

**Minutes of Meeting – Final**  
**Joint Committee Meeting – Charles Street Community – February 7, 2023**

**Management Members Present:** Gloria Cuneo – Director, University Family Housing (UFH), Apostolo Zeno - Assistant Director, John Companion - Manager, Building Operations & Services

**Tenant Executive (TE) Members Present:** Maryam Owodunni - President, Lerato Mpye - Vice- President, Tenants' Association Executive.

**Minutes:** Penny Wilson - Business Officer.

**UFH Membership Proposed Changes**

Last year, members of the Tenant Executive noted there was an imbalance at the meetings between those representing the Tenants Association (TA) and those representing University Family Housing (UFH). Although the intent was for UFH to have subject matter experts around the table, moving forward the UFH team will be limited to Gloria, Apostolo, and John (Penny serves as note taker only i.e., no active role). Gloria welcomed Maryam and Lerato to invite another member of the Tenants' Association. Gloria added that on occasion, other UFH team members may join the meeting to share programming updates or specific expertise. When this happens, the TE will be notified in advance.

**Comments or Concerns about Minutes from November 8, 2022**

Gloria asked attendees to raise any comments or concerns regarding the Minutes of November 8, 2022.

No comments or concerns raised.

**New Action or Carried Forward Items:**

- Maryam and Lerato to send Gloria and Apostolo a written request for their proposed alterations to the Terms of Use document: Terms of Use: University of Toronto University Family Housing Tenants' Association Newsletter System (Charles Street Community).
- John to obtain key(s) to the TA Bulletin Boards in each lobby and provide to Maryam and Lerato.
- John to investigate the temperature in the Meeting Room.
- Gloria and team to discuss the specific points brought forward regarding the Survey results and put together a response.
- Penny to send out draft JCM Minutes to both UFH and TA teams prior to publication on website.

**Status of Action Items November 8, 2022**



### **Communication Channels for Tenants' Association Executive to communicate with Tenants**

- See full discussion under TE Section. Gloria to provide an update by end of November on action taken to assist the TE is gaining access to a communication channel such as a Listserv. Maryam and Lerato to also provide, in that period, a document outlining their request, the purpose and the types of communication they are proposing to disseminate. This will form the basis for the development of a joint framework to assist and guide current and future Tenants' Association Executive.
- ✓ **See Listserv Section. It was agreed this item was sufficiently advanced.**

### **Notifications to Tenants of Scheduled Unit Turnover/Reno Work**

- Mike and the Operations Team to investigate how best to inform tenants of work scheduled in proximity to their units.
- ✓ John sent out notifications during the last week of January and again last Friday. This provides tenants with notice of the renovation work on each floor. John acknowledged this is not perfect since there will be emergency work scheduled on occasion.

### **Residents' Survey Results**

- Apostolo will send final copy of the Infographic to Maryam and Lerato and will wait to hear back before next steps.
- ❖ A meeting was scheduled before the break to discuss survey results. In addition, a final copy of the Annual Resident Survey infographic has been shared. See full TA response in TA section.

### **Documents to be Shared**

- Gloria and Penny to assemble relevant documents to share with the new TE (e.g., terms of reference, purpose of JCM).
- ✓ Documents sent.

<b>Listserv Access Follow-up</b>
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Gloria thanked the TA for their letter requesting access. In mid December, Gloria sent an email with an attached Terms of Use document and inquired if the TA had adequate time to review. Lerato responded that the document was reviewed but there was concern about the statement that UFH would have, at its absolute discretion, the right to restrict or revoke access or rights to users or moderators who do not follow the principles.



Maryam and Lerato disagreed with the language as stated in the document and requested language be amended to recognize there be an opportunity for dialogue with the Tenants Association before any rights are revoked.

Secondly, Maryam and Lerato requested that UFH administration upload student email addresses four times per year as opposed to the stated three times.

Gloria requested that proposed alterations be sent in writing so its clear. Gloria confirmed that we will keep the momentum going to get this next phase resolved.

Gloria reminded the TA of other communication channels available such as Facebook, email address, etc.

## **Tenants' Association**

### **Annual Resident Survey Results**

- Lerato recounted some of her personal experience with Admissions/Eligibility and made the point that even though a significant percentage of respondents rated staff as excellent or good, we cannot overlook the experiences of others.
- Question 13 - Availability of Security Staff: only 53.67% rated as excellent or good and a significant number, and 46.32% rated as fair or poor. This is a concern. Lerato suggested we increase Security so that we have someone on standby when one guard is doing patrols.
- Question 14 – The feeling of safety and security in the building: 55.48% rated as fair or poor (44.53% rated as excellent or good). Lerato made the point that if we increase the availability of security staff (when one is on patrol) this will increase the feeling of safety and security.
- Question 22 – satisfaction with Laundry Rooms: 43.94% of respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Lerato recognized the UFH plan to move to new laundry equipment and a new card system. However, Lerato reported that in some washers she has noted the drum making such a noise that it seemed unsafe. In addition, she has seen one or two machines spilling water. If the repair process was speedier this would result in residents being more comfortable using the laundry rooms. She asked if UFH could improve how quickly we react or move to full replacement sooner.
- Question 30 – interest in having the Meeting Room converted to a 24-hour study space. UFH has moved to implement this recommendation, however, Lerato noted that the room is extremely cold.
- Question 31 – interest in having an onsite pay-per-use copier/printer/scanner: over 74% said yes to this initiative. Lerato said tenants have workarounds with neighbours or Toronto Public Library and would like to see one device in each building. Gloria responded that we have investigated and found it to be very expensive. If UFH implements, it would be with one device until we could test and gauge demand.
- Question 43 – participation in a building wide virtual resident discussion to review the results of the survey and discuss building improvements: Lerato noted that there is a significant interest, 51.91%, in participating in a town hall type forum.
- Gloria thanked Lerato and Maryam for the thorough analysis and feedback. Apostolo will put together a high-level response.
- Apostolo said that the infographic on the website is at a high level but offers up the raw data if someone is interested.



- Apostolo noted several next steps:
  - The Transfer and Waitlist process has undergone review. The process has been significantly streamlined and is now being rolled out.
  - UFH is conducting a thorough, in-depth review of key communications provided over the life cycle of a residents' stay (from prospective tenant to move -out). This encompasses all the communications both on the Admissions and Residence Office side and is therefore a complex project, so it is moving forward in stages e.g., move-in, orientations with Residence Advisors etc. This will identify key interventions and address gaps.
  - Security issues will be addressed by John
- Gloria and team to discuss the specific points brought forward regarding the Survey results and put together a response.

### **Plumbing Issues and Prohibited Appliances**

- Maryam brought forward the issue of suspected washers and dishwashers contributing to kitchen issues with debris coming up in drains. Maryam asked if the maintenance of the plumbing system can help to rectify this. In addition, she has heard that there may be some exemptions granted and questioned the fairness of this.
- Gloria said that the issue of washers of all types has been an ongoing concern for many years. It is not related to the pandemic though there may have been an uptick during that time. UFH does have protocols in place.
- John provided some background. Issues are caused not only by prohibited appliances but also by residents' actions such as pouring grease down the drain. UFH has a preventative maintenance program in place that entails an annual kitchen drain flush (drains are snaked and flushed). The buildings were built in 1969 and the pipes are not the same diameter they once were so any additional stress on the infrastructure causes problems.
- John was aware of someone being granted an exemption. However, there was only one instance of an exemption, and this has now been rescinded. UFH does not grant exemptions for prohibited appliances, and this is now clear to all UFH staff. Stated simply, the infrastructure cannot handle these appliances.
- One major issue is how difficult it is to identify illegal appliances in use. However, these appliances make a very distinctive humming noise. If heard, we ask tenants to call Security so that a real time investigation can take place. John has advised Security that they are to investigate all reported instances of the humming/vibration/noise, and this may entail going a couple of floors above or below and, if the noise is heard security will knock and ask for permission to enter unit.
- If a resident is caught with an illegal appliance, UFH can exercise its right under the lease and issue an N5 to evict however the resident would be given an opportunity to correct.
- Biggest issue is detecting the appliance in real time. Security will answer the calls and they have been asked to be vigilant in their patrols and listen for the distinct humming sound.
- John has contacted the Landlord Tenant Board (LTB) for advice and the only recourse for tenants using a prohibited appliance is to exercise our rights under the lease agreement and issue a notice of eviction (N5).
- John added that we are in the process of doing annual unit inspections and staff are on the look out for any connections to the kitchen faucets. Maintenance Technicians will observe and note if they see something and will report to the office for follow up.
- John appealed to the TA to partner with UFH. Perhaps by noting on Facebook that there are no current exemptions and that the use of these appliances impacts everyone i.e., appeal to residents' sense of being



good community members by noting that the use of such appliances infringes on the reasonable enjoyment of others and damages the infrastructure causing leaks, back-ups etc.

- Maryam said this is not an easy task, but we can increase education and awareness around this issue.
- Apostolo's plan is to provide a multi-pronged, holistic campaign around this issue including providing information to prospective tenants prior to move in. In addition, information in the move in package will be bolstered. For current tenants, we will list the prohibited appliances, the repercussions, and the impacts. In terms of programming, we will rely on peer-to-peer raising of awareness around this issue by utilizing UFH Resident Advisors, who are also tenants in the buildings.

#### **Publication of JCM Minutes of Meeting**

- TE members requested an opportunity to review the Minutes of Meeting prior to release on website. It was agreed that only when the minutes have been reviewed by TA as well as UFH will the minutes be published on either the UFH website or the TA's media channels. Penny will provide a week in which all parties have an opportunity to review and provide edits prior to release.

#### **Transfer/Sale of Furniture/Household items**

- Maryam and Lerato brought forward a request from tenants to see if there was a practical way for tenants moving out to offer up furniture or other household items to new tenants moving in.
- Gloria commented on the number of ways UFH Charles Street community has contributed to items being reused, recycled, or regenerated. The Free Store is a significant community resource that helps many people.
- John said that from a practical standpoint this request cannot be accommodated. The unit turnover process often involves extensive renovation work including replacing or sanding floors and contractors cannot work around furniture items. In addition, there are confidentiality issues.
- Lerato asked if there was a way in which we could keep furniture on site for a week so people can look at it. John said that our bulk pick up contractor comes on Friday so essentially there is time.
- However, if a tenant had a bed bug issue and disposed of the furniture in our bulk storage areas, we would be promoting cross contamination, therefore, we do not recommend tenants take used furniture from the bulk storage areas.
- Gloria thanked Lerato and Maryam for the ideas. Gloria does not want to close the door on these kinds of ideas and stated that UFH believes in continuous improvement and working with the TA is integral to achieving these improvements.

#### **Building Operations Update - John**

- Plan was to start the elevator modernization at 35 Charles in January. However, there are supply chain issues with the control systems and we expect to start in March. At that time, a schedule will be communicated to all tenants with regular updates.
- Playground Renewal – tender has gone out and there has been a site meeting. Currently in the evaluation stage and once that is done a contract will be issued. We do expect supply chain issues here as well and can expect a 3-to-4-month delay.

#### **Admissions, Eligibility & Residence Life - Apostolo**



- Currently doing a life-cycle review of all tenant communications
- A Residence Advisor has recently left and there is a job posting on the website. Will move shortly to the interview process and in the meantime, Erin Pettibone, oversees the RAs and will ensure adequate coverage.
- Finished interviewing for the Community Standards role. Will formally move ahead with the recruitment for this new position and will provide an update at the next JCM.

Next JCM is March 7<sup>th</sup>