regular patrols of the building, they may be called out on an emergency, locker request etc. John gets the reports daily so he knows the number of incidents and how many are actually stopped. However, it only takes one person to get in to cause trouble. The other issue is with covid there are so many deliveries and delivery personal coming in. They go to the tenant door and drop off a box and anyone can pick it up. What is the solution: people can try to be home but that is not always possible.

Farhana said a lot of tenants have had packages stolen or a package open and left on staircase so they have installed cameras on their doors. John said this is a privacy issue if the camera faces the apartment across the hall, and it could be a fire safety problem if drilling to install it on a door because it could impact the door's fire rating. Ammar said he walks the halls and has not noticed any cameras. Gloria said we are preparing an additional communication to provide an update on the investigation and to provide safety tips for parcel deliveries.

Gloria said it is very important that if any tenant is seeing someone who does not belong, to not engage but rather call Security and provide relevant details such as: precise location, what was person wearing, what occurred and let them look into it.

It is important to stress to tenants that the job of the security guard in the booth is not to check key FOBS on entry.

Farhana said there are not enough security guards. Gloria said we will take that under advisement. John said we have three guards on a 24-hour clock. Gloria added that we upscaled and increased our security presence when we took over 730 Yonge to address how porous the building was with the mall and the parking etc. Once that was resolved, we scaled back again to three security guards. Gloria feels that three security guards is sufficient.

Gloria added that the expectations of what the guards should be doing varies from person to person. We will add this to our tenant survey to see what people are looking for: a concierge service, requirement to show ID cards to enter etc. however, there would be a high cost for this level of service. It is important to note that some tenants feel uncomfortable with that level of monitoring and see it as invasive or censorship. This has been an ongoing topic of discussion with the Tenant Executive team. We need to assess what tenants want.

Ammar said that maybe we need to account for the seasonal impact i.e., there are times when more people are trying to gain entry to 30 Charles and maybe we need to make an allocation of 2 guards at 30 Charles. Gloria said this is a good point and we will consider this. The big question is what do our tenants at large want to see and how do we provide that level of confidence.

Tenants' Association – Ammar & Farhana

Security Issues in 30 CSW regarding missing packages: There have been several security incidents in the past few weeks. Multiple residents have shared experiences regarding missing parcels. One resident mentioned that they had seen two people entering the building multiple times in one day without a fob and carrying bags.

Issued was addressed in Building Operations section.

Transparency in regards to waitlist for two-bedrooms: Tenants have described a lack of transparency in regards to the offer of two-bedroom apartments to those on the waitlist. The waitlist for two-bedroom apartments at CSW are lengthy for existing tenants. UFH indicated that there are two waitlists for two-bedroom apartments (i.e. one list for new applicants and another for existing tenants to transfer). There is a lack of transparency in regards to how the two-bedroom apartment vacancies are allocated between these two lists and why it is done this way. Existing tenants already live in small quarters with their growing families within UFH, and if they have demonstrated good tenant behaviour (paid all rent and bills on time and invested into the community), they should be prioritized.

Communication on this matter to existing tenants on the waitlist will help shed light on this process and ease anxieties. Farhana shared her experience and frustration and asked what is the justification for two waitlists.

Response from Apostolo: we understand the frustration. The process is complex and layered. We have had recent discussions with tenants which yielded insights and suggestions. We are committed to reviewing the entire process with a view to making it more transparent and clear and will include the TE in this discussion. We will undertake a review and then engage with tenants.

Farhana said management needs to communicate with people who have already waited a long time. These people may then want to look at alternatives. If they are not provided with a straight answer as to where they fall on the waitlist it becomes an anxious and precarious position.

Gloria agreed and has had in depth conversations with tenants. We need to rework our entire transfer process to build in transparency so the process is clear and to manage expectations as well. Gloria acknowledged that there is work to be done here and we have received valid points from Farhana and others. Gloria feels confident we will arrive at a process and will reach out to the Tenant Executive as well as tenants currently sitting on the waitlist to have a conversation about what process improvements we can make.

Farhana added that having two waitlists for the finite number of 2 Bedroom units is inequitable especially since one group is prioritized over the other. Gloria said we hear this loud and clear. Gloria said this will not be resolved in a month but rather it may take a few months. See Action Items.

Rent Payment Options: TE requested an update on the project to adjust payment options for rent? Has a solution for rent payment had been considered for 1) international students who have no Canadian bank account and 2) for those who want to use credit cards to pay their rent.

Update provided by Apostolo and included in section above.

Greenhouse Gases/Carbon Footprint: In the context of the recent COP26 in Glasgow, we were wondering if there had been any analysis undertaken to calculate the specific greenhouse gases/carbon footprint of this building and if there was a plan to reduce this in the long-term.

Ammar is wondering if current Carbon Footprint of the 2-buildings could be calculated and made available to tenants so that they can then calculate their own personal carbon footprint as well. Ammar requested that the long term plan to reduce our carbon footprint be shared.

Management Response: Gloria said this is top of mind on our bucket list of desirable work and thanked Ammar for bringing it forward. The University has a Sustainability Office with which we engage and we can work with them to do an analysis. Gloria sees this work as having two components: 1) the infrastructure/building piece and 2) an education piece with tenants. The management team will contact Scott Hendershot from the Sustainability Office for next steps (see Action Items). John added that we are always looking for ways to save on utility costs and this includes more energy efficient boilers, LED lighting in hallways, and LED bulbs in units which John initiated. John is excited about advancing the educational piece with tenants and has been dealing with these initiatives for most of his career. One idea may be a tip sheet.

Residence Life - Apostolo

Updates to COVID-19 Protocols at UFH: Effective January 31, the Ontario Government is easing some of its COVID19 restrictions. We have distributed an updated communication on January 28. Capacity limits have shifted to 10 indoors and 25 outdoors. We will be shifting to non-emergency related work orders effective February 7th. We will also reintroduce our hybrid programming the week of February 7th as well.

Survey Roll-out Plan at UFH: We are working on a survey rollout plan for our Charles Street Community. Back in November we distributed the Wifi/Internet satisfaction survey with some very useful and informative results. A detailed tip sheet and summary of results will be posted on our website over the next two weeks.

Looking ahead, our team is planning to rollout a number of surveys over the next few months. We will start with a facilitated survey assisting a team of researchers at UofT to explore how building features impact well-being. We will follow this with a building operations/maintenance and communications focused survey administered by our team. Finally, we will distribute a residence life survey focused on the programs and events and seeking input for future programs. A communication alerting tenants of the anticipated rollout will be distributed in the coming weeks.

These surveys will make part of an annual survey strategy in which we will engage and focus on addressing constructive responses and strategies.

Noteworthy Website Updates: As we return to a hybrid program offering as restrictions ease, and considering new/interim approaches to improving our website communications and transparency, we are revamping what we will call our news and events blog. This section will have a landing page with a regularly updated calendar of events where tenants can find upcoming res life programs (and how to register) as well as planned building wide maintenance projects (building wide shutdowns, fire alarm testing, etc). Important blog posts will be pinned to the landing page and other important notices will be found here. As we continue to populate our blogs, we will work on tagging the blogs so that visitors can find relevant information based on the purpose and tag of the blog.

Admissions & Eligibility – Victoria

During the fall and early winter we have had good acceptance rates to housing offers from the incoming student families, and our occupancy rate is quite high. Winter is typically a harder time to fill spaces as people don't like to move during the winter or in the middle of the school year.

Community & Recreation –Maureen

Programs: All our virtual programs started in the past couple of weeks including Song's Circle Time. The Baby and Me Dance Program began this morning. Unlike the earlier days of online programming our attendance is not nearly as high. Maureen believes that most our families are less interested in virtual programs now and are simply waiting till we can all be back onsite once again. The programs that continue to do well currently are the Sunday Yoga Program as well as the Children's Tutoring Program. Both have consistent numbers and good regular attendance.

Placement Student: Once again, we have a placement student from Nippissing University. Jennifer is a teaching candidate but her placement with us is a 'community' experience placement. This time round we had her all set up to be doing live programming. What I'm doing now to give her some insights into our community at University Family Housing is setting her up with interviews with staff and students to better understand how we serve this community, even when it's virtual. Maureen may call on a member(s) of the Tenant's Association to give her 15-20 minutes of your time to talk about the role of the association and how it helps to support this community. We are also going to have Jennifer sit in and participate in as many virtual programs as possible to see how we maintain contact and connect with our families even when we are not able to be on-site.

Staff Zoom Meeting: We had another zoom staff meeting for a second semester check-in for everyone. What we are seeing in our weekly chats is that most of our student staff are also struggling with this new round of isolation and virtual learning and programming. They are all doing their best to provide interesting programs, newsletter articles and videos. I'm really impressed with how well they are managing as well as how they continue to be enthusiastic about all their programs, buddy meetings and videos.

Communication & Education – Victoria for Helen

Residence Life and RA Team:

Helen Katz is on leave, so Victoria is currently overseeing the RA Team and responding to email complaints sent to her. Victoria has asked HR about getting more assistance.

Victoria has been receiving a number of noise complaints and some smoking complaints. In both types of situations, most of the affected apartments have not been able to correctly identify the source of the problem. We did

track down one smoker and they seem to be cooperating and willing to comply with the no-smoking clauses in the lease agreement.

New/Other Business – Gloria

Questions: Gloria opened up the meeting for any questions on any topics.

Arrows on Walls: Ammar reported his observation of arrows on walls in pencil:

- 5th floor between 508 and 506 arrow pointing east
- 5th floor between 503 and 505
- Paint colour changing

Ammar said he wanted this brought forward especially considering the security concerns. Gloria speculated these markings may be where you and Vithu are planning the upcoming common area plaster and paint work. Gloria would like this confirmed by John and asked Penny to follow-up and record in action items. She added that if she is correct, we are planning a forthcoming communication to advise tenants of the exact locations where the work will be happening.

Upcoming JCM Meetings and Dates

- **February 22**