



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

### Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative

#### Board Meeting Zoom Meeting – May 26, 2022

Meeting was called to order at 6:40 PM – Hybrid modality: in -person and via Zoom

#### Directors Present:

Tanner Deeds  
Sofia Simeto  
Ryan Johnson  
Munkh-Erdene (Muugii) Bayarsaikhan

#### Future FY 22-23 Directors Present:

Ever Mykoni  
Taiwo Aremu  
Manlin Cui (virtual attendee)

#### Directors Absent:

May An  
Amer Al -Homoud  
Jyoti Sanini Sharma

#### Also Present:

Shanea Amundson, CTC Executive Director  
Patrick Broderick, CTC Operations Manager  
Lindy Wirth, CTC Marketing & Customer Support Coordinator  
~~Scott Creer, UMN Housing and Residential Life Co-op Liaison~~

Timekeeper: Lindy  
Process Assistant: Tanner

**Welcome**, Timekeeper (minute taker) and Process Assistant (Chair)

**Approve: Packet / Agenda / Consent Agenda**

*Sofia makes the motion to approve the packet, agenda, and consent agenda. All six (6) vote in favor. Zero (0) opposed. Packet, agenda, and consent agenda is approved.*

Meeting begins with introductions of attendees. Tanner will be moving out of CTC soon and thus leaving the board next month, in which we will need to elect a new board chair at an upcoming meeting.



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### University Project Updates

- Scott is unable to attend the meeting; Shanea updates the board based on Scott's report.
- Scott is our co-operative's University liaison and typically attends all board meetings
- Phase IV update of laundry rooms, updates will occur one at a time. Updates include the shelving, flooring, walls (not machines themselves)
- Currently in the bidding process of updating the Study Center boilers, which recently failed in January. University's bids are \$50,000, elsewhere would be \$10,000, which would be taken from the capital project budget.

### Community Voices

- Can we have our own laundry machines? No, that is not currently allowed in our current contract with BDS; plus, there is the issues of plumbing (it's old, lint). We will revisit the conversation within the year as our BDS contract comes to end.
  - Currently receiving resident reports that the BDS machines do not do an adequate job of washing and are expensive
- We currently are in a contract with BDS, and it is up in March 2024, must inform by March 2023 if we wish to not renew or not.
  - If the machines aren't doing what they are supposed to, we need residents to continue reporting. Overreporting is good. Report to BDS and CTC office.
  - We need to the reporting as leverage in our contract to negotiate a better one, as well as to fix and optimize the machines.
  - Machines were brand new when they arrived to CTC 5 years ago. These machines are the highest quality machines available from BDS.
    - There is an option to update the surrounding service, however, such as processing payments. We are unable to switch in the middle of our contract.
  - What is the price break? Less expensive than going to a laundromat. CTC absorbs the rising expense, it is actually supposed to increase 3% annually. Doing laundry offsite has tripled the price compared to doing it at CTC.
  - Can CTC purchase and manage their own laundry machines? CTC would need to hire a specialist if yes. We will discuss the option in the upcoming months.
  - Biggest issue we can solve right now as a board, communicating with the community about what they can do in the immediate: increase reporting for any dissatisfied service.
  - Before BDS Laundry, CTC had "Mac Gray," which BDS acquired. BDS is very prominent in the twin cities.
- Coyotes:
  - Community announcement:
    - Keep distance and do not feed coyotes
- Composting is closed: Report that residents are discarding organics throughout the grounds in result of the closing of the compost bins
- A resident is interested in organizing a group of volunteers to beautify the Rock Garden on Gibbs Ave.
- We will need to plan a future community event to help clean up the Fruit Garden



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- Noticed three dead squirrels.
  - What to do with deceased animals? If you feel comfortable you can move/properly dispose of the animal (take precautions though, such as wear gloves or use a shovel). If you are uncomfortable, try asking your neighbors, or please report to maintenance.
    - Try to instill a greater sense of responsibility and initiative for residents. There is a limit of what we can ask of residents.
- Compost bins are closed due to rats
- Likely that the squirrels ate the poison intended for the rats in the compost bins
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- Outdoor Facility Updates:
  - Increase the number of swings at CTC: currently we only have swings at one location. Future agenda items: we are redoing the sports court soon, and playground updates are on the capital budget, and we will start planning for summer 2023 construction in November.
    - Swings are difficult to implement with insurance
  - Possibility of converting one of the green areas into a bike obstacle course for the kids to enjoy.
    - This would free the space on the sidewalk, plus would be lots of fun

### Overview Board Projects/Policy Review for 2022-2024 Term

- What policies need to be revisited for new board?
  - Pet/Animal Policy
    - Recommended to start here first
    - Adapt a similar approach to CSCC, in which we could allow other animals and charge a fee, which will help offset the significant financial loss when the University begins taking units offline
  - Playgrounds
  - Laundry machines
  - Compost (Operations Committee currently working on solutions)
  - Turf/Landscape (assign to Operations Committee?)
    - Reduction of chemicals means the increase of weeds.
    - Reconsider, research.
  - What is the best communication to get out to the community? What are better options to increase understanding and participation?
    - Tanner recommends the board to read “Nudge,” also the effectiveness of modeling good behavior: board members can lead by example and communicate such as through social media, at events
    - How do we engage all residents, from the community-oriented to those only looking for inexpensive rent? How do we get them to do something? Communication, creating culture on the grounds focusing on positivity
  - Prorating Charges: resident charges are prorated for added charges, such as air conditioning, additional charges
    - Change to seasonal or monthly charges
    - It is a lot of administrative work and strain on CTC’s office
    - This does not include rent



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- All this work would need to be complete before January for the rollout of the new fee schedule
- Safety and Security
  - We have had a lot of continue conversation on the matter. Hopefully we can take more action, or just to communicate better. Find a new way to empower residents to take action and autonomy in security.
- When an agenda item, big discussions typically happen in executive meetings and/or assigned to a committee to then report back to the board.
- Keep pushing back on the University, we need to be incorporated in their vision and redevelopment plans
  - We need residents showing up and asking questions.
  - For the people who want cheap housing, the University is currently working to take that away. We need to instill the understanding in them that they need to show up and take action.
  - How can we challenge ourselves, too? How are we responsive to other's needs – being mindful that if we are proactive, that empowers the residents' reporting/offering of feedback.
  - Graduate students are our main population: how can we meet people where they are at, remind them that the board members are also students (residents volunteering on the board). Decisions we make aren't for tomorrow yet are for the upcoming 5 years, 20 years, 50 years, etc.
  - New resident orientation and onboarding: communicate and instill co-op values with them. New activities/initiatives in the community to begin incorporating more and more engaged community.
  - Implement more large community events (community celebration, NNO, etc.), offer food, drinks, chat with neighbors
    - Increase Ward events. Helps neighbors know each other, facilitates passing along messages too from the board/management
    - Board and Ward representatives should develop a working and social relationship/event.
      - Board members could join the ward rep quarterly meeting
      - Add a liaison of the board to the ward reps, like the committees

### Board Members Onboard New Board Members

- What do you wish you knew when you joined the board?
  - Progress and processes can go slowly. There are legal sides, insurance, exploring all the questions/options; it requires patience.
- Letter from Grace Bell, a former board chair.
- Board meetings must have agendas, keep track of time, approve items, due to Bylaws. The executive meeting, though, is where greater and more freely discussion time is available. Encouragement for all members to join the executive meetings.
- It's okay to disagree with each other yet remember to be respectful and that we are all, at the end of the day, friendly neighbors working together.
- Bring and push forward ideas and initiatives for discussion. We'll always look for new ways to solve these problems.



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### Informal Discussion – Updates/Suggested Future Agenda Items

- Formalizing the updated Pet/Animal Policy
- Next month: electing the executive committee members (chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer).
  - Think about what you want to do and your schedule.

*Ryan motions to adjourn the meeting. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 7:53 pm.*