

SPECTRUM

serving the housing spectrum from emergency housing to home owners

2011 Issue

The Director's Desk	2	A Needs Assessment on Homelessness Issues.	6
Brantford Hoarding Coalition Committee	3	New Housing Staff	7
Celebrating a Decade of Growth	4	Social Housing Renovation & Retrofit Program	8



The new development on Alfred Street opened in 2011 with a total of 34 units. Photo courtesy of CMHC.

From the Director's Desk

By Deborah Filice



When I came to the Brant/Brantford in early 2010, I knew our continued success was dependent upon hearing resident, community and partner opportunities, concerns and issues, and then ensuring that we focus our time and resources where most needed.

We are “dedicated to providing a range of housing needs and supports with a focus on dignity, pride in community and self-sufficiency.” This is the Mission Statement of the Housing Department and a strong reminder in all our efforts, of our purpose and duty in providing the best possible service to you, our residents and the community.

In my role as the Director of Housing, I am pleased to take a few minutes to make you aware of our significant effort underway in the Housing Department. This effort spans across the housing continuum from identifying homelessness issues, building on partnerships, improving the housing communities, supporting new affordable housing developments and identifying opportunities for resident and community engagement. I think you will find this edition of the Spectrum will describe our efforts in each of these areas.

When I came to the Brant/Brantford in early 2010, I knew our continued success was dependent upon hearing resident, community and partner opportunities, concerns and issues, and then ensuring that we focus our time and resources where most needed. In this regard, we will be issuing a tenant satisfaction survey later this year and we hope that residents will take the time to complete the survey and provide comment. It is our hope that this survey will permit us to celebrate our collective success while providing you another venue to explain how we can

meet your expectations.

We continue to build on our partnerships with local colleges and universities, bringing in many students throughout the year to support a number of housing and resident initiatives. Thank you for welcoming the students into the communities, providing opportunities for learning and allowing students to experience a housing career. A note of thanks to the clerical and maintenance summer students as well, who have been busy assisting staff and completing maintenance work throughout the housing communities.

We embrace the opportunities to partner with residents and celebrate progress in building safe and strong neighbourhoods. An example of one initiative underway is the Brant & Lorne Towers Safe and Healthy Community Initiative. Residents are working together with staff to promote tenant education, improve safety and demonstrate how volunteerism and caring residents can make a difference. We know that a number of other tenant groups are making a difference in their communities as well, whether through community gardens, social clubs, promoting resident education or helping us to build capacity for community and resident engagement. Please know that all your positive efforts are much appreciated.

I am very proud of our role and effort in providing you a place to call home and on behalf of all staff, wish you good health and an enjoyable summer. I look forward to meeting you over the coming months and years.

Brantford Hoarding Coalition Committee

By Tom Hodgson

A Hoarding Coalition Committee has been meeting to promote a safe, healthy living environment for the residents of Brantford and Brant County and prevent hoarding behaviors from creating hazards for themselves and others. The committee was established after participants attended a full-day session on hoarding presented by Elaine Birchall. Ms. Birchall is one of the few experts on hoarding behaviour in North America and was instrumental in developing the Ottawa Community Response to Hoarding Coalition.

The coalition addresses the compulsive behavior of hoarding by providing the necessary tools, intervention, resources, education and community coordinated response to deal with the disorder. They

believe the best way to deal with a hoarding case is through a collaborate effort of local services. The committee is developing a protocol to ensure that cases are referred to the appropriate departments/agencies for assessment, intervention, services and support. They meet four times per year and on an emergency basis to discuss cases, address concerns and develop a plan of action.

If you would like more information about the hoarding coalition or are interested in joining the committee please contact Tom Hodgson, Social Housing Manager at 519-759-3330 Ext. 6307.



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Solar Panels Provide Revenue

By Tom Hodgson

Four solar panel projects at Social Housing Sites could generate \$1.6 million during the next 20 years. Solar panels will be installed on the Beckett Building on Bain Street and Silver Pines townhouse complex on Dunsdon Street. In the County, panels will be installed on Trillium Way in Paris and South Dumfries in St. George.

The Province is paying the cost of installing the panels, \$673,000, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and

Housings' renewable energy initiative.

If the housing providers are successful in their application to the Ontario Power Authority Feed in Tariff program they would generate \$83,000 per year.

Over the 20 year term of the agreement they would generate \$1.6 million in revenue to help offset operating costs.



This program could generate \$83,000 per year.

Celebrating a Decade of Growth

By Deb Ballak



Brantford Housing Department and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation co-hosted a week of activities celebrating the importance of safe affordable housing to every member of our community.

Building Homes... Building Community... Building Our Future!

National Housing Week November 2010; Brantford Housing Department and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation co-hosted a week of activities celebrating the importance of safe affordable housing to every member of our community.

You may have heard us on the radio or read the news articles. One of them was about how a

Brantford family built a “garden suite” so that their 18 year old dually diagnosed son could live independently. They were able to pursue this creative housing option through the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and delivered by the City Housing Department.

A free Home Maintenance Seminar was presented to homeowners to provide sound knowledge, science, and advice about what to look for, season by season, to ensure your biggest capital investment is protected.

About 100 people gathered for a day-long Housing Forum to hear a number of professional presenters talk about Community-University partnerships and how housing communities can benefit; innovative redevelopment of housing communities and

community engagement; and sustainable building design -- building with straw bales!

Over lunch several developers were formally recognized for their creation of over 352 new units of affordable rental housing in the City of Brantford and the County of Brant. This is a very impressive accomplishment! After an overview of the Affordable Housing Strategy (see below) forum participants boarded the bus for a tour of the affordable housing projects.

Friday concluded the Housing Week celebrations with a bundled Grand Opening/Start of Construction ceremony for six new affordable housing projects! These developments represent 199 units of brand new affordable housing for our residents. Forty-eight of these units are modified for persons with physical disabilities.

Brantford’s Housing Department works with many organizations, faith groups, and the private sector to provide a variety of programs and types of housing that assist our neighbours who find themselves without a home, or need subsidized or low market rental accommodation, and moderate income individuals and families who have been helped to purchase their very own home through our interest free downpayment assistance program!

So where do we go from here? The Brant-Brantford Affordable Housing Strategy was approved in 2010. This

document provides 53 recommendations that were the result of extensive community consultation and research. These recommendations will guide the Housing Department and City Council in its decision making over the next 5 years in the following areas.



ENSURING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

- a diverse housing supply to meet the full range of housing needs of current and future residents;
- more accessible units;
- more supportive housing for seniors, those with mental illness and addictions, physical disabilities and developmental disabilities;
- more affordable housing in all communities;
- making sure new housing responds to the needs of our residents;
- protecting and enhancing the supply of rental housing, and
- a diverse housing supply to meet the full range of housing needs of current and future residents

ENHANCING SUPPORT SERVICES

- there is a strong demand for sup-

port services to ensure the long term success for those transitioning into and maintaining permanent housing

CREATING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- for the purpose of increasing public awareness of housing issues all along the housing continuum (homelessness to stable housing) in Brant-Brantford

If you are interested in leaning more about the Affordable Housing Strategy, the Housing Demand and Supply Analysis or the Resource Document go to www.brantford.ca or contact The Housing Development Coordinator at (519) 759-3330, ext 6292.

The Brant-Brantford Affordable Housing Strategy was approved in 2010. This document provides 53 recommendations that were the result of extensive community consultation and research.

A Needs Assessment on Homelessness Issues

By Sherry Haines

We completed 45 meetings/focus groups and interviewed more than 440 community members. Their feedback on what is needed in our community is highlighted in the report.

The Federal Government announced late last year that it will be providing 3 more years of funding (from April 2011 to March 2014) to address homelessness and related issues in Brantford.

Before the Federal Government can provide the money to the Municipality, we were required to complete a Community Needs Assessment on Homelessness Issues. This needs assessment document identifies the top seven (7) priorities in the City related to homelessness issues.

So how did we get there? Housing staff and students from Mohawk and Sheridan Colleges started work in early January 2011 to identify a very broad range of agencies/services and

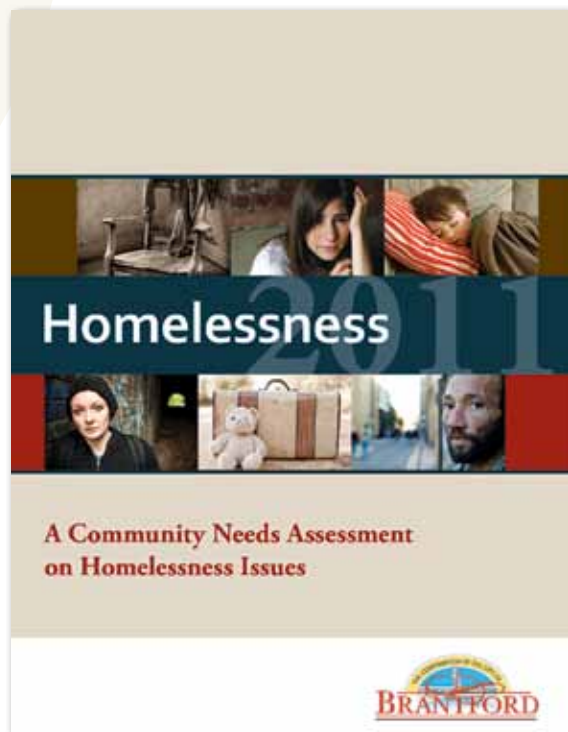
service user groups who could help us by participating in focus groups and individual interviews.

We completed 45 meetings/focus groups and interviewed more than 440 community members. Their feedback on what is needed in our community is highlighted in the report. Priorities were identified based on recurring themes heard in these interviews.

This report was sent to City Council for approval in May and then was sent to the Federal government for their approval as well. Once approval from the Federal Government is received, we will be ready to ask local agencies/partnerships for proposals that address any of the priorities listed in the Community Needs Assessment on Homelessness Issues. Funding will flow shortly after the successful proponents are chosen.

We thank all of the community members who have helped provide us with vital information in this process. Their open willingness to share their personal and professional experiences has provided a solid view of what is needed in our community.

You can read the Community Needs Assessment on Homelessness Issues 2011 on the City of Brantford website. Simply visit brantford.ca and click on quick links to direct you to the Homelessness site.



New Housing Staff

By Terry Matheson

The Housing Department has indeed been going through many changes over the past year or so; one of the most significant being that of staff changes.

Ellen Gerow comes to us with more than 10 years experience in Property Management and currently manages the portfolio formerly managed by Karen Pearson. Ellen has a Registered Condominium Manager Honours Certificate and brings to this position her experience from previous work in area & store management. Ellen has been learning the Housing 'ropes' and is making her niche in our department. She is a welcome addition to the Housing team and is looking forward to meeting all her tenants!!

For those of you who haven't met our



Ellen Gerow

new Housing Director, you might be surprised to hear she's on her second office location and second job title since she first walked through the Housing office doors 12 months ago. Deborah Filice first came to us as our Housing Manager in February 2010, when Tom Lockyer retired, then in October when Rick Farrell left, she moved down the hall and to the right to the Housing Director's position! Deborah brings

with her a background in Social Services Housing that spans more than 24 years. She literally began 'on the front lines' as an admin assistant, then a Property Manager and then Manager of Operations with CityHousing Hamilton. Earlier this year, she completed her BA studies at McMaster University, Gerontology studies, and still finds time to teach and volunteer on the Advisory Board at Humber College, and is President of the Institute of Housing Management and Board Member of The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. Deborah hit the Housing ground running and hasn't stop since she opened the door!

The newest member of our team is Mira Fearnside who will be starting as our new Manager of Municipal Housing on June 27. Mira comes to this position with an extensive housing background spanning 31 years. In her last position as Manager Housing Programs, Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) she has been responsible for managing the relationship between NRH and 67 non-profit social housing providers, ensuring compliance with legislative requirements, developing local policies and best practices. Prior to this role, Mira was employed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in various positions, including Manager, Finance & Administration and Housing Administrator. We look forward to Mira bringing her extensive social housing and finance background to the Housing Department.



Deborah Filice

Welcome to the new members of the Housing Department: Ellen, Mira, and Deborah.

Social Housing Renovation & Retrofit Program

By Anne Derosse

The Housing Department received an allocation of \$4.7 million dollars, which was distributed amongst 12 housing providers.

In March 2009, the Federal and Provincial governments announced that \$704 million dollars would be committed to repair social housing units and make them more energy efficient under the Social Housing Renovation and Retrofit Program (SHRRP). The capital work that was undertaken had to fit within these priorities: health and safety, reducing operating costs, energy efficiency, and increasing accessibility. In our service area of Brantford and Brant County, the Housing Department received an allocation of \$4.7 million dollars, which was distributed amongst 12 housing providers.

As of March 4th, 2011, all of those funds were allocated and enabled housing providers within the City and

the County to complete an extensive list of property upgrades. Here is a snapshot of the types of work completed in our social housing sites:

Furnace replacements, roof replacements, plumbing replacements, foundation and brick repair work, window replacement/window caulking, door replacements, electrical panel repairs and replacement, fridge and stove replacement, replacing lighting with more energy efficient fixtures, and accessible doors and accessibility improvements.

Housing Providers were thrilled to be able to spend this money on their housing portfolios, which then in turn has enhanced the quality of life for tenants living in these units and helped to reduce operating costs.

Winter Term Students

By Angie Vehrs

From L to R:
Manuel Silva, Andrea Price, Kyle Harber, Chantal Watson, Lisa MacKay

Absent:
Gerald Waite



Thanks to our small army of students

Over the winter term the Housing Department provided placement opportunities for students from Fanshawe College and Mohawk College. These students were instrumental in moving forward many housing initiatives and projects. Good luck in all of your future endeavours. You all have a great future ahead of you!