

Property transferred to town for proposed seniors' housing unit

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GORE BAY—The concept of a new seniors' housing facility being developed in the town of Gore Bay has taken another step forward with the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) having agreed to transfer a piece of property in the town to the municipality.

DSB CAO Fern Dominelli confirmed that the board (in a recent committee of the whole meeting) unanimously agreed to the transfer of the property.

Ron Lane, mayor of the Town of Gore Bay, informed council at a meeting last week, "Annette Clarke (clerk) has been doing a lot of work on this, and (councillor) Lou (Addison) is a member of the DSB. The full board has approved the transfer of property to the town. The board has approved this, and the seniors' housing committee will be holding a meeting in the near future to discuss the financial details."

"We are pretty excited that everything has gone forward," said Maxine McVey, a spokesperson for the local group spearheading this project, on Tuesday.

Mr. Lane told the Recorder after the council meeting, "the DSB agreed to the transfer of the property to the town with certain conditions put on it, such as having to pay all the legal and survey costs for the work on the property, which will have to be done for the transfer to take place and for the construction of the seniors' housing."

"The property has to be used for the purpose of seniors' housing," said Mr. Lane. "Because we are taking title, the seniors' group has to come up with a survey of the property and legal papers being registered."

"We're really excited and have now applied for incorporation, having signed the papers to do this today," Ms. McVey told the Recorder on Tuesday. "We want to get a charitable number, as we will be doing a lot of fundraising, and we are definitely looking for community support in this project."

"The name the committee has selected for the site is the Bickell's Creek Complex," said Ms. McVey, who added, "We will be paying for the survey work to be carried out on the property, legal fees and environmental assessment that also needs to be carried out. We had originally agreed to raise the funds to pay for these expenses."

As reported in the July 6, 2012 edition of the Recorder, the DSB had received an appraisal on a piece of Gore Bay property it owns, prior to considering and granting approval (at its last meeting) to transfer the land, and considering a proposal from the local group for developing seniors citizens housing in the town.

The proposed site for the 20-unit building is located on the south extension of the Bayside property on Water Street. It was chosen as the preferred site for the housing unit, compared to two other parcels of land the committee had been looking at, with one of the reasons being it is closer to the downtown area.

"The next step is to have the survey done, to be taken care of by the committee," continued Mr. Lane. "So we have only gone through the preliminary step for the transfer of the land being approved by the DSB board. Now the committee will move ahead with the survey and other work that needs to be done, and then have a plan in place to move ahead when funding is available (through government sources) for a project like this. But now that the transfer has been given the go ahead we will hold the land indefinitely until the seniors' group is ready and have the finances in place to have construction done."

"We want to get a sign up at the proposed site with the name Bickell's Creek Complex on it," said Ms. McVey. "We will get the property survey done, environmental assessment carried out and have everything in place, and planned, so when money is available we have a complete plan and are ready to go," continued Ms. McVey. "Right now there is no funding available from governments for supportive assisted housing. But in time we hope this funding will be available, and we will be ready with a plan to apply for funding."

"We're quite happy with everything that has taken place so far," she added, "and the next piece of the project will be to fundraise and get the surveying and other necessary work done to go ahead," added Ms. McVey.