

Riverview Manor: Aging at Home Proposal

The Riverview Manor Proposal continues to progress through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH). At the Ministry's request, an Environmental Assessment has been completed and the subsequent report released to the Ministry. This should be our final step in the proposal process and we look forward to being contacted by the Ministry shortly, in order to proceed with construction at the Rainy River site.

Sandra Weir, Housing Manager and Debbie Ewald, Mayor of Rainy River/Social Housing Committee Chair have met with Kristan Miclash from Northern Independent Living Services (NILS) to review the proposal and to design a needs assessment for clients and potential clients. The survey has now been developed by NILS and, with the assistance of our Aging at Home Committee members, will be distributed to determine the need for this type of supportive housing in the Rainy River area. The Committee is looking at on-site 24 hour attendant care for tenants residing in this 13 unit building on a scheduled or per request basis.

If you are aware of anyone who could benefit from this initiative, please contact Sandra Weir, Housing Manager at 274-5349 extension 230 to obtain a copy of the survey. Further information may also be obtained by calling Kristan Miclash, Executive Director, NILS at 1-888-939-0993.

Ontario Early Years

The Ministry of Education has appointed Jim Grieve, formerly the Peel District School Board Director of Education, as their new Assistant Deputy Minister to set up and lead the new Early Years Division. This is considered the first step toward a new integrated system of early learning and care services for all children 0 to 12 years of age, as set out in the recent report by Dr. Charles Pascal, Ontario's Early Years Advisor.

Public Consultations on Affordable Housing

The Province has been holding public consultation sessions on the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy across the Province. On September 30th, two of our staff met with Minister Watson to share their ideas on the best ways to deliver affordable housing. The Minister has been asked to press the federal government for a national housing strategy, to increase funding for affordable housing, introduce new planning tools, and provide supports, programs and protections which

will allow people to live with respect and dignity in their homes and thrive in their communities.

The consultation document can be found at www.ontario.ca/housingstrategy.

Employment Services: Ontario Works

The Board had an opportunity to hear from Frank Malvaso, Regional Manager, Ministry of Community & Social Services at the last Board meeting regarding employment services, partnerships for economic development and proposed changes to the Ontario Works funding formula. He had very nice things to say about our Programs and, in particular, our employment services side. Krista Ballard, Employment Support Worker, has been instrumental in finding opportunities to develop employment and provide placement for social assistance recipients. She is sitting on a variety of district and community committees to represent and promote DSSAB services. Krista is currently actively seeking subsidized employment opportunities for her clients throughout the district.

We are deeply concerned about a unit cost funding formula for Ontario Works. This particular formula has been discussed for several years and has now returned to the forefront. Mr. Malvaso reports that the Ministry is well aware of the added costs experienced in Northern Ontario and promised he will represent that position at the provincial table as they continue to explore this funding scheme. OW services are mandated within legislation for social assistance recipients and regardless of the number of clients or the obstacles they encounter - whether distances between communities, lack of transportation, weather, etc - the services still must be provided. It is certainly a challenge for our staff.

Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM)

We have been informed by the Northern Ontario School of Medicine that two second year medical students are being placed in the Town of Rainy River and have been invited to orientate them to the various services we provide at the DSSAB. We have agreed and will welcome them on October 22nd to discuss our role in the district, the local needs and how we can serve patients they may be seeing in our communities. It is a great opportunity!

Accessibility Standards

Joanne Spence, Personnel & Policy Officer has attended two sessions on the new accessibility standards. The Province has committed to creating an accessible Ontario by 2025. Under the

proposed *Accessible Built Environment Standard*, all new buildings and buildings undergoing major renovations would need to meet the proposed requirements, if passed as law. The last opportunity to comment on this proposed standard is before October 16th – you may do so by calling 1-888-482-4317.

The *Built Environment Standard* is only one of five standards being introduced via regulation to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Thus far, a *Customer Service Standard* and *Transportation Standard* have been passed. Various provincial organizations, including the Ontario Non Profit Housing Association and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association have been contacting members (we are members of both associations) to gather input into the proposed *Information & Communications Standard* and the *Employment Accessibility Standard* as well.

As part of the new standards, the DSSAB will require a policy on accessibility standards for customer service. The management team has assisted Joanne in preparing a policy for the Board's review. In addition, Joanne will be presenting mandatory training to the board before year end, in order to comply with the new customer service standards. There is much work to be completed on accessibility in the months and years ahead. Unfortunately, much of it may come with a large price tag so provincial lobbying has begun.

Human Resources

The following Human Resource activity has taken place since last reported:

Name	Title	Status	Start/Effective Date
Michelle Shute	Assistant Housing Manager	Replacement PFT: internal	05 October/09
Dori Barker	Finance Clerk	Replace preg/parent leave	19 October/09
Kim Tarrant	Tenant Liaison Officer	Replacement PFT: internal	19 October/09

Please call me at 274-5349 extension 238, if you have any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,
/d Dittaro