

## **President's Report**

2017 Annual General Meeting

November 4, 2017

2017 has been a momentous year for Old Grace Housing Co-op. This report provides an overview of some of the highlights.

Over the past year, the Board of Directors focussed its efforts on

- monitoring construction of the building,
- monitoring expenditures and securing additional resources,
- supporting the inclusion of households with very low incomes in our co-operative community,
- ensuring development of essential policies,
- preparing for building occupancy,
- communicating with members and neighbourhood residents, and
- planning for Phase II.

The Board met 11 times over the past year, with much of the work being carried out by committee volunteers. Board members are typically involved with one or more committees as well.

Active committees included the Governance Committee, Membership Committee, Marketing & Communications Committee, Finance and Fundraising Committee, Site Committee and Amenities and Common Areas Committee. Their reports have been provided separately.

### **Construction**

The Board-appointed Building Committee monitors construction progress and ensures co-op interests are represented throughout construction. The committee is comprised of 3 members of the OGHC Executive (Sandra Hardy, Victor Dobchuk and Laura Sevenhuysen), plus Karl Falk and Harry Haid of DSI Tandem Co-op Resources. The Building Committee attended 25 site meetings during the year and followed up on numerous items between meetings.

Construction is approximately 75% complete with interim occupancy projected for late December 2017, and full occupancy for March 2018. Architects, engineers and inspectors provide frequent progress reports.

The project is maintaining its focus on the co-op's environmental principles: continuing to target LEED Gold, deploying the first of 2 Peg City Car Co-op vehicles, and constructing a tower to attract the endangered Chimney Swifts previously living on the site.

### **Financial and In-kind Resources**

The Co-op has applied for numerous grants, and was successful in receiving funding for the wheelchair lift, perimeter landscaping, energy modelling, energy

efficiencies and a co-operative Internet. Free and/or very inexpensive used furnishings have been secured for most of the common areas. The contractor and architects found some cost savings, and some of the project contingency budget has been drawn down to pay for added-back items. A back-up loan has been negotiated with the Community Forward Fund, though none of the funds have been required as yet.

Contract expenditures are supported by receipts and certifications, and monitored by the Quantity Surveyor. To date MHRC and ACU loan funds have been used to cover construction costs. Very soon, the construction will reach “lock-up” stage and the Member Shares in escrow can be used to pay the construction bills.

### **Supporting Lower-income Households**

A key success of the Co-op this year was establishing partnerships with Mennonite Central Committee, All Saints Anglican Church and SEED Winnipeg that will ensure continuity of support for several low-income households. OGHG volunteers continue to work toward finding additional partnerships to extend this security to all 12 of the households who will receive provincial rent supplement assistance.

### **Preparing for Occupancy**

Finalizing the first year operating budget is well underway. Locking in the 66-month mortgage on September 1, 2017 gave predictability about debt repayment costs. The allowable monthly occupancy costs for 2018 have now been provided by the Province of Manitoba, and the co-op has a better sense of property taxes and utility costs. Occupancy Agreements are nearing their final form.

The Board has signed an agreement with DSI Tandem to act as Building Manager in the critical first year of operation. Insurance and equipment-monitoring contracts are being put into place, and a Members’ Handbook is being developed.

Co-op volunteers are pursuing a variety of options to provide lower-cost Internet services to suites and to common areas.

### **Communications**

Five membership meetings were held in the past year, and members received frequent updates through emails and monthly newsletters. Any complaints from neighbourhood residents (fortunately very few) were responded to promptly, and several leaflets were delivered throughout the neighbourhood providing updates.

The website is updated nearly daily and provides a wealth of information about the co-op.

## **Phase II**

Discussions have begun with the Province and Assiniboine Credit Union about Phase II. Design and costing processes are well underway with the expectation that construction will begin in February 2018 and conclude in October.

## **Thank you**

Four new members joined the Board at the 2016 AGM – Denis Bracken, Gerard Bzdel, Randa Stewart and Carlos Sosa. They have brought increased energy and enthusiasm to Board deliberations.

Three members are leaving the Board with the 2017 AGM. The co-op has benefitted greatly from the contributions of Laura Rempel, Denis Bracken and founding member Sue Hudson. They will be dearly missed.

Three continuing Board members –Laura Sevenhuysen, Gord Clark and founder Victor Dobchuk, – have been involved since the earliest days. Their skills and efforts have played a significant role in bringing the co-op to where it is today and will ensure we successfully reach our finish line.

Special thanks go to our long-time partners – DSI Tandem Co-operative Resources. They recently received the 2017 Cooperative Achievement Award from the Manitoba Cooperative Association - a fitting recognition of their contribution to the co-op and non-profit housing sector. We would not be where we are today without them.

Looking forward, 2018 promises to be an eventful year as well. By the next AGM, both buildings should be complete and we'll be deeply engaged in the work (and joy) of building and living in our new co-operative community.

As President, I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to all who have contributed to our success to date – Board members past and present; committee chairs and members; consultants and advisors; and our many co-op members and supporters.