MINUTES: Tenant Advisory Committee  
Friday, March 13, 2009 – 1:00 p.m.  
Room 207, Hamilton Convention Centre

PRESENT: Andy Cranbury, Mary Sinclair, Connie Bellamey; John Hawker; Daryn Deon; Susan Andrews; Sana Ahmad Minhas

REGRETS: Laura Harper-Stubbs, Tammy Morasse

Also Present: Dave Brodati, Bob McKnight, Michele Attard

1. **OPENING & AGENDA APPROVAL**  
   Item 1.1 – Welcome  
   Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting, mentioning that Dave Brodati attended in Tammy’s absence. Andy welcomed Susan, Sana, John and Daryn; new members to the meeting.

   Item 1.2 – Additions to & Approval of Agenda  
   Dave asked to include the following items under City of Hamilton, 3.4 – 1) Community Liaison Committee and 2) the letter requesting of a Peer Reviewer to be appointed for the HPS call for applications from the Tenant Advisory Committee. Agenda was accepted as presented.  
   (Cranbury/Sinclair) CARRIED

   Item 1.3 - DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST  
   None declared.

2. **BUSINESS ARISING/UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

   Item 2.1 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES for December 12, 2008  
   The December 12, 2008 minutes of the Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC) were approved as circulated. Andy mentioned that the January and February meetings were cancelled.  
   (Sinclair/Bellamey) CARRIED
2.2 Access to Housing
Bob McKnight, of Housing gave a brief history of Access to Housing and where they are now. Access to Housing is a coordinated access list for persons waiting to be placed in housing. The data base used to be organized by CHAN, now City of Hamilton is in the process of going to tender which is mandatory every 3 years. But before they put out the RFP City of Hamilton would like to conduct a survey to include people who are currently on the wait list and those who have been housed within the past year. This survey will inform the upcoming RFP. Members thought that it was important for people to know where they are on the wait list and an explanation of why they did not get placed in housing when they were on the top of the list. Bob explained that persons of abuse, urgent situations, homeless, newcomers and youth are given priority, so this may affect a persons position on the list. It was expressed by members that tenants are frustrated because they do not know why they have not been placed in housing. It was suggested that City of Hamilton produce a pamphlet and send out an annual letter to tenants informing them of the process. The question arose if it was possible for tenants to access the wait list, but members were informed that because of confidentiality issues this was not possible.

2.3 Utilities Billing
Dave explained that the issue around utilities arrears was a focus of TAC; where members were concerned for persons with low-income having to pay utility arrears due to fact that the billing date did not coincide with when they received their Ontario Works cheques. Members had asked Dave to contact Kerry Lubrick from Ontario Works for some numbers of people affected; Dave was not able to obtain any specific data, but he presented a report from the Ontario Energy Board dated March 10, 2009. There is some hope that they will look at these issues, as stated in a media release dated March 10, 2009 titled – OEB moves forward with new Low-income Energy Assistance Program. The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) has three components: temporary financial assistance for consumers in need; access to more flexible customer service rules on matters such as bill payment and disconnection notice periods; and targeted conservation and demand management programs. Members thanked Dave for the information.
2.4 Multi-Residential Tax Update
Andy explained that there is an inequity in the Multi Residential Tax; where the classification of properties of more than 6 units are taxed at a Multi Residential tax rate which is higher than residential tax rates, tenants should not be paying more than homeowners. Andy has a meeting March 18th at the Convention Centre regarding Multi-Residential Property Taxes.

3. REPORTS

3.1 Solutions for Housing Action Committee (SHAC)
Mary mentioned that there has been a decline in attendance at the last SHAC meeting; there was some discussion of how are they going to move forward. Mary will give us an update at the next meeting.

3.2 Hamilton Tenant Education Project (HTEP)
Andy informed members that the HTEP is a program funded through HPI formally SCPI, and they have secured funding for 6 months until September. Madhavi a former TAC member was involved in the project and was doing some great work with the outreach aspect but unfortunately had to leave because she found another job in Toronto. Now HTEP will replace Madhavi in order to follow through with the outreach. The name of the program has been changed to Tenant Outreach Education Initiative and hope to secure more funding in the community past September.

3.3 Residential Tenancy Act/Legal Issues
No updates, Laura was not present.

3.4 City of Hamilton
Dave gave an update of the Homelessness funding process for the next Call for Applications (CFA). Andy had received a letter from City staff requesting that one or more appointees from TAC be selected to volunteer with the review of proposals. The Peer Reviews cannot have a conflict of interest with any of the applications submitted though the call. Members appointed Connie and thought that she would be qualified to review the applications. Connie accepted the task, and looked forward to helping with the CFA.

Dave mentioned that he is now a member of the Community Liaison Committee. The committee will be discussing the feasibility of licensing rental housing. Dave has not been to any meetings so far, but will update members at the next meeting.
3.5 City Voter List
Andy explained how this item is on the agenda due to the fact that tenants do not have access to an updated voters list, and tenants should be encouraged to vote.

3.6 Recruiting New Members
Andy thanked the new members for volunteering to be part of the committee. City staff will send the members an updated contact list before the next meeting.

3.7 Review of 2008 – Chair
Andy asked members if anyone would like to assume the role of chair for 2009. Members thought that Andy was doing a great job and asked if he would like to continue as chair for rest of the term to 2010.

On motion, members agreed that Andy assume role to chair for 2009/2010 term.
(Bellamey/Sinclair) CARRIED

4. NEW BUSINESS
4.1 Grow-Op 3
Andy informed members of the recent Grow-op on Hughson St. N., and expressed his concern that tenants did not know what was happening. Andy sent an email to Councillor Bob Bratina informing him of the situation to ensure that tenants are informed. It was suggested that recommendations be brought before council on this matter. Andy mentioned that he has the recommendation forms and will discuss this at the next meeting.

4.2 Bed Bug Issues
Members thought that the bed bug issues was becoming a real problem, and should they advocate for Public Health to take the matter in their hands. It is a migration problem, people are disposing of the furniture in the garbage and members thought that this furniture should be destroyed so that other people cannot reuse it. A unit with the bed bugs sometimes has to be treated 2 or 3 times before the problem is solved.
Andy will talk with Larry Huibers from Housing Help Centre who has been involved with this problem; and give an update for the next meeting and possibly invite someone to discuss the problem at a future meeting.
5. **ADJOURNMENT**
On motion, the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.
(Hawker/Cranbury) CARRIED

6. **Future Meetings**
The next meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2009 due to the fact that April 10\textsuperscript{th} which would be the regular meeting date is Good Friday. Andy asked members if the second Friday of the month would be a good date to schedule meetings, all agreed.