

Gabriola Housing Society

Board of Directors' Report for 2021

Highlights 2018-2020

2018

- GHS held a community-wide Affordable Housing Forum.
- The *"Housing Needs Assessment for the Northern Region of the Islands Trust"* (2018) stated that the greatest housing need was affordable rental housing for people with low to moderate incomes.
- GHS began planning to build an affordable rental housing project near the village.

2019

- GHS received federal registration as a charity.
- Emcon Services donated to GHS an eight-acre property (3 lots) on Paisley Place.
- GHS contracted a Development Consultant to manage the design and construction work, and a few contractors began work on the project design; on-site wells were tested.
- GHS created a plan for "Paisley Place": *"Affordable, comfortable, secure rental housing for Gabriolans of all ages who have low to moderate incomes"*.
 - 24 homes including studio, 1-BR, 2-BR, & 3-BR
 - average size 900 square feet
 - to be built in 2 clusters of 4 triplexes.

2020

- In January GHS submitted a rezoning application to the Local Trust Committee (LTC) for the two lots on the north and east sides of Paisley Place.
- In July local First Nations and other interested groups were notified.
- By December the LTC had approved:
 - Second Reading (of four) for the two bylaws to amend the Official Community Plan (OCP) & the Land Use Bylaw (LUB)
 - First Reading for the Housing Agreement bylaw (*an agreement between GHS and the Trustees regarding regulations for the Paisley Place project*)
- GHS applied for the required Provincial Water Licence.
- GHS contracted professionals to continue the design work, including an architect, construction manager, engineers, water supply and wastewater specialists, and landscape architect, all in preparation for our application to BC Housing in January 2021 for major government funding.

Board activities in 2021

1. January to May '21—continuation of the rezoning process

- January: The LTC held the required Public Hearing for the three proposed bylaws, after which they approved Third Reading for the OCP and LUB amendment bylaws. These were subsequently approved by the Islands Trust Executive Committee, and then the OPC bylaw received the required provincial approval in May.
- March: The Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) asked for additional time to review the GHS rezoning application and proposed bylaws. In response the LTC decided that they would not proceed with further readings of the Housing Agreement Bylaw until comments were received from SFN.
- May: Provincial Water licence issued to GHS
- May: SFN staff emailed GHS with three comments: stating that SFN does not oppose the Paisley Place housing project; requesting that the Housing Agreement include a priority allocation of 25% of the 24 homes for SFN members; and requesting a seat on the Gabriola Housing Society's Board of Directors.

2. June to December '21—building SFN relations:

In June, the Board asked SFN for a meeting to begin developing a relationship and to discuss their priority allocation request.

- In September, SFN responded that a meeting couldn't happen until after the February 2022 installation of the new Chief and Council.
- The Board replied, stating our intent to present the current proposed Housing Agreement to an LTC meeting in early 2022 for Second Reading, and also stating *"We are committed to working with you when your availability allows, to find an appropriate resolution to prioritizing rental units for SFN members, which can be included as a future amendment in the Housing Agreement (letter to SFN, October 29, 2021).*
- There was no further communication from SFN by the end of 2021.
- *Note: It was decided that the SFN request for a seat on the GHS Board would be discussed when the Board could meet with SFN, and subsequently with GHS members.*

3. Application for major government funding—disappointed, but not deterred!

BC Housing's Community Housing Fund (CHF) is part of the provincial government's ten-year plan (2018-2028) to build affordable housing across the province. The CHF provides large construction grants and long-term subsidies for mortgage payments. The rents are below-market:

- 70% of households pay affordable rents (maximum 30% of household income)
- 30% of households pay average market (not open market) rents.

In January 2021, GHS applied for project funding from BC CHF's second call, and in June the Board was very disappointed to learn that we were *not* chosen for funding. In their debriefing meeting, BC Housing told GHS that although we had a strong application, they had received applications for 3,000 homes while being able to fund only 600. BC Housing says the next call for applications will likely happen in mid-2023.

4. Continuing to develop the Paisley Place project:

The Board decided in June, with member support at the June 22 AGM, to re-apply at the next round of funding from BC Housing. Consequently, from June to December the various contractors proceeded in their design work for the homes, water supply, wastewater system, electrical plan and landscaping.

5. Appreciation for financial support from the Gabriola community

The Board deeply appreciates the ongoing donations from Gabriolans! This money has helped significantly to finance the development of the Paisley Place housing project over the past three years. From 2019 to 2021 the community donated our land and almost \$214,000, and we are very grateful to each of these donors.

6. A Strategic Plan for the Society

In October, the Board decided it was time to create a first Strategic Plan for the Society that would articulate a broad vision, guiding values, and some goals for the next few years in addition to the Paisley Place affordable housing project. We were pleased to contract Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley to facilitate this process, with the work to happen in the first half of 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Directors, Gabriola Housing Society, December 31, 2021

Jenni Gehlbach, Nancy Hetherington Peirce, Jennefer Laidley, Barry Loescher, Jim Ramsay, Kristina Wray