

DSB, Aboriginal Housing reach tentative deal on Woods Lane Apartments

By **Tom Sasvari** - November 15, 2019



ESPANOLA – A tentative agreement has been reached by the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) and Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS) for the transfer and sale of property owned by DSB in Gore Bay, along with the 10-unit Woods Lane apartment social housing property.

“At our previous board meeting the board passed a motion allowing for negotiations to take place for the transfer and sale of the vacant land located on Water Street in Gore Bay, along with the 10-unit Woods Lane apartment social housing property, to the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services,” said Fern Dominelli, CAO of the DSB, late last week.

Mr. Dominelli said with negotiations complete, “we have an agreement in place, that they (OAHS) will be considering for ratification on November 13 and our board will consider at our meeting November 28.”

As was reported in last week’s edition of the Recorder, Gore Bay Mayor Dan Osborne said he had researched this and (if the negotiations are positive) it will be a benefit to the town. He said, OAHS’ priority is to take First Nations persons first, but will take non-First Nations persons in terms of rentals of housing spaces. They already own one (housing unit) in the town on Dennis Street.

After a discussion at an in-camera meeting recently, the DSB authorized the CAO to negotiate the transfer and sale of the vacant lot on Water Street in Gore Bay and the 10-unit social housing property on 66 Meredith Street to OAHS per the terms discussed during the board’s in-camera session, Mr. Dominelli told the Recorder.

Mr. Dominelli noted that the OAHS is not exempt from paying property taxes on the building, the same as DSB does. “I think it (the potential sale) will be very positive for the Town of Gore Bay.” He told the Recorder the four residents still living in the Woods Lane Apartment buildings won’t be affected by this move and will be able to stay where they are.

Mayor Osborne added that there is the potential that, if the sale takes place, OAHS could build on the vacant property near the Bayside apartment buildings. “We need seniors’ housing and/or affordable housing, so this would be positive,” he said.

As was reported by the Recorder this past May, the DSB had agreed to sell Wood’s Lane Apartments due to the costs involved in maintaining the building. The projected cost of maintaining the Woods’

Lane units was expected to increase significantly to \$42.39 per square foot by 2023 from \$1.15 in 2017. "It is the most expensive building for us to maintain," Mr. Dominelli told the Recorder.
