

Affordable housing for seniors comes to forefront

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The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board recently reviewed the Social Housing Portfolio to determine the current resident and applicant make up of the apartment complexes in the area to set criteria for consideration of conversion of eligible buildings to 'senior's only' environment.

They acknowledged that seniors have very specific and categorically different needs, and do not always socially thrive in an integrated residential setting. Converting to senior-only housing would allow seniors to age in a place and assist local health supportive services to better provide for residents in need of these services in one location.

Over the past years, affordable seniors housing needs have been in high demand seeing wait lists increasing as years pass.

Donno Moroso, Integrated Social Services director, explained to the MSDS board that after analysing the current building demographics and waiting lists to determine the 'senior make-up' on hand within the DSB it would be best to start a 'phase-in' approach to making one of the two building in Espanola as a 'seniors-only' facility. The phased-in approach would see new vacancies being filled with the new mandate until full senior capacity is achieved.

Of the two buildings in Espanola, there is the Rainbow Apartments located at 70 Barber Street, which currently has 29 one bedroom units with eight seniors currently occupying them. There is also the Millsite Apartments located at 60 Barber Street, which has 10 one-bedroom units with five units occupied by seniors. Currently, in the Espanola area there are 67 applicants on the waiting list and 19 of who are seniors.

It was noted to ensure the building falls within the 'seniors only' guidelines that residents 65 or older will be eligible to apply for the units. Also in Espanola, to ensure the units meet the criteria and stay at full capacity they will be looking to choose the 70 Barber Street location.

These changes would start to as of Oct. 1 of this year.

It was stressed that the MSDSB will not be evicting any tenants from any of their buildings and it will be done only as units become available.