



Minutes of Meeting – FINAL
Joint Committee Meeting – Charles Street Community – September 22, 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.

New Action or Carried Forward Items:

Free Store Access and Volume of Donations: After a very robust discussion of this item (see Status of Action Items from June 6th) all agreed to add this item to the October JCM. Apostolo to discuss with Residence Life Team including the roll out of a communication strategy 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.

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.

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. The elevator ambassadors to be reminded of elevator reservation lists.

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 will coordinate to ensure the renewal takes place.

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.

Annual UFH Budget Presentation to the Tenant Executive. Penny to reach out to everyone in the next few weeks to determine the best timing for the annual budget presentation which typically takes place early to mid December.

Online Payment Process: Apostolo to provide an update on status of the project at the next JCM.



Status of Action Items June 6th, 2023

Free Store Operation: Apostolo to brainstorm with Residence Life Team how staff can ensure those accessing the Free Store are limited to people affiliated with the Charles Street Community. In addition, Apostolo to check on the promptness with which donations are sorted and stocked.

- At the last JCM there was a report of someone coming to the Free Store and taking items away in a vehicle. Apostolo discussed this issue with the Residence Life Team. Apparently, this individual was a former resident who believed they were still entitled to access the Free Store. The staff explained that this was not the case and Free Store offerings were only for current residents. The individual understood and accepted this.
- A strategy will be developed to communicate the use of the Free Store in the Newsletter and Posters. Apostolo mentioned plans were in development for high level checks and balances and to get some sense of usage and one idea was a logbook. Gloria suggested doing a test pilot that could, for example, include surveying those residents coming in and assessing their level of comfort with a logbook.
- Mel suggested that the incident involving a former resident using the Free Store was, likely, isolated and would not necessitate tracking people using the Free Store and the larger issue was non-residents accessing the buildings. Maryam agreed that there was a perception that people could too easily get access into the buildings.
- Maryam added that the Free Store logbook is in place now. Maryam herself was asked to sign. Since she knew the background, she was comfortable, however, if other tenants had not read the JCM Minutes they may feel some level of discomfort. Maryam added that she visited the Free Store in early August and her spouse visited the Free Store in late August or early September and the logbook was in place. Apostolo had had a discussion with his team about piloting the logbook, but they may have gone ahead and implemented it. Apostolo will discuss with his team. He does not want this to come across as resident are required to register to use the Free Store.
- Maryam said there seems to be a trend of fewer people dropping off things and maybe people are using Facebooks posts and having people pick up items at their doorstep. Maryam asked if perhaps residents are finding it difficult to drop off items at the Free Store and hopes that things are not going into waste which is against the principles of re-use for which the Free Store was established. Mike thought that this may be a lingering impact of the pandemic and said there are ebbs and flows to the volume of donations. Volume could simply be lower this time of the year. Apostolo agreed that the abundance of items left during and immediately after the pandemic have now been sorted. We seem to be in a phase of less drop offs and more pickups.
- This item will be carried forward to the next JCM

Information to Tenants from Residence Office: John has ensured that the Housing Assistants do provide the proper information to tenants regarding air conditioners (a/c): tenants can check the free store, tenant notice boards for items for sale, and check the UFH website for information on a/c sizes for windows and UFH a/c policy.

- ✓ John confirmed prior to his departure.



Tenant Mail going to Vacant Units: John and Apostolo to check on the current protocols in place and assess if other action can be taken to address this issue.

- ✓ Apostolo agreed to investigate this further. On the UFH side this is difficult to manage. Apostolo and Mike to brainstorm on this and report back at a future JCM.

Sharing Educational tools such as the Garbage and Recycling video: Apostolo was asked about sharing educational tools such as the new Garbage and Recycling video.

- ✓ Apostolo shared links with the TE. The UFH Res Life Team is actively looking to develop creative, fun, and informative videos to post on the website and social media e.g., Garbage Disposal, Pet Policy. This is part of a larger UFH communication strategy which is yielding positive results. Apostolo is happy to share as UFH creates content. Maryam added that the waste video was shared on Facebook and asked if there was anything new. Apostolo said he will share the Pet Policy video once it is on the website.
- ✓ Maryam said that some residents do not use the website and might not be following UFH on social media. Apostolo is happy to keep sharing this content as it is created and posted.

Fall Welcome Event: Apostolo and his team to determine best timing for a Charles Street Community wide social and share potential dates with Maryam and Lerato so they can get it on their calendars.

- ✓ Fall welcome event date is set for October 11th. This is an annual standing event for UFH. This year there will be representatives from both the UFH Team as well as from the TE. This will provide the TE with an opportunity to meet and greet residents. Apostolo's team will set up a table, linens, tents. A banner for the TE is in progress and will be available for future events. Apostolo will discuss logistics as we approach the date of October 11th (4:30 to 6:00 or 6:30).

General Introductory Remarks - Gloria

The group commenced the meeting with a round of introductions and a welcome to Mel. Gloria described the format of the monthly meetings including the issuance of a formal Agenda and Minutes. This meeting allows the UFH team and the Tenant Executive to come together to hear directly about matters of concern arising from the Tenant Association. The meetings allow the UFH Team to share information on upcoming projects, allow the UFH and the TE members an opportunity to brainstorm on current and emerging issues and to work together collaboratively to find solutions.

Penny is not an active member but works to schedule meetings, issue agendas and prepares the Minutes for review, and, once vetted by both UFH and TE members, publish on the UFH website. The Minutes allow tenants to review the discussions and get a sense of what actions are being take on a variety of concerns.

The group does take a hiatus in the months of July and August, and this is discussed and agreed to in advance. The group is always able to convene on short notice should any matter arise requiring attention.

Tenants' Association - Maryam & Lerato



Security Issues:

Mel said the number one recurring issue is: package thefts and non-residents accessing the buildings. Mel added that these issues seem to be more predominant at 30 Charles. Gloria said that this has been an ongoing issue and needs to be part of a much broader discussion. Gloria said that the annual tenant survey conducted by her team is an important tool for UFH to gather feedback in an open way. Gloria said that she and her team are in the process of reviewing the results of the survey and although we can broach the subject today, this topic may necessitate a more focussed meeting with the TE. Gloria will share the tenant survey results with the TE, timing TBD. On the topic of building access there are no easy, fast solutions. Gloria said that tenants are split equally along two lines: 1) the current status quo versus 2) a more stringent requirement to show Identification thereby restricting access to tenants only. Gloria wants to discuss this issue in a more targeted around possible solutions such as:

- Increased education
- Signage
- Clarify the roles of the Security function in our buildings.
- Do we look to impose a modified access to our buildings.

Gloria explained that a few years ago UFH conducted a test pilot in which tenants were asked to show identification and this did not sit well with tenants. This is a complex issue that will take some mindfulness and creativity to resolve. Gloria suggested we need targeted discussions over the next few months: how do we address concerns over building access as well as package thefts.

Mel suggested that some buildings have locker systems (no need for a concierge) and a phone app to notify people to pick up their package. Mel asked if these sorts of options have been explored.

Gloria said that UFH has explored a locker system, but we are constrained by space: the lobby at 30 Charles is very narrow and includes a security desk as well as 4 elevators. Mel asked if we could direct packages to go only to a designated floor for drop off. Gloria added that once people are on the elevator they can go to any floor. Mel suggested that if packages were directed to only one room it would prevent theft and she suggested a common room space such as the Recreation Room at 35 Charles. Mel also suggested that by doing this, i.e., sending packages only to one room, there would be the secondary benefit of freeing up the elevators, as we would eliminate delivery people going up and down to all floors. Gloria said that we need to be creative in exploring potential solutions and we want to ensure we do not create a secondary issue.

Security Issues: Maryam said that the perception is that people are feeling insecure, and this was heightened to some degree by the incident last week at 30 Charles. Maryam added that this incident prompted issues of race-based discrimination on the TA Facebook page. She felt that it is extremely important that contractors be issued and wear a badge. In her role as an Elevator Ambassador, Maryam sees a lot of people coming and going and it is critical that contractors wear badges. Gloria said that the protocol of having contractors register with the Front Desk, who then issue badges to all contractors, is a long-standing process. She added that the incident of last week Maryam is referring to is currently part of an ongoing investigation by Campus Police. Gloria agrees that everyone working in these buildings must sign in and wear a badge and this message has been reinforced with UFH staff.

Maryam asked for clarification: whether this protocol was already in place or will be put in place? Gloria said this protocol has always been in place and if there are instances where this is not happening, we need to drill down and find out why there are lapses. The message must be you are not welcome into the building unless you check in and wear a badge. Gloria added that the work Maryam is doing in the lobby is helping to identify gaps



which need to be addressed. Mike and Apostolo said that this requirement needs to be reinforced with staff. Mike said that he was made aware of a circumstance in which a foreman signed in with the office and was issued a badge, but other members of his crew were not signed in and not issued badges. Mike said that this has now been reinforced such that all contractors must sign in and get an individual badge. Mike asked Maryam and Mel to let him know of any other instances of this and he will address it immediately. Gloria appreciated hearing Maryam's feedback, which helps to immediately address any gaps in compliance.

Value of Tenant Feedback: Maryam spoke of her dual roles both as a member of the Tenant Executive as well as her role as a UFH Elevator Ambassador. She said that what she hears resoundingly is a feeling that tenant complaints and feedback are not heard and not valued. She also cited an example of what appeared to be contradictory messaging regarding when elevators could be reserved for move-ins and move-outs. Mike said that the message that went out early was a mistake. Gloria said that messaging must be consistent and requested that Mike review all messaging around elevator bookings.

Gloria sought further clarification around tenant perception that UFH is not listening to them. Gloria has been paying close attention to the communications coming through on the elevator modernization project. If there is a pattern of consistent concerns, every effort is made to address them. UFH understands that the elevator modernization project is hugely disruptive to tenants. She asked if tenants are voicing concerns largely through the TA Facebook page, and if so, UFH would not be aware (UFH staff do not have access nor should they). Gloria asked the TE to share, in summary, what are the kinds of concerns being expressed.

Maryam said that the perception that tenants are not being heard extends beyond the elevator projects. Maryam suggested that although she understands plans need to be put in place, they also need to be flexible and responsive to changes in conditions/needs. She said the tenants who live here are experiencing firsthand the actual conditions. Mel said that we need to ensure that during busy elevator travel times, elevators are not being booked not just for move-ins and outs but also for delivery people. This needs to be enforced. Mel asked if elevators are booked far in advance and if so, can this information be shared so people can adjust their own scheduled departure/arrival times i.e., publish a schedule so people know when to expect that the elevators are down to one.

Mike said that the messaging had been inconsistent. In addition, he was made aware of an incident in which Security Staff decided to allow Amazon delivery people elevator access without authority from Mike or his team. Mike spoke to the Security Supervisor and insisted all Security staff must follow the protocol set by UFH management team and they are not to make those types of decisions. Mike also acknowledged that there was a suggestion to not allow booking on a weekend between 12:00 pm and 5:00 pm but this could not be implemented as it would cause a significant issue for international and out of province tenants moving in. Gloria asked if Mike responded to the individual who suggested this, and Mike said yes, a response was issued.

Apostolo said that UFH has a robust communication strategy with a dedicated web page in which a weekly elevator schedule is updated every Friday. UFH's intention was to provide as much information as possible on the project timelines, elevator access, through frequent, regular communication channels. Gloria said that its possible that over the course of the project people forget to check the website. UFH will put renewed emphasis on physical signs in the lobby and messaging in the Newsletter regarding elevator modernization and elevator booking times.

Gloria was disappointed to hear that residents are saying UFH is not responsive since the UFH Team spend so much time and effort considering feedback and addressing concerns. However, she and her team will take this message back and consider how to better demonstrate that tenant voices are being heard and are not being discounted.

Mel did not know elevator booking times were published on the website and reiterated the fact that tenants don't go to the website for this information. Mel suggested that perhaps the schedule of bookings could be printed out and posted in the lobby or perhaps this could be part of the role of the Elevator Ambassadors to direct people to this information. UFH needs to clarify that there will not be any booking during either the morning or evening rush periods.

Mike reiterated that the first booking can be only at 10:00 am or later (nothing earlier than 10:00 am). Further, addition, no bookings are allowed in the 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm period. In addition, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm on weekends UFH does not allow bookings in recognition that there is a lot of resident activity at this time. Mike suggested that a lot of the frustration probably came about over the summer months during the busiest move in and move out period. Mel commented that the time slots seemed reasonable. Mike added that the notifications/postings contain a QR code to take people to the website to allow them to view the current version of the schedule. Gloria added that we need to refresh our communications and remind everyone of the UFH email address that can be used by residents to express comments or concerns.

Maryam added that most tenants feel that the posters are about the project rather than booking times. Maryam agreed with Mel that the Elevator Ambassadors can play a role in disseminating information and UFH needs to consider other communication channels besides the website.

Gloria expressed her appreciation for the TE members sharing this important information and her team will now review communication strategy and retool the communication channels.

Building Operations Update - Mike

Elevator Modernization project:

- Elevator 1 complete as of July 31st.
- Elevator 3 is currently ongoing with an estimated completion date of October 18th.
- Completion of the elevator modernization project at 35 Charles is estimated by November 27th.
- These dates are subject to change.
- There will be a break before work begins at 30 Charles.

Building Heating System:

Mike explained that we are now in the "shoulder season" in which we experience comfortable temperatures during the day and lower temperatures at night. UFH actively monitors to determine the optimal time to turn on the heating system in consultation with the Building Engineers. UFH has not set an exact time to make the switch to heating but once the decision has been made it will be communicated to tenants.

Fire Alarm System at 30 Charles:



Mike acknowledged the unacceptable level of fire alarms during the month of September in which building residents experienced five alarms, all of which were false. This level of frequency is unfortunately attributable to the intersection of the UFH Residence with the Commercial/Retail spaces as well as the 730 Yonge underground parking facility both of which are operated by other departments within the University. All but one of the five alarms were from outside of the Residence and were due to construction activities or mischief. Mike reached out to our partners to make it clear that this is unacceptable and asked the other departments to shore up their spaces because this frequency of alarms is adversely impacting UFH residents. Gloria and Mike will be working with U of T Fire Prevention experts to potentially separate the Residence from other locations connected to the fire panel. This may require a retrofit of the existing system. For example, if there is an alarm triggered in one of the restaurants in the commercial retail area of 730 Yonge, it should not impact the Residence.

Laundry Equipment: the replacement of the current laundry equipment is back on track as a priority project. The project did experience a set-back following the departure of John Companion. Maryam expressed her disappointment that the replacement was not further along. Mike reiterated that this is a top priority for him, and he is working to finalize the RFP with U of T Procurement. A considerable amount of preliminary work has been done including ensuring the physical space could accommodate the new equipment which includes assessing drainage for these large commercial grade machines. In addition, the UFH team has explored new technologies that will be available including credit/debit card access, WIFI connectivity etc. Gloria explained that this is a large public procurement and must comply with university standards for taking this procurement to market for the purpose of open competitive bidding, the assessment of submissions etc. The project is back on track as a priority and is moving as quickly as possible given the constraints of working within a large public institution. Mike assured the group that we will achieve a good result which will be worth the wait.

Roof Replacement at 30 Charles: Mike has recently received the contractor's schedule for the roof replacement work. There is a tentative date for mobilization set for October 2nd. The first phase of the roofing project will address the lower second floor roof which covers the commercial/retail spaces. Once the schedule is more definitive, a communication will be sent to residents.

Admissions, Eligibility & Residence Life - Apostolo

Apostolo reached out Maryam and Mel to ensure alignment with the TE communication strategy in terms of educational videos, website, and social media and to touch base to ensure any issues with the TE List Serv were addressed. Maryam hoped that issues with the List Serv were sorted out and said the either Mel or Lerato would issue the next communication. Apostolo suggested that Mel draft the message which would then go to Maryam for final approval and if there were any obstacles or challenge to let him know. Apostolo agrees with the upload of tenant information on a quarterly basis.

Gloria addressed the agreement between UFH and the Tenant's Association. Gloria explained that we put in place a process and agreement mirroring similar agreements that the University has in place with other student societies. Gloria suggested that every September is a good time to revisit the agreement and get the current Tenant Executive to review and sign off on the terms.

Other Business



TA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Tenant Executive Orientation: Gloria explained that each year she and Apostolo align themselves with the TE around the timing and results of the Tenant Association Annual General Meeting (AGM). This is so an Orientation Session can be provided to new TE members. Maryam said that the AGM will take place after the fall social scheduled for October 11th.

Annual UFH Budget Presentation to the Tenant Executive: Penny to reach out to everyone in the next few weeks to determine the best timing for the annual budget presentation. Similar to last year, we could modify the December JCM and tack on additional time to have a hybrid meeting: part of the time dedicated to the JCM, and part of the time reserved for the Budget Presentation. Additionally, the UFH team is available to deliver the budget presentation in early evenings or early mornings. UFH can accommodate the TE in terms of best timing including virtual or in person options.

Flyers for Social: Mel and Lerato to confirm work on flyers for the social on October 11th. Apostolo agreed to support any printing of flyers which can be left for pick up with Security. Mel, Maryam or Lerato to reach out to Apostolo.

Online Payment Process: Maryam asked that an update be given on progress at the next JCM.

Next JCM - Schedule

- October 17th
- November 7th
- December 5th – this may be a hybrid meeting, expanded to include time for Budget Presentation. Budget Presentation date and time to be determined in the next few weeks.