



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

### Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative

#### Cooperative Annual Meeting– April 28, 2022

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM - Via Zoom and in-person at the UMN St.Paul Campus Student Center.

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NGtucHE5Oo>

#### Directors Present:

Tanner Deeds  
Munkh-Erdene (Muugii) Bayarsaikhan  
Sofia Simeto  
May An  
Ryan Johnson  
Amer Al -Homoud

#### Directors Absent:

Senanur Avcı Tosun

#### Also Present were:

Shanea Amundson, CTC Executive Director  
Patrick Broderick, CTC Operations Manager  
Lindy Wirth, CTC Marketing & Customer Support Coordinator  
Salena Hernandez, Office Coordinator

Community Pre-Voting Count: 243  
Overall Community Vote Count: 251

In-person attendance: 20 residents  
On-line attendance: 228 log ins

#### Open Remarks – Tanner Deeds, Chair

Good evening and welcome, thank you for coming and for those of you online, thank you for logging in. I want to give a quick reminder voting is open until 6:45pm. That is another 15 minutes, so if you haven't voted for incoming board members and the bylaw changes, please do so as soon as possible. I want to say once again welcome, and thank you for coming, thank you for logging in. I'm Tanner Deeds, the board chair for this year.

It's so good to see people in person again it's been two years since we came together as a



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

community, and even though it's only some it's nice to see our neighbors together. On behalf of the board of directors, I want to thank you for being a part of this Community, and today we're going to begin discussing the 2020-2021 fiscal year, this has been a year of change for CTC and, most of it has been very positive change.

The Board can attest that there's been a lot of new faces on the board coming to serve the Community over the year. So, thank you to each and every board member for your service this past year and, of course, this was a year of the continuation of the pandemic. The pandemic drove us apart put us inside and prevented us from meeting some of our new neighbors.

Tonight starts a new phase. Tonight, we begin coming together this weekend in various forms, we will have spring cleanup together. But tonight, we also need to talk finances security and other important topics have been brought to the Community.

### **Financial Report of Cooperative – Ryan Johnson, Treasurer**

Here is an overview of the finances for the fiscal year 2020-2021. In FY 2020-2021 there was a zero percent increase on rent. As far as the rental comparison the city of Minneapolis and St Paul. CTC had a 2% increase for FY 2021-2022 compared to the previous year for 2020-2021. The city of Minneapolis is that a 3.8% increase in the city of St Paul's out of 5.2%. CTC includes utilities, trash, water, electric, heat, and internet.

The audit broke even which is the goal with a fiscal year. We were about roughly \$900 in the red, which is a pretty insignificant amount, you want to break us even as possible in a fiscal year and we did meet that metric which is good.

The gross budget is about 5.2 million and that's including like maintenance, University financial requirement, the Co-op expenses. The goal of the co-op is to maintain a low rental rate and be fiscally prudent and avoid net access funds so. We came close which was the key for this past year. One thing to call out is vacancy. There was a little bit of vacancy which contribute to the overall fund and the budget. The two charts above show that rents were appropriately price to effectively cover co-op expenses CTC continued priorities maintaining low rental rates and using strategies to help offset other costs.

### **Expression of Co-ops Mission & Importance of Volunteer Work – May An, Board Representative**

In a time when expensive 'luxury' apartments seem to be popping up on every corner, our student-run, democratic cooperatives have never been so important. Cooperatives or Co-op housing is member-controlled housing. Residents that choose to become members of the co-op are not only “tenants”, but an important part of the whole, allowing our communities to shape their members' vision.



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

In fact, over 95% of our households are members, and these residents pitch in through regular duties, organizing and directing co-op initiatives through serving on the Board of Directors or various operational committees, as well as voting on policy changes, and participating in other activities on a voluntary basis. This means that anyone residing at CTC can choose to participate and have a voice in policies, procedures, activities, and improvements to our buildings and grounds.

Here are the main values to guide us having a successful co-op:

- **Quality Environment:** We take personal responsibility for making the co-op an affordable, well-maintained, welcoming, well-governed, transparent and safe living environment.
- **Volunteerism:** We value the principles and practices of the cooperative way of life, and understand that volunteerism is essential to building a strong community.
- **Community:** We promote friendly connections among neighbors as essential for building our co-op community.
- **Inclusion:** We value everyone's opinions, and make decisions together for the continuous improvement of the cooperative.
- **Sustainability:** We value sustainability; the choices that we make benefit not only current members but the wider community and those to come.
- **Family:** We value and support family life by promoting family-oriented activities.
- **Diversity:** We value and appreciate culture, lifestyle, and individual differences.
- **Respect:** In our interactions, we value professionalism, respect, and good communication.

Prior to the pandemic we held a great variety of community activities. Despite this, we have tried to make the most of it. We have had residents organize food drives and step up to assist those in need.

As we begin to return to a more normal state, it is time to return to our core value of volunteerism. Across this community there are brilliant people with innovative ideas for ways to help and improve our community. Together, we will continue to make CTC thrive.

### **Volunteer Appreciation** – Amer Al-Homoud, Vice Chair

Volunteering is an important thing that we all have to work on, because volunteering helps people to know more things, learn about each other's cultures and it helps to reduce our financial burden on CTC.

Whenever residents volunteer, it helps reducing the financial cost. Volunteering is something that everyone can do, whether signed up in advance or not. Volunteers take care of distributing



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

the roles and responsibilities in events. We have more than 50 people volunteering and doing some things within the community and even outside CTC, like the food collection.

I would like to urge people to volunteer board in the community and to participate in our volunteering events.

And if you have a good idea, please mention it to us and we will be doing that. It would be good to utilize the time of the kids efficiently and have them in organized sport and events activities. This is helpful of their growth and to organize them to make show them discipline within sports. I see kids in our community that have a lot of energy outside. We have experienced kids who create vandalism unintentionally, because they do not have activities to do.

We have a good skilled people in our community to use for all type of activities. I would like to focus on sports like doing tennis coaching, soccer coaching, basketball coaching, martial arts coaching any type of this coaching, and we may do some simple tournament and give them some incentive to have things and their vision and future. So, we need to step up and take initiative to be leaders in doing things in our community. With this I would like to end this, and thank all the people who have volunteered in our community.

### **Future of the Co-op** – Sofia Simeto, Board Secretary

As CTC board and together with the Management team we have been following the process of the development of the Saint Paul master plan since its first announcement and we also have get first-hand information from our Housing and Residential Life liaison who gives us University Updates in our monthly Board meetings.

#### **What we know so far is the following:**

Although it is not stated in the master plan, we know that the University will not be investing capital monies in the one-bedroom and two-bedroom split model buildings due to the age of the buildings and the pending redevelopment plans. CTC was first notified of this starting in 2015 and it has developed in more details since then. This means that the investment to keep these units on-line is coming from CTC's operating budget or they would need to be set to be off-line and demolished. Future demolition is unknown, but is expected no sooner than 5 years from now. To account for this loss in income, proper financial planning is in place.

The U of M Twin Cities campus master plan (which includes St. Paul campus plan) was finally approved by the Board of Regents during their December 2021 session.

Although the plan does not specify the details of what the future development will look like, we know for sure that the CTC property will remain housing and will be reviewed to possibly include mixed use with commercial space.

We have also been informed by Housing and Residential Life that changes on the property following the master plan will probably not occur before 5-10 years but that the University will



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

start building up reserves for the future redevelopment of the cooperative by raising the University Requirements CTC owes, at a rate of 4% annually.

CTC management is planning for the continued aging of the co-op and the challenges this brings. This will include strategic planning of failing buildings, when they need to become off-line in the future, how that will affect the income and the bottom line each year, and the impact that it will have on relocation of residents.

Knowing that the property is still designated for student housing in the future is really good news and if the cooperative model can be maintained and chosen as the continuing managing agent, an affordable housing option for students within a wonderful community will still be offered for the future students at the University of Minnesota. For that, we believe that it is very important that we take every opportunity to continue showing the importance of what our co-op provides to students and their families.

### **Recognition and Welcome of New Board Members** – Sofia Simeto, Board Secretary

And now I would like to thank and acknowledge Board members that had left and the ones that will join us soon:

I want to start by acknowledging all the former Board Members that greatly contributed to our community between 2020-2022 and that had to finish their term earlier: Tammara Walsky, Laura Eckhardt, Wei li, Mounisha Gorle, Kari Li and Damilola Mofikoya. Of course, I also want to thank the current board members some of whom are about to finish their terms (Senanur Avici Tosun and Tanner Deeds). Big Thank you to all of them for their contributions and their time at the Board. Also, a very special acknowledgment to our former General Manager Hadley Adkins for their great 15 years of service to our coop.

I would also like to thank you all for participating in our annual election for the available positions at the Board of Directors for the upcoming term 2022-2024, which is part of our bylaws. After closing the voting, I am pleased to welcome Ever Mkonyi, Manlin Cui, Taiwo Aremu and Jyoti Sanini Sharma as our new members of the Board and also special thanks to Ryan Johnson for running for another term. Sometimes it happens that a board member must step down due to personal situations and in such a case, we have to find a substitute to end that term. That happened several times during this past term but fortunately, we had volunteers that kindly offered their time and stepped forward to take the challenge: thank you Shengmei (May) An and Munkh-Erdene (Muugii) Bayarsaikhan. It is always great to see how new Board members bring renovated energy and new ideas to the team.

I firmly believe that our co-op provides a unique opportunity to experience a beautiful and diverse community life but also, the chance for those willing to, to engage and make our own personal contributions. The co-op model gives us the unique opportunity to build our community the way we want, through the involvement of their members. So, after these past



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

challenging years, I hope that we will soon have the chance to keep strengthening our beautiful community and keep enjoying living here at CTC.

### Final Candidate Vote:

All five board candidates received over 55% of the votes and will now serve the upcoming 2022-2024 term.

Taiwo Aremu  
Manlin Cui  
Ryan Johnson  
Ever Mkonyi  
Jyoti Sanini Sharma

### Results of Bylaw vote- Tanner Deeds, Chair

Voting is closed on the amendments to the bylaws with 251 votes casted. There were 230 yes, 21 no was about 92% of the vote.

Vote passes for the approval of the Amended Bylaws.

The bylaws have been amended we'll now turn to a Q A.

### Community Voices (Q & A) – Tanner Deeds, Chair, and Amer Al-Homoud, Vice Chair

Main topics discussed: Safety, Financials, Laundry Machines, policies.

*This is a summarized version of questions submitted in advance of the meeting and in-person at the meeting.*

*\*Management will continue follow up.*

**Q:** Please talk to UMPD to increase cameras to vulnerable points of CTC to reduce catalytic converters thefts. We would like to know which actions have been taken place to improve security?

**A:** UMPD has put camera trailers on property in areas that have had high theft. The only way to indicate when and where to do this is if proper police reports are submitted. If you ever have questions, please reach out to UMPD, they are always willing to talk to residents and regularly works with CTC management about increasing patrol, putting in mobile cameras and partnering on events. The latest news is that UMPD is working with MN Depart of Commerce on a program to provide adhesive ID strips for high profile vehicles for catalytic converter thefts. This program



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

will be coming to CTC in the upcoming months for those who qualify. There have been arrests made because our community has been very descriptive when calling police.

**Q:** The thefts (bikes and catalytic converters) in CTC are getting out of control. I personally think police patrol is essential but far from being enough. What is the perspective of CTC as a whole and the board about actual actions to remedy this crisis? I think a combined effort from the residents might be a good option without an increase in cost.

**A:** Current reporting shows that we have had an increase in theft, especially catalytic converters in our community. Yet, we are still considering a very low crime area according to reports given by UMPD. The Board has discussed options of private security and neighborhood watch and organized foot patrol. Privatized security is not a feasible option due to cost and with in-depth discussions with UMPD, neighborhood watch has been successful. We are reminded that it does not have to be organized watch, simply looking out your window and recognizing things that are out of the ordinary and making a call to 911 has proven successful with UMPD making arrests after a call was made from CTC. Officers have informed us that those who call from CTC give really good descriptions to help them make arrests. We have also had great discussions with UMPD about Bike thefts which is common across campus. The best thing you can do is to use a heavy-duty lock such as U-lock and write your own serial number from the frame of the bike so you can properly identify it if it is recovered. It is also to note serial numbers to any items such as computers as well. Take picture of bike or have unique marking that you can add to your police report to help in the case.

**Q:** Is there going to be a rent increase by Summer 2022? If so, how much?

**A:** There will be an increase in rent effective July 1, 2022, following the start of our Fiscal year. This increase was officially announced in the April Terrace Times. A greater explanation is [on our webpage](#) that we can try to put in the chat now. However, the rent increase will range between 2.75-3.25% depending on the unit type. The board voted on the approval of this increase after it was reviewed by the finance committee. A large contributing factor to this increase is our required 4% increase from the University Requirements. The Budget is looked at closely on what to cut so that this 4% is not reflected directly to the rent increase for the residents.

**Q:** The increase in 2022-23 rent: Last year when rents increased, we were told that rent would not increase this coming year. If the UofM is charging more to CTC, there must be different ways to find this money than charge current residents to pay for a future project that we will not reap the benefits of. Can we reduce the amount of laundry units (the laundry machines are so old they don't clean clothes effectively - and they are extremely expensive for the quality of cleaning)? Can some of the landscape management be moved onto residents? I refuse to believe that the only option to meet the UMN expectations is to charge residents more rent.



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

**A:** The CTC resident board makes the decision to approve the budget which accounts for the rent increase. The budget is drafted with our not-for-profit mission of breaking even. Such promises of not raising rent would not and could not be made as costs may go up or down, but more typically they go up in utilities and expenses. The rent will likely always be increased, as with other market rate properties, however we are still making cuts in the operating budget, so the full University increase is not reflected on the residents to the best of our ability.

**Q:** Can we receive operating costs?

**A:** Reach out to the office to schedule a meeting to discuss further. \*Join the finance committee to break down the specifics and review and recommend the budget approval.

**Q:** Is the house rent inflation balance with the salary of a graduate student?

**A:** We understand that the salary of graduate students is not going up and when the University required a 4% increase, one of our first question was, "Do you consider that Students stipend are not increased when raising the University Requirements?" Of course, it is considered, which is why we tried to minimize the rent increase to not fully reflect the 4% increase of the university requirements and utility increases.

**Q:** We have had a few questions regarding the Laundry Machine functioning and price, so I will address that as an entirety. When will the community take action to improve the washing machines? They are expensive and not working efficiently and this is unhealthy! Laundry Machines Rent increases. Laundry issue is important, and I think so many people reflect on that! When will the community take action to improve the washing machines? They are expensive and not working efficiently and this is unhealthy!

**A:** CTC was recently informed by BDS Laundry that the number of work orders submitted for the machines on property is just a fraction of what they normally see for a property our size. What this tells us is that there needs to be greater reporting when and if a machine is not performing as it may need additional maintenance. Additionally, some machines do work fine, so if BDS Laundry can know which machines are not performing well, they can investigate what might be causing the poor performance. It will be up to residents to become more vocal and submit their concerns about machines as soon as a problem arises. As a resident, please report directly to BDS and follow up with the CTC office. The current Contract with BDS ends March 2024, in which the Board will be starting to work on investigating new contracts alongside management leading up to that time. The contract in which we have, does have a 3% increase that is to reflect on the vending prices (i.e., the residents) however, management has absorbed that cost with the budget, so it doesn't directly reflect on the residents cost. Management will also continue to look in to ways to improve cleaning of machines and have continued discussions with BDS.





# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

**Q:** Residents are loud using laundry.

**A:** Quiet hours are from 10pm-7am, if it is within this hours, report the issue and discuss with your neighbors.

**Q:** Services are not good with BDS. Is there a way we can contact the company to improve the services while we are still continuing our current contract?

**A:** With continued reporting, it will eventually need to be replaced. Report to Management, so they can discuss with BDS. *\*Management will follow up with BDS on resident concerns about service.*

**Q:** Can we have a systematic way of reporting machine issues?

**A:** Report to both BDS and Management. Management does have notes on tickets reported to BDS and will follow up. As mentioned, we have very few reports to BDS to fully understand issues that are being expressed.

**Q:** There is still no place for residents to discuss the competency of ward reps.

**A:** Community voices are always encouraged by completing the resident voice form online. Many changes to the Ward Rep position are coming that will both make it easier for the Ward Representative to do a better job as well as increase their accountability to CTC Management and by extension the residents. No announcements have been made yet as some of those changes have seen some delays due to staffing changes at CTC. Please follow up with Operations Manager Patrick Broderick for more details on these changes.

**Q:** Is there a way that we could get timely updates about landscaping/green spaces projects. And more consultation about this one. No input is gotten from members for setting up new "gardens" that do not look pretty at all, require more maintenance, and where grass was way much better.

**A:** We would encourage you to reach out to the Operations Committee with any concerns about the green spaces as they are the official resident-run committee that considers all potential landscaping and community improvement projects. They have had input for years on each project considered for the CTC property. Updates are in emails and website as well.

**Q:** What is a possibility of having an indoor sports room with necessary equipment's such as but not limited to chess, carrom, table tennis etc.?



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

**A:** Indoor space is limited. What is available is table tennis but is not permanently set up. To have a space designated to only these games would mean that we would have to either remove the current playroom or music room to replace with these items. The Community Center Upstairs room is available to set up Table Tennis and other items which can be reserved for free by all residents. The Community Center Kitchen could also be available for games upon reservation. If you have requests to specifics, please email the office at [ctc@umnctc.org](mailto:ctc@umnctc.org).

**Q:** Is it OK that some neighbors have a complete messy their backyards? What actions are being taken for cleaning in the common areas of CTC, especially the cleaning of abandoned objects from past CTC residents.

**A:** No, it is a requirement that residents keep order and have proper yard spaces and plantings. Annual Yard Inspections for Spring will take place the week of May 2nd and we can share a link in the chat for more information. Maintenance will report on uncleanly Yards periodically throughout the year and we have announced inspections for residents to be prepared. If any residents feel that their neighbors are not in compliance, you can report this to the office to have a proper inspection be completed. As to abandoned items, management does initiate a tagging event annually to remove bikes, grills or other items left on property to help remove the abandoned clutter. Watch your community announcements for these details.

**Q:** We have a few questions regarding our current Pet policy and needing clarification of it.

**A:** Our pet policy can be [found on our website](#) or requested from the office if you need more clarification. I will see if we can get the link in the chart below now. Our policy does not allow dogs; however, we allow up to 2 animals including cats, rabbits, caged animals and aquariums. It has also been expressed the comparison that Como Student Community Cooperative has changed their pet policy to allow dogs and we should do the same. The CTC board did investigate opening the policy when CSCC did, but it was voted against at that time. We thank you for your feedback and we will look at adding this to an agenda item for this upcoming term to re-evaluate again.

**Q:** Why only 5 candidates for 5 representatives? What's the point of voting then?

**A:** While voting may appear unnecessary with an equal number of openings and candidates, the election process is constituted in the cooperative's bylaws to affirm our members' democratic control of the co-op.

**Q:** Are there any updates from UMN about the St. Paul construction plans and if that will affect CTC?



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

## COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

**A:** As Sofia mentioned earlier in our meeting the U of M Board of Regents passed the Master Campus Plan with CTC property being slated for redevelopment. The timeline for this is not yet set yet is likely to start in 5-10 years. The Board of Directors continue to ask pertinent questions in the monthly board meetings to our Liaison in Housing and Residential Life to ensure we are aware of plans when they come about. We don't yet know exactly how the future redevelopment will affect CTC.

**Q:** Car parking Spot reservation should be made for each household.

**A:** CTC had reserved parking spots for each household about 6 years ago, and it was voted to move to open parking as it is today. Each household is given one spot guaranteed for free. We will note your comment of wanting this looked at and reviewed again, however it is not a quick change.

**Q:** Pest Control concerns and wondering if it is possible to look for a new pest control service.

**A:** \*management will look into current contract, call backs by residents and review services for future changes.

### **Closing Remarks** – Tanner Deeds, Chair

So, thank you again for coming. Thank you everybody who's here in person, and who logged in and welcome to those new board members.

And thank you to this year's past member for your service. but rather than saying goodbye and good luck for another year. I want a different phrase to be what we leave with, and that is: let's get to work CTC! Let's get to work on the management side because you're a part of our community, too.

Let's get to work on making sure the transition is clear, and that there is an agenda and path forward for all residents, and that next board to the future board. Let's get to work on your vision for the community. Let's get to work on the things you want to change and continue and emphasize to the residents.

Let's get to work on making CTC the model for student community cooperatives. Let's make it a place everyone wants to live in so I'm going to challenge you to do 2 things when you see something beautiful, wonderful, and nice, whether it's a blooming tree or someone picking up trash: point it out to your neighbor and pointed it out to the community as a whole through the various Facebook pages.



# COMMONWEALTH TERRACE

COOPERATIVE STUDENT HOUSING

And when you see something, you want to change, be a part of the solution. Come to the Board, asked the difficult questions. Serve on committees organized programs and take action.

It's been an honor and a privilege to serve on this board, with these wonderful residents, my neighbors and friends. It's been wonderful to be a part of this co-op, so let's get to work!