

**Minutes of Meeting – FINAL**  
**Joint Committee Meeting – Charles Street Community – October 17, 2023**

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

**Tenant Executive (TE) Members Present:** Maryam Owodunni - President, Mel Heibert, Secretary General, Tenants' Association Executive

**Absent:** Lerato Mpye - Vice-President, Tenants' Association Executive.

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

<b>Meeting Format &amp; Agenda</b>
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Due to the number of items on this month's Agenda, Gloria suggested proceeding down the list of Action Items from the last meeting as many of those topics were also included in the Tenant Association agenda items.

<b>New Action or Carried Forward Items:</b>
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**Packages:** Apostolo and Mike are continuing to work on this and will have a discussion around their findings at the November JCM. Since the two buildings are limited in terms of space, Gloria said there are two approaches being explored:

- ❖ The UFH team is considering having external companies, experts in this area, visit the site to assess options considering our current space constraints and configuration.
- ❖ We are awaiting updates and further information from the Real Estate Team on who the retailers located at 730 Yonge may be.

**Approach on Rental Rates for Upgraded units:** Gloria suggested since this topic was raised at the AGM it might be beneficial for Gloria and Apostolo to have a separate discussion with the Tenant Executive. Gloria asked Maryam to signal to Penny who will arrange a meeting. Maryam will get in touch with Penny to schedule (and early morning or early evening meetings are an option).

**Tenant Executive Election:** Maryam and Mel to provide Gloria and Apostolo with the election results. This item carried forward from September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Tenant Executive Orientation:** Maryam and Mel to provide Gloria and Apostolo the names of the new Tenant Executive members once the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Tenant's Association is concluded.

- ❖ This item carried forward from September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Annual UFH Budget Presentation to the Tenant Executive.** Penny has reached out to determine the best timing for the annual budget presentation which typically takes place early December.



- ❖ This item carried forward from September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The TE felt that scheduling should take place with the inclusion of new Tenant Executive members after the elections.

**Storage Locker Availability and Process:** Mike and Apostolo to send an email describing the process and availability. This is intended to help the Tenant Executive respond to future queries.

**Contractor Badge Compliance:** Mike agreed to take the following actions:

- Post a sample badge in the Security booths.
- Ensure that Security's Post Orders are complied with so former tenants, without a FOB, cannot access the floors without a security escort.
- Provide a further update on compliance for contractors working in the buildings.

**DEI and RA Selection Process:** carry forward from October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### Status of Action Items September 22, 2023

**Free Store Access and Volume of Donations:** Apostolo provided an update around Free Store access, how best to check that users are residents, ways to encourage donations (i.e., so items are not diverted to waste or other disposal options) as well as the process of sorting/cleaning what is made available.

- ✓ The UFH team has told former tenants, no longer residents of the buildings, that they are not eligible to access the Free Store.
- ✓ Effective this month, the log to record name and unit number of tenants entering the Free Store is no longer in place. The UFH team will revisit how best to ensure only current residents access the Free Store and track general metrics around usage while avoiding recording sensitive information.
- ✓ Maryam asked about the volume of donations. Apostolo said it is very much about the time of year and the number of tenants moving in and out. Apostolo added that his team will brainstorm if there is a way to achieve more consistency.
- ✓ Mel asked if UFH had any ideas how to stop people from dropping off items at 35 Charles and throwing things out. Mel also suggested that the bench at 35 Charles be moved or changed to remove the opportunity for stuff to be dumped at that location.
- ✓ Apostolo said that for tenants living at 35 Charles there is not the same convenience factor. He suggested his Team would launch a social media campaign and post more signage.
- ✓ Gloria suggested that the bench at 35 Charles may be a contributing factor and the UFH team would explore moving the bench as a further deterrent. Gloria added however, that seating is needed so possibly a relocation of the bench would work. Mel suggested that replacing the bench with individual seating may help although this may not be a priority given other budget needs. Gloria added that the UFH team is committed to increasing education around this issue and asked Mike to investigate how this area could be revamped.

**Building Access and the Securing of Packages Delivered to Tenants:** A larger, targeted discussion to take place around this complex issue which considers the results of the recent Residents' Survey.

- ❖ Carried Forward to New Action Items.



**Elevator Communications Consistency and Publication of Booking Schedule:** Mike and Apostolo to review communication strategy to include more postering in the lobby, issuing reminders in the newsletter so tenants have access to up-to-date information and are clear when elevators will not be used for service calls. Lobby posters to include an email address for tenant concerns. Elevator ambassadors to be reminded of elevator reservation lists.

- ✓ Mike is looking at all posters and communication to see what more can be done to ensure communication is consistent and current.
- ✓ Apostolo shared a deeper dive on how certain communication channels are being used. Over the past year, UFH has modernized the website so it can be used as an effective communication tool. From March to the current date, there have been 18,000 unique visits to the website and a total of 33,500 visits. The stats indicate that the website is being used for Admissions and Operations related information. Since March, almost 800 people entered the site via QR codes from posters on our site. Another point of access is from the UFH Newsletter. There is a lot of action in terms of the elevator communications: users looking at the modernization project information, the Elevator Ambassador positions, as well as the project timeline section. We are seeing a lot of usage from people being directed from our posters. The stats demonstrate that the website is being used. Apostolo will continue to track the metrics as well as explore how to supplement communication with social media.
- ✓ Maryam clarified her point was not so much that the website was not being used but rather not everyone uses it. She suggested that a good portion of the activity is from potential tenants looking for housing. In addition, early interest in the project may have dwindled and posters can disappear and this needs to be monitored.
- ✓ Gloria said that UFH agrees with the points being made but it is still valuable to share some statistics. UFH Team is looking at reinvigorating the communication campaign with posters in lobby and on each of the floors. It is important to keep this information fresh since this is a long project.
- ✓ Apostolo shared the challenge of communicating to the population housed at Charles Street: there are students that are connected via StarRez who get the newsletter and there are non-students for whom postering is best option. The challenge is finding the sweet spot, so everyone has the most up to date information.

**Annual Review and Renewal of the UFH/TE List Serv Agreement:** The Terms of Use for the University Family Housing Tenants' Association Newsletter System (Charles Street Community) agreement needs to be renewed annually.

- ✓ Apostolo and Maryam are trying to coordinate a time for the renewal. Apostolo added that we are due for an upload of the most recent list of occupants. Apostolo just received the list for October reflecting new move-ins and move-outs.
- ✓ Maryam agreed that the ListServ is due for an update and because of the low frequency of updates, communications may go out to people who have left the building.
- ✓ Apostolo agreed this is a challenge since the ListServ is updated four times per year so there will always be a catchment of people that are missed. Apostolo suggested that some standard language be inserted at the bottom of the messages to say that if you are the recipient of the message and no longer a tenant please Unsubscribe etc., and this may ease the administrative burden.

**Tenant Executive Orientation:** Maryam and Mel to provide Gloria and Apostolo the names of the new Tenant Executive members once the elections are concluded.

- Item carried forward to New Action Items.

**Annual UFH Budget Presentation to the Tenant Executive.** Penny has attempted to arrange a date and time for the annual budget presentation which typically takes place in early to mid December. The Tenant Executive asked to hold off until the new Executive is elected.

- Item carried forward to New Action Items.

**Online Payment Process:** Apostolo said this project began as a multi-step roll-out. The first step was the implementation of the Point-of-Sale device in the Residence office where tenants can pay with their debit card. The second step is far more complex due to data security and privacy concerns. Apostolo has started the investigation with U of T Information Security staff; however, the key contact has since left the University. Following a lag in the summer Apostolo is turning his attention to getting this back on track by exploring how this works in other areas of the University. A more fulsome update will be provided at a future JCM.

#### Tenants' Association - Maryam & Mel

**Summary of AGM:** Maryam said the AGM was fantastic with a better turn out than expected. However, an election could not be held as they opted to spend the time to hear from tenants. The concerns raised echoed many of the concerns raised in the JCM including parcels, security, rent rates for renovated units and the gap with the unrenovated units. Maryam would like to discuss rental rates at the Budget meeting. Maryam said that graduate student funding packages are not getting increased and the cost of living in Toronto keeps rising. Another issue is around locker availability. Mel added that there are quite a few people willing to step up and serve on the Tenant Executive. Mel and Maryam want to assess where people can best fit with positions and this will be the focus of the next meeting. Gloria asked if there was a date set for the next meeting/election and Maryam said a date has not been determined. Maryam wants to go over the old documentation, minutes, and provide two weeks notice for the meeting.

Gloria responded that the approach for rental rates for renovated and refreshed units was discussed at last year's budget meeting with the Tenant Executive. Gloria suggested a separate meeting be held on this topic. See Action items – Maryam to reach out to Penny to schedule.

**Storage Locker availability:** Maryam and Mel felt that confusion is created by the wording in the current lease. Many tenants are under the impression that they had rights to a locker but then discover from the Residence Office that there are no lockers available. It seems that there are very few available at 35 Charles and it may be possible that one can be obtained at 30 Charles.

Gloria agreed there is limited locker availability at 35 Charles. Gloria proposed that Mike and Apostolo take this back and document the current process and availability and forward in an email to Maryam and Mel to help them respond to queries. Mel agreed it would be good to know the process and felt that the wording in the lease is contributing to the confusion. Mel suggested that the wording be changed to reflect the reality such as



“storage is available but not guaranteed” so tenants are not surprised when they discover lockers are not available.

Maryam agrees that they need more information regarding locker availability, the assignment process, the number available as well as the enforcement of rules i.e., are rules in place and, if so, are they being followed.

**Support from Office for the AGM:** Maryam expressed both her appreciation for the assistance in terms of publicity and the flyers but also expressed some disappointment in the level of support when it came to posting/distributing flyers. Although Maryam was in touch early in September, posters were not posted by the long weekend. It was not until Wednesday morning that the Residence Advisors posted. Apostolo said this is important and he will investigate but wanted to put this in its full context. Apostolo said that the community bulletin boards are for the Resident Advisors and the Tenant Association has their own communication channels: their own designated bulletin board, ListServ, and Facebook. Apostolo said that having the RA’s assist was a “one-of” option as this is not part of their duties. Also, this is not something that Security would assist with. Apostolo apologized that this did not go the way expected and reiterated that although we can support these efforts, the Tenant Association has its own designated communication channels.

Maryam asked why the Tenant Association does not collaborate with the Residence Advisors. In addition, she added that some tenant notices are delivered by Security. Maryam said that they did have posters on the Tenant Association bulleting board, but they wanted to maximize publicity for the meeting, so they sought alternate channels. Maryam thought that if the notice was up on the RA boards, then each floor would see the message.

Gloria added that while the TA does have bulletin boards in each lobby, they are not well looked at, so we did allow the for notices to be posted in each elevator cab. Gloria asked Mike if the elevator modernization project will install bulletin/notice boards in each elevator cab. Mike said that the scope of work included a lockable notice board which was to be used by the Family Care office. In addition, there will be digital signage. If we want an additional notice board, we need to ask if we really want to drill more holes in these new elevator cabs. Gloria thought it reasonable to have one bulletin board in each cab for these “one-of” announcements e.g., TA AGM, or building specific notice.

Gloria asked Maryam to think about the notices for the upcoming Election: if notices are posted in elevators they may get removed. Security could put a notice up in each cab and the Tenant Executive can utilize their other communication tools to spread the news of the election meeting. Gloria cautioned that if notices are not posted in time, it will hinder the process.

Maryam added that their meetings should be held with tenants on a quarterly basis and, in order to do this, they need a space. Gloria suggested that as tenants, they can book the Recreation Room for these discussions and agreed this level of engagement is important.

**Security Concerns:** Mike said that significant efforts are being made to ensure that all contractors wear badges while they are in the buildings. Mike asked Maryam to help him understand the issue better by providing details such the specific contractor and date of non-compliance. Maryam asked what the badge looks like and added that she sees the painting contractors because their clothing shows the company name/logo. Mike said that the badges are green laminated badges worn on belts, pockets, or key sets. Mike added that in order to get keys, a contractor would be assigned a badge. Gloria was curious how Maryam could distinguish between contractors



and tenants. Maryam said contractors can be identified because they often have tools, they are wearing “work clothes” and she sees the pattern of them going in and out. Maryam added that she wanted to mention this again because she is still not seeing this practice in place. Gloria added that between 3:30 and 5:00 most contractors would be off site. Mike added that no work is scheduled after hours except for emergencies in which case a plumber, for example, would not be issued a badge since the Residence Office would be closed, however they would be escorted by a UFH Maintenance Technician wearing a UFH uniform.

Mike was disappointed to hear there is still an issue since much time and effort has been expended. Mike will check and provide a further update to the group.

Gloria requested that Maryam send Mike a quick message noting the date and time of any suspected non-compliance to help source out who this might be. Mike will make a sample Contractor Badge visible in the Security booths, and this will help all Elevator Ambassadors.

Maryam said she also witnessed something which gave her pause: a former tenant came into the building to check to see if a package had been delivered. The former tenant asked Security if they could go up to their old floor and Security agreed. Maryam expected that Security would escort the person up and back out again. Mike agreed this should not happen: if someone is not a current resident and does not have a key FOB, they cannot wander in the building but should be escorted by Security. Mike will ensure these Security Post Orders are followed.

**DEI and RA Selection Process:** due to time constrains this item to be tabled for next month.

#### **Building Operations Update - Mike**

Due to the number of issues brought forward by the Tenant Executive the following agenda items were not discussed:

- Elevator Modernization project update
- Building heating Systems turned ON for the season.

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

Apostolo provided updates on Elevator Comms and broader stats and metrics on website use as well as the UFH/TE ListServ Agreement. Details noted elsewhere in the Minutes.

#### **Other Business**

No other business raised.

#### **Next JCM - Schedule**

- November 21st



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## **University Family Housing** Spaces & Experiences

- December 5<sup>th</sup> – waiting for the TE to provide names and best timing to determine if the December JCM can be a hybrid meeting, expanded to include time for Budget Presentation. Budget Presentation date and time to be determined in the next few weeks.