

TCHC - CSAC -JULY 20th, 2021 (CSAC Public Meeting Materials)

This document outlines the membership of this committee absent any members of the Community Safety Unit. That concerns me a great deal. You can't create policy in a bubble if you don't understand the realities of turning those policies into practice.

It also concerns me that you appear to be focusing on the Violence Reduction Strategy with a particular focus on guns without acknowledging that there are anti-social behaviours that are a precursor to gun violence.

No one is born with a gun in their hand.

But, there are a set of circumstances that can increase the likelihood of an individual resorting to gun violence. Which Sheila Penny would be well versed in by now with her discussion with the peeps at Toronto Police Services Guns and Gangs Unit in the West end.

If you're not going to crack down on the anti-social behaviours within TCHC then I'm not clear on how you intend to deal with the larger and more lethal impact of gun violence.

Your current enforcement methods for anti-social behaviours is lacking. The mentality of those engaged in such activities dictate that they push the boundaries to see the full spectrum of behaviours they can get away with. You're allowing them to opt-in to behaviours that would otherwise be unacceptable in any other rental accommodation.

So when they do reach Tribunal and its deemed that the tenant would have difficulty finding alternative housing the Tribunal is not wrong. You have taught tenants that they can get away with just about anything.

I would love the opportunity to contribute to a dialogue about Community Safety. (Years ago I was a floating guard for Burns Security. I was on eighteen different sites in about a year and a half. Everything from a cosmetic warehouse by the airport, to Redpath Sugar Refinery at the lake, to condos in Scarborough) But, I feel it's more important for you to have reps from the Community Safety Unit at this table to talk about the practicality of implementing any new measures that are deemed necessary. Otherwise, this is tantamount to talking behind each others backs. It's also a needless waste of time as your ideas would need to be filtered out of the committee then brought back for discussion at a future date. It's more efficient to have them at the table from the very beginning.

Then again I have to wonder what would happen if the end result is needing to revert to a system where we had Special Constables in all communities in the evenings and on weekends? Is TCHC going to increase their budget line? Is the City prepared to fork over the necessary funds?

Either way I find this Committee a questionable endeavour if you don't have the ability to build bridges. Whether that means having Community Safety Unit staff involved in the discussions or increasing the presence of Special Constables on all sites. Not just those deemed a Priority based on a risk rubric somewhere.

I have often thought that we should have invested in increasing the presence of Special Constables on our sites instead of staffing community hubs. But now that we do have community hubs can't those spaces double as security offices after hours?

I find it ironic that this document mentions False Fire Alarms and CCTV cameras in a consecutive manner. I understand as much as TCHC professes otherwise that the safety and security of the tenants is not exactly a priority but saving millions of dollars should be. So, if you won't put the cameras on every floor of every building to protect the tenants, maybe you could put them on every floor to save the four million dollars annually of tax payers money it takes for Toronto Fire to respond to all those false alarms. It's mind boggling to me that TCHC still has difficulty defining items on any agenda that actually overlap. Certainly cameras on every floor of every building would act as a deterrent and make identifying alarm pullers much easier. It would also help TCHC identify the bad apples in here. But, that's only if you're willing to do the actual work of reviewing the CCTV camera footage on a regular basis.

Aside from all that I'm not impressed with how fast you threw together this whole committee. Yet, you completely disregard a recommendation to increase the number of tenants on the Tenant Services Committee. Especially when one of your own Board members expressed the notion that it's a good idea to have more tenant involvement.