



Minutes of Meeting

Joint Committee Meeting – Charles Street Community – March 6, 2024

Management Members Present: Gloria Cuneo – Director, University Family Housing (UFH), Mike Kaev – Manager, Building Operations & Services, UFH

Tenant Executive (TE) Members Present: Mel Heibert – Vice President, Alexander Valencia Sanchez – Secretary

Absent: Apostolo Zeno – Assistant Director, UFH and Maryam Owodunni – President, TE

Minutes: Dana Burke – Manager, Admissions & Housing Services, UFH.

New Action or Carried Forward Items

Orientation Session: TE to reach out to Dana to schedule a meeting.

Rental Rates for Upgraded Units: TE to reach out to Dana to schedule a meeting.

New Business - Gloria

Introduction of New Recording Secretary – Dana Burke: Gloria stated that there has been a structure change with respect to the Recording Secretary. Penny has been doing it for a long time, we appreciate all her work and dedication to these meetings and excellent minute taking. Penny is stepping away. Dana Burke is joining as Recording Secretary and taking on Penny's responsibilities. Dana will schedule meetings, request agenda items, send minutes. Dana recently joined UFH as Manager, Admissions & Housing Services. Dana took over from Victoria Orr. Dana's role is a re-organisation of Victoria's position to take on the Housing Services functions. We welcome Dana and thank Penny.

Mel asked if this is goodbye to Penny. Gloria stated that Penny can be reached out to as she will be taking on additional duties as they pertain to her finance role. Dana introduced herself.

Status/Updates of Action Items from January 31, 2024



- 1) Bike theft and broken car windows in underground parking garage:** Mike said that this was investigated after the last meeting. Theft prevention and personal safety notices were drafted and distributed to residents and posted in strategic areas of the garage which speak to measures that residents can take to better secure property like cars and bikes in these spaces. Existing signs in the building were looked at, Campus Safety provided some signs that speak to theft protection. It is felt that existing signs in the building are sufficient. The locks on the bike cage were looked at and are secure. Mike said that it is unfortunate that there is a high level of theft of bikes, even in the city, and many city residents face this, everyone must be careful. Security at UFH has been instructed to be more vigilant in patrols and viewing cameras. Mike confirmed there are only two cameras in the garage. One of them faces the entry ramp so Security can see all entering and one faces the exiting ramp so Security can view all those exiting the space. The bike enclosure has no existing camera, it is on the Operations Team's agenda for the future if cameras are increased. Operations has done checks and increased the presence in the garage and are doing its best to deter unauthorized entry. Security does catch people following a car into the space, but people do gain access from time to time, so users of the space need to be smart and secure cars and bikes as best they can.

Gloria asked whether there were any comments or questions. Alexander asked whether there are any cameras on the bike cage now and if not, are there plans to increase the number to have visibility of the bike cage? Mike responded that this is on the Operations Team's agenda for the future. Currently there is a limited number of ports on the existing network switch, a larger switch would need to be installed with a higher capacity to house more cameras and place them in strategic areas. It is complicated, there are many steps before a camera can be placed in that area. Cameras were expanded most recently 1.5 years ago. A camera was added to the Recreation Room and the Lounge on the 2nd floor at 35 Charles. The current switch is at capacity. At some point a larger capacity network switch will be installed but we do not have a timeline at this time but will share when we do.

- 2) TE collaboration on annual survey:** Gloria said that we consulted on this internally and with other colleagues in housing operations at U of T. We appreciate and welcome collaborations where possible with the student body/student associations/Tenant Association (TA). The practice at other facilities, and our discussions, led us to say that these annual surveys where we ask questions of all residents is a housing and U of T specific initiative undertaken so that we can improve our operations and services. We are open to and welcome having the TE submit questions that we can take under consideration for our



annual survey. Gloria said she appreciated this is not what the TE was looking for. The surveys are issued as UFH surveys and not as a joint survey of the TE and UFH management. Gloria wanted to bring forward this response as soon as possible. In the next week or so Gloria and her team will start on this year's round of survey questions, and the TE is welcome to submit questions. The TE has a few weeks in which to submit questions for consideration.

Gloria continued, in terms of sharing raw data, we spoke about that in depth and there are lots of merits in sharing the raw data but the issue that kept coming up was that there would be some respondents that may feel uncomfortable with the raw data being shared in a broader fashion even if it was framed in a way of it being for the collective benefit of the operation. We will continue to share as much data as we can in advance of the survey being published and we are happy to answer questions about the survey and results. It is not meant to withhold information or skew data, but to maintain our processes. In this instance we have to keep it as a separate piece.

Gloria asked if part of the desire for collaborating was to find a mechanism so that the TA can have a method to reach all our tenants in a simpler fashion other than door to door, and if so, we can discuss that. We have no quick answer but some suggestions if this was an objective for the TE in participating in the annual survey.

Mel asked if the listserv is updated quarterly. Gloria confirmed that this is correct. Gloria added that the criteria for using the listserv that the TE agreed to is prescribed in the agreement. Mel asked if the TE could send out their own survey. Gloria recommended the TE ensure they have read the terms of the agreement signed by Maryam, and then she can answer any questions. Gloria stated that surveying is not one of the approved uses of the listserv. Generally, it would be permissible for the TE to communicate regarding elections, or notices of meetings, but the use of the listserv is somewhat restricted. Last year, the TE requested a listserv and Gloria shared that she contacted several UofT departments to understand if they provide this level of access to students. We worked with the Vice-Provost, Students Office, who shared their model with us and it was adapted for UFH. This model is used at UTSU and GSU, large student body organizations, and the model was reviewed by the internal FIPPA office.

Mel asked what position is responsible for making these decisions and saying no to the survey collaboration? Gloria responded that she consulted with other residences, both



undergrad and graduate, and her own team, about the merits of a collaboration. Gloria added that in fall 2022 there was work done to come up with a vehicle to provide the TA with access to tenant information, and knowing the restrictions and challenges with that, she applied this to her decision. There was a discussion around policy and decision making and Gloria indicated that she reached her decision based on needing to protect the privacy of the email and access to it, along with her discussion with university colleagues and her team, and the research she undertook for the listserv access protocol currently in place for the TA. Mel and Alexander confirmed that no further discussion needed. Gloria added that she hopes that the UFH/TA collaborations that takes place in these monthly meetings will continue as this provides valuable insights into the operation. Gloria appreciated the efforts of the TE members who volunteer to work with the UFH team and advocate for the tenants.

- 3) **Printer/Photocopier:** Gloria referenced back to November 21st meeting where the results of the 2023 survey showed that 29.5% of respondents had no interest/would not use, 25% would use once every few months, 22.5% 1-2 times a month, 16.5% 1-2 times a week and 6.5% more than twice a week. Gloria confirmed that Apostolo is on leave but when he returns, he will continue to explore what this would look like. Gloria still has an issue with the paper restocking, so more mechanics need to be worked out, but she would like to leave this on the table. The Meeting Room at 30 Charles would be a great location for a printer as it is open 24/7. Further information to come.

Alex asked if the question related to the printer would be in this year's survey. Gloria said she will raise it with the team: include same question or a more in-depth question and could not recall how many times it was previously asked in the survey.

- 4) **Pest assessment/inclusion in survey:** Gloria said she would note a question around pest assessment for the survey e.g., are residents seeing activity and have they scheduled a treatment. It might help UFH assess if we need broader treatment.
- 5) **Gym Space:** Gloria shared that we do not have the physical real estate to house a gym space. The space on level one or two at 30 Charles/730 Yonge is not our space. It belongs to U of T Real Estate and UFH would be charged market value for it, in addition we would need to purchase equipment and it would be a lot of money for a gym.



Accepting an offer: When a tenant receives an offer they are asked to provide payment for 2 months of rent within a very short time frame. There's been cases when the timeframe is less than a week. Most tenants already have contracts in other buildings and it might be difficult to take a decision with such a short notice. Considering that the vacating tenants have to submit notice at least 2 months in advance would it be possible to be more flexible in this time? Alexander shared that this question was raised by a TA member. There is a big gap of time between when someone leaves and the new tenant arrives. The new tenant has a short time to respond to an offer, they might be busy the week they are given to respond, and they might have arrangements at a current residence. Alexander asked if UFH could adapt the timeframe so new tenants can have more time, 2-3 weeks, to look at the options and get the money to pay rent? Gloria responded that how the process generally works is that individuals who complete their application answer the question in the application about how much time they need to be able to consider a housing offer. Some will say two months, or six, or short notice. UFH recognizes that people are coming from all over and they need to plan their move and to inform a current landlord. Gloria confirmed the current process now works out to two weeks and that UFH works months ahead of schedule usually, unless an offer falls apart by the tenant backing out in which scenario, we work to fill those apartments with applicants who indicated they can accept housing in a short timeframe. The two-week process includes having a conditional offer, once that goes through and is accepted there is a more definitive offer and applicants need to submit the deposit, then we proceed to the lease. If in the two-week period, the applicant is engaging with the staff in terms of things like visa or custody information, or navigating with their existing landlord, there is flexibility. UFH continues to have dialogue beyond two weeks as we want to retain the new tenant. It is a very complex process. Some issues can delay or postpone a move in.

Alexander stated that UFH usually gives two weeks, but people leaving an apartment must communicate two months before they move out, and asked why new tenants don't get one month to get everything together. Gloria responded that we work months in advance and when UFH receives notices to vacate (NTV) we act on them, and do not wait to fill vacancies. UFH has hundreds of applicants, and it does not just offer to applicant #1 on the list. UFH will consider if they want a bachelor style unit or a one or two bedroom, it gets complicated. UFH will consider if the applicant can take something with short notice or if they don't have exiting landlord complications. All this information is considered before UFH connects with an applicant and once there is a dialogue it can go beyond two weeks. If an applicant needs a few extra days for the deposit, the team is open to that level of flexibility.

Postponing offers: In case a tenant decides to not accept an offer, their place in the waitlist is saved or they go back to being the last of the list as if they just applied? Alexander asked if a person for any reason does not take an offer do they have the same spot in the list. Gloria responded that each applicant has a maximum of three offers they will receive before their application is cancelled. The applicant is placed back on the list based on the date they applied.



Depending on the scenario for declining, such as a visa issue, the applicant remains at the top of the list, but they may stay in that position while the issue is resolved and before we offer again. Applicants do not drop to the bottom of the list.

Leave notice: The current guideline is that tenants should notify the office 2 months before they plan to move out of an apartment. There might be cases when tenants miss a few days into a month before notifying but then they're requested to wait an additional month. This implies an additional expense for them since they may already have another place where they'll be paying rent, and they'll pay double for a month. Would it be possible to define a grace period when they may still be able to notify without having to pay a whole additional month? Alexander stated that UFH has flexibility for those accepting a new apartment but asked if UFH is flexible on the two months notice when giving NTV. Gloria responded that residents could move out at any time but are financially responsible for the entire 60-day notice period. Alexander asked if there is flexibility. Gloria responded that for NTV, 60-days written notice is required by the end of the month, but tenants do not have to wait until that date to provide NTV as most will know in advance that they have plans to move out for whatever reason, more than 60 days NTV can be given. Gloria stated that UFH holds very tight to the NTV policy. There is flexibility only when the end of the month falls on a weekend, and on Monday morning the UFH team reviews NTVs submitted through the weekend. Under other circumstances UFH does not accept late NTV as most tenants can plan for their leave unless there is an extenuating circumstance.

Alexander recalled that when he was offered an apartment at UFH, he was told the first day to occupy the apartment might not be the first of the month, it could be earlier if rent was paid. Gloria stated that the standard is to take the unit on the first of the month, but some tenants request to move in early due to situations where they must be out of their current place on the last day of the month and do not have their new place until the first and for these instances we charge a daily rent, e.g. if a tenant moves in on the 28th of a month that has 30 days, they will be charged two days of rent. Alexander asked if something similar can be done for the NTV where if submitted late, the tenant can pay a few days rent. Gloria responded that is not an option as the tenant is already in occupancy.

Alexander asked whether there have been cases where tenants cannot give 60 days NTV and UFH has worked with them. Gloria responded that when there is an absolute extenuating circumstance we would work with the individual, e.g. a domestic violence situation is one where UFH would do everything it could to not make the situation more difficult for the tenant by holding them to certain criteria.

Alexander asked if an NTV can be cancelled. Gloria responded that it would be a negotiation as the NTV is a legal document. When an NTV is received by our office we send a move out confirmation letter accepting the NTV. There are cases where an NTV might be submitted with



errors such as a wrong date where we return the NTV to the tenant without accepting it. If a tenant asks to cancel their NTV near the termination date, we cannot cancel. If a tenant submits an NTV 70 days in advance and their new housing deal falls through, we might be able to cancel the NTV. It is always a discussion. Residents cannot refuse to leave. In all likelihood the unit would have been rented out to a new tenant, so this becomes a legal situation.

Alex said he is raising this because cases have been brought to the attention of the TE where there was no flexibility where a prospective tenant had less than a week to accept and pay the first and last month's rent. Gloria said most tenants know when they are leaving and can submit the required notice. It becomes tricky when a tenant is no longer eligible to live in University Family Housing. However, if a tenant is leaving because of personal reasons and is still eligible then we can consider working with them.

Gloria said that Dana will look to overhaul the processes and provide clarification and transparency. Gloria asked Alexander to direct tenants to Dana so she can gather information on their experiences and build this into her review.

Building Operations Update – Mike

35 Charles Playground Revitalization Project: Mike was pleased to announce that UFH has been given the opportunity to start the community playground project earlier than expected. The new timeline has the project beginning this Monday and a notice will be sent out to tenants. It is expected to be completed by mid-May, internal deadline of the May long weekend. Children onsite can enjoy the space this summer, rather than us starting the project in May. The work times will be 8am to 5pm on weekdays, no weekends, or holidays. The good news is that the existing concrete areas and perimeter will not be touched so no major heavy equipment or percussive work, so less dust and noise. There will be diggers and trucks, all these details will be included in the notice. We are excited for the project to be completed and enjoyed by the summer.

Admissions, Eligibility and Residence Life – Gloria

Subletting: Gloria stated that this topic was not noted in the agenda as she learned of it yesterday, sharing that a tenant reached out to the Residence Office about the TA Facebook (FB) page pertaining to a communication about subletting. It appears someone was asking other tenants in the group if they would be away for a portion of the summer and would they be willing to sublet to their family who would be visiting. Gloria stated that subletting is not permitted and that we will put out a reminder in the newsletter and other communications. Gloria asked if the TE could address this matter on the FB page letting folks know that subletting is not permitted. Alexander responded that they are working on monitoring the FB group and the message will be taken care of. Mel stated that people can flag posts if they go



against the group, and they could do that. Mel shared that this message said they were asking about subletting in the building or nearby, but the TE can remind them that nearby is fine, but in the building is not. The TE doesn't go through all the posts, but if this happens again the TE can let them know to flag posts and we can remove them. Gloria thanked Mel and Alexander mentioning that UFH has no line of sight on the FB group and appreciated that they are open to removing flagged posts.

Next JCM

- March 27, 2024
- Penny confirmed that monthly meetings have been scheduled up until the end of June.