

**Charles Street Student Family Housing**  
**Final Minutes Joint Committee Meeting – March 29, 2022**  
**Amended and Reissued April 26, 2022 – Revised wording raised and confirmed at JCM April 26 2022**

Present: **Management Members** - Gloria Cuneo - Director, University Family Housing, Apostolo Zeno - Assistant Director, University Family Housing, John Companion - Manager, Building Operations & Services, Michael Kaev - Senior Property Operations Coordinator, 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: Victoria Orr - Manager, Residence Life & Admissions, Helen Katz - Residence Life Coordinator, Communication & Education, Fernando Calderon Figueroa – Secretary, Tenants' Association Executive.

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

<b>Comments or Concerns about Minutes from February 22, 2022</b>
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Gloria asked those present to raise any comments or concerns regarding the Minutes of February 22, 2022. None were raised.

<b>New Action or Carried Forward Items:</b>
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**Building Upkeep - Provide Frequency of sweeping, cleaning, waxing etc.:** Mike to provide details of the frequency of various buildings cleaning activities in hallways, stairwells, lobbies etc. This information will be provided to the Tenants Association and will be posted on the website.

**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 the communications piece be tabled at a future JCM or set up a dedicated meeting to discuss communication strategies.

- ❖ A meeting was scheduled for March 11<sup>th</sup> but cancelled by TE members due to other pressing matters. We recognize how busy things are at this time of year, but Gloria encouraged the TE to reach out to Apostolo over the next month or so to reschedule this meeting at a convenient time.

**Waitlist Process for Transfers: Carried Forward.** 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.

- ❖ Gloria said that there will be more to come in future meetings.

**Security Presence in Lobby at 30 Charles: Carried Forward.** John to investigate if it makes sense to have a tag in the Security Booth in the lobby at 30 Charles.

- ❖ John spoke to the Security Supervisor on site and determined that a tag can be located in the Security Booth at 30 CSW. John to follow-up with the Security Service provider and will give an update in the April 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):**

**Update March 29:** See full update provided by Apostolo in Residence Life Operations Section.

**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 we would provide this service (provide paper, toner 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.

**Update March 29:** Gloria said the question of need for this service was included in the recent survey on services. We asked the question to get an idea of the order of magnitude of the need. We did investigate the photocopy piece, but this is very expensive. We will further unpack this and circle back with more information.

**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.

**Update March 29:** John and Apostolo attended a Sustainability Workshop last week. A survey is being developed that we can utilize (can be completed by anyone with a UTORid). The survey asks a series of questions aimed to educate and curb certain behaviors with respect to saving energy and lowering overall carbon footprint. There is also a survey that can be completed internally by various U of T departments in order to provide a rating: bronze to platinum.

There has been no carbon footprint calculation done on these buildings but we will follow up for the future.

Apostolo added that this is an opportunity for a broader initiative. We will undertake some longer-term action items involving Residence Life programs for both adults and children. We will brainstorm over the next few JCM meetings.

**Status of Action Items from February 22, 2022**

**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 the communications piece be tabled at a future JCM or set up a dedicated meeting to discuss communication strategies.

- ❖ Move to Carry Forward.

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**Building Operations – John**

**Update on Construction 730 Yonge/30 Charles:** John advised that work would pick up now that it is spring. The contractor has been warned to restrict noisy work to the 9 am to 12 pm window. John has asked about potential noisy work in the future. John is concerned about the impact on tenants when work begins on the exterior tiles. John is hoping this work happens after the exam period. They may start to drill into the exterior wall and when this is about to commence, we will notify tenants as soon as possible. Currently, John is just raising this for awareness. The contract does not stipulate a restriction during exam time. John did get a schedule from the contractor, but it is not sufficiently detailed for his need to determine tenant impacts. John has reached out the U of T Project Manager, to obtain more specific details.

**Annual Unit Inspections:** We will be starting the annual unit inspections at 35 Charles April 10<sup>th</sup>. It should take approximately a month to complete all inspections. No inspections will occur after 7pm. Tenants will be given sufficient notice. A communication will be sent out on April 6<sup>th</sup> to inform tenants of the schedule and what we will be doing in each unit so tenants know exactly what to expect. Notices of Entry will be issued to allow for the three-hour window.

Farhana asked about the Inspections as she is aware that some people on Facebook reported that the inspectors came very late, three hours after the designated time. John was disappointed to hear this and said we do our best to adhere to the timeline. John again encouraged prompt notification to him or Mike directly so that action

can be taken immediately. Mike added that he has not heard of this. Mike will speak to the Maintenance Technicians to ensure the entry happens within the window designated. Mike added that if they cannot adhere to the timeline, then the inspection will be cancelled, and we will reach out to the tenant to reschedule.

Gloria asked Ammar, Farhana and Fernando if they receive reports of complaints such as this to inform us as soon as possible as we do not have access to the Tenants' Facebook. John again encouraged that he or Mike be contacted directly on any Building Operations issue as this is the only way it can be addressed immediately.

**Bike Cage and Bike Rack Clean-up:** This annual work is tentatively scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week of April. Advance notices will be given to tenants. Ammar asked what areas are involved. Mike explained that there are two parts to this process: 1) the exterior racks at 35 Charles - - two large racks outside and two downstairs in the parking garage outside of the bike cage 2) second area of focus is the bike cage/enclosure located on the A level of the garage. By splitting the work up, it allows for tenants to have an alternate storage location.

#### Tenants' Association – Ammar & Farhana

**Questions On Moving Out:** When tenants move out do they get notified if the apartment will go into renovations after? And how does that affect damage-fees and are those even charged since the unit will be ripped apart anyways for Reno?

**Response:** Gloria explained that a unit is not ripped apart on turnover. We do a refresh on all units and an upgrade on selected units. The upgrade consists of a full kitchen renovation, so in those units the kitchen is torn up. We go into assess units for potential damage, but this process stopped during covid. Pre-covid we would do a pre-move-out inspection. We would do a broad strokes review of the condition of the unit e.g.; do we see gross damage vs normal wear and tear. We understand that people live in these units with strollers, bikes, and regular traffic. We do not issue many damage charges. We do look for restitution to some small level if there has been negligence such as a door kicked in, but this is a rare finding. Another example would be if someone damaged a countertop with burn marks from pots. Upon refreshing the unit, we would not want to replace the countertop. If we knew that the countertop was in good condition when the tenant first moved in, we would ask for some amount toward the replacement in the range of 30 – 35% of our cost. It is important to note this is not a money-making endeavour but more about accountability. On the painting side, if a tenant painted their wall a particular colour, we ask that they at least prime the walls prior to leaving. We look for effort and some contribution to decrease our costs.

Gloria asked if this explanation provided a sense of the process. Ammar asked if all units are going to be renovated. Gloria answered that our plan is to upgrade 100 kitchens in each year that runs from May 1 to April 30<sup>th</sup>. In the case of a damaged kitchen countertop, if we were to then upgrade the unit it would be unreasonable to charge the tenant. Gloria added that the vast majority of tenants do a good job on move out. We do see costs around painted walls and often tenants leave a lot of stuff behind - - leaving with no time for proper disposal. We do charge a fee for disposal. We bring vacated units up to a standard. If tenants have been in a unit for 2 to 3 years, then there will of course be wear and tear. We look for gross damage.

**General Upkeep of the Buildings:** Farhana raised the issue that tenants have noticed a decline in the general upkeep of the buildings since the start of the pandemic. This relates to waxing of floors, cleanliness of staircases and hallways.

Response: John said we have not changed our cleaning policies and procedures and stairwells and hallways or cleaned on a regular basis. John has started the painting of common areas and stairwells at the garage level. John again said if you are getting complaints then he would appreciate a heads up so he and Mike can address the issue right away. We now have a Junior Property Operations Coordinator regularly walking the halls to identify issues and to notify the cleaners for action.

Subsequent to the meeting Victoria added the response that she thinks it is important to out that for most of the past two years, all of the families have been attending school and work from their apartments, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This has never before been the case. As a result, the wear and tear on the lobbies, halls, stairs, laundry rooms etc has been enormous in comparison to normal life at Charles St.

Gloria requested that we provide details to the TA such as when is the next floor waxing scheduled. It would be helpful to articulate the frequency of hallway sweeping, stairwell cleaning etc. Farhana agreed this would be reassuring for tenants to know. Gloria agreed to get this information to the TE and then we can also post onto our website as well. Gloria knows that when floors were waxed a communication would go out floor by floor for information purposes. We will ensure this is reinvigorated by John. Mike will help gather this information which is in our cleaning contract. This is a good opportunity to refresh this information now that we are in a new phase of the pandemic/endemic. Mike added that nothing changed during pandemic. Floors are waxed more than once a year and the work is staggered and, in addition, the lobby carpets are shampooed, and notices are posted. Mike will look into this further. Gloria wants to know the frequency and provide this level of information to our tenants. Mike asked Farhana if the complaints were building specific and Farhana said more from 30 than 35 Charles.

**30 Charles 7<sup>th</sup> Floor Foam coming out of the sink:** Farhana raised this for our awareness and asked if we can do an inspection. Mike was aware of this issue as a report did come to him. One of the Junior Property Operations Coordinators reached out the tenant to try to resolve. Ammar asked how we would track this down. Mike said it relates to the risers so it can impact the units above and below. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> riser share kitchen in 30 Charles so these are more involved as the cause could be in either of these risers.

#### Residence Life Operations - Apostolo

**Recreation Room Booking:** We are re-opening the recreation room for events effective April 4, 2022. We have managed to shift the booking process to online on StarRez (similar to the Maintenance request page). We have seen bookings come through regularly since roll out. We will continue to conduct enhanced cleaning of the Recreation Room space 3 times a day.

Apostolo added that we are unique in that some of our tenants have access to StarRez and some do not. Those that do not can access the booking module by going into the Residence Office and booking and signing the waiver in person.

Apostolo noted other recent updates such as the lifting of the capacity cap on common spaces, elevator capacity lifted, and signage removed. A communication has been sent out on the easing of restrictions.

**Payment Automation Update:** We have the majority of the aspects of the Point-of-Sale (POS) Machine ready for rollout. We have a meeting scheduled with Ancillary Finance early next week to initiate the acquisition of the machine. We will be sending out a communication once we have a date set as to when we can begin using the machine. The physical machine will be located in the Residence Office. This will process debit card transactions for a variety of payment transactions. The machine will be made available for use in the coming weeks.

On the online payment portal side, we have met with ITS to discuss and assess our project as we want to ensure that the privacy of our tenants' data is maintained. We are undergoing a risk assessment and at the same time exploring some secure third-party services in anticipation of moving towards a rollout. Detailed timing is uncertain at this point as we continue to work with ITS. More to come in the coming weeks as this part of the Payment Automation Project continues to take shape.

Gloria asked if there were any questions on the Payment Automation plans. Farhana asked if the online payment portal is limited only to rent. Apostolo said that there are some transactions for which ID verification is required e.g., keys etc. and these transactions will have to be done in person in the Residence Office.

Apostolo added that an information graphic will be posted to help to illustrate what can be paid online vs in person Debit transaction.

#### Admissions & Eligibility – Victoria

**RAs:** The Residence Advisors are continuing to deal with neighbour conflicts. These are being addressed on a case-by-case basis.

**Illegal Appliance Use:** There has been a recent increase in complaints received of illegal appliance use causing dirty water coming into kitchen sinks. See full details under TE section.

#### Community & Recreation –Maureen

**Programs:** Our programs are operating at maximum capacity right now. Song and I will be discussing the expansion of the Drop-in for April and May as well as increasing hours and increasing capacity. We are reducing the virtual tutoring program to three times weekly. We will see a significant drop in attendance as the warmer spring weather pulls children outdoors in the next while. It's also much more manageable at three times weekly for the staff.

**Earth Hour:** The weather wasn't great, but we set up outside under the sheltered area. Just as we thought, lots of families still came out because it's the first thing we've had on a bigger scale in a while.

Registrations for the drop-in and the movie went well. However, quite a few people showed up with their children without registering for the movie. Luckily, we were able to accommodate more due to the set-up of the room

We purchased sealed snacks such as chips, cookies, juice boxes and granola bars for the outdoor crowd. Indoors the families were given treats to take home with them. Luckily, we bought lots because they went quickly. There weren't a lot of leftovers but what remains is ideal for other programs like the drop-in.

We bought lots of glow sticks which were an even bigger success than we thought they would be. We ran out of the star and laser sword glow sticks early on but the glow in the dark bracelets still went over well

**Bulletin Boards:** Some of the Res Life staff will be spending time, this week and next, updating the bulletin boards in the lobbies to announce the arrival of spring. In addition to this, they are repairing the bulletin boards on the floors where damage and some vandalism has occurred. Thanks once again to Vithu who brought out attention to the boards on some of the upper floors that we don't see very often.

An update to this report since our Teams Meeting. Two of the four staff working on the boards have come down with covid so the project might be delayed by a week or two. They will continue to work on both and plan to complete everything as soon as they can return to campus.

**Work Study:** All students are in their final weeks of work study, and many have already completed their hours for fall and winter.

The new applications are all in. We should hear back quite quickly since the spring and summer is such a short session and it begins in May.

**New Programming:** In response to a question from Ammar, Maureen said she hopes we could have the Spring Garden Festival again this year in June which typically draws 300- 400 people. There are plans to expand the Drop-In hours in May, more fitness, run club etc. There is a possibility there will be trips this year even local trips where there is a meet-up. In the April JCM Maureen will share more specifics. Song will bring back the stroller walks in May to areas such as Queen's Park.

#### Residence Life – Apostolo for Helen

Updates provided in Admissions & Eligibility section.

#### New/Other Business – Apostolo

No new business.

#### Next JCM Meeting Date

- April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022



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# UNIVERSITY FAMILY HOUSING