

## **GABRIOLA HOUSING SOCIETY – BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT FOR 2020**

### **PRESENTED AT THE JUNE 22, 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Gabriola Housing Society (GHS) was incorporated as a non-profit society in January 2013 and then remained inactive for a few years. In 2016, the members re-organized the Society and began addressing affordable housing for people with low to modest incomes on Gabriola Island. As stated in the Constitution, the GHS purpose is to “relieve poverty by supporting and/or developing and/or operating housing projects that provide housing to people with low to modest incomes on Gabriola Island”.

By December 2019, GHS had become a registered charity, received a donation of three properties on Paisley Place, clarified a Vision Statement of “Affordable, comfortable, secure rental housing for Gabriolans of all ages who have low to modest incomes”, and begun designing an affordable rental housing project of 24 homes (studio, 1-BR, 2-BR, 3-BR; average size 900 square feet), in two clusters of triplexes on approximately two acres on the east and north sides of Paisley Place.

#### **BOARD ACTIVITIES IN 2020**

In 2020, it was time for the next two important steps towards the goal of opening the housing in 2023: achieving approval from the Local Trust Committee to rezone two properties for multi-dwelling affordable rental housing applying for major government funding via the BC Housing Community Housing Fund.

#### **Approval from the Gabriola Local Trust Committee (LTC) to rezone the north and east properties on Paisley Place for multi-dwelling affordable rental housing**

In January 2020, the Board submitted its rezoning application to the LTC, with the necessary assessments and reports to support. In April the initial staff report was presented to the LTC and in June the LTC approved 1st Reading (of four) of the bylaws to amend the Official Community Plan (OCP) policies and the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) regulations.

In July, requests were sent to several organizations and First Nations for feedback on the rezoning application. As well during the summer, the Board began working on the Housing Agreement (HA) bylaw: an agreement between GHS and the LTC that contains detailed regulations for affordable rental housing on the properties.

The LTC held a Community Information Meeting in July, and in October the LTC approved 2nd Reading of bylaws (BL) 306(OCP) and 307(LUB). The LTC also decided that final adoption (4th Reading) would wait until the provincial Water Licence was received and the Housing Agreement bylaw was completed.

In November, the LTC approved 1st Reading of BL 308(HA), and in December, the LTC held a second Community Information Meeting regarding all three bylaws. Also in December, GHS received the almost-final version of the Water Licence from the provincial government, certifying ample well-water supply.

(In early January 2021, the LTC held the mandatory Public Hearing for the bylaws, and then gave 3rd Reading to BL 306(OCP) and BL 307(LUB). The Executive Committee of the Islands Trust Council then approved both bylaws.)

### **Application for major government funding via the BC Housing Community Housing Fund**

The Community Housing Fund (CHF) is part of the provincial government's ten-year plan to build affordable housing across the province. The focus households are families, seniors, and people with disabilities. The CHF provides large construction grants and long-term subsidies for mortgage payments. The rents are controlled: 70% of households pay affordable (below-market) rents and 30% of households pay average market (not open market) rents.

The CHF began in 2018, with the second call for projects in May 2020. For this second call, only "shovel-ready" projects could apply in September; others, including GHS, applied at the January 2021 closing date.

Throughout the year, the Board worked on developing the plans for the Paisley Place housing project, to be ready for application in January 2021. Many professionals were hired, including an architect, landscape architect, construction manager, water supply and wastewater specialists, and various engineers.

(In mid-January 2021 the Board submitted the GHS application for the Paisley Place project to BC Housing for the Community Housing Fund.)

In closing the Board, with strong support from the community, celebrated a productive and successful 2020 and entered 2021 with high hopes for the proposed Paisley Place housing project!

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Directors, Gabriola Housing Society, December 31, 2020

Jenni Gehlbach, Margy Gilmour, Nancy Hetherington Peirce, Barry Loescher, Dave Neads, Jim Ramsay