

MEMORANDUM

To: Directors of Housing York Inc. Board

From: Kathy Milsom
General Manager

Date: September 17, 2020

Re: Housing York Inc. Activity Update

Tenant and resident wellness checks

Resident wellness checks continued to be conducted at several Housing York Inc. (HYI) locations, including Armitage Gardens and Fairy Lake, both in the Town of Newmarket, Keswick Gardens in the Town of Georgina, Orchard Heights in the Town of Aurora and Springbrook Gardens and Rosetown, both in the City of Richmond Hill. Of the 334 calls placed, team members spoke with 230 HYI tenants. 73% of callers were very positive and pleased to hear from team members. Some residents received referrals to food security programs such as Local Food Banks, York Region Food Network and the Food Bank of York Region, as well as referrals to financial services, including family support workers, income tax programs, and mental health services such as the Canadian Mental Health Association and Client Intervention and Support Services program.

To support its residents, HYI will continue with the wellness check program for the time being.

Housing York Inc. continues to work with residents in arrears

As reported at the [September 2](#) Board meeting, HYI continues to encourage residents in arrears to establish manageable payment plans. HYI's normal tenancy management processes were suspended in March in response to COVID-19. In June HYI began a partial resumption of Landlord and Tenant Board processes, sending N4-Notices to End Tenancy Early For Non-Payment of Rent (Form N4) to residents who did not respond to HYI's efforts to contact them to

discuss payment options and to those who did not make reasonable efforts to repay their arrears.

Where the issue persists following the issuance of the Form N4, HYI has begun applying to the Landlord and Tenant Board to request hearing dates. Residents are notified of the hearing date application. These processes encourage most residents to work with HYI to preserve their tenancies. As of the end of August, arrears had decreased slightly to \$173,678, down from a high of \$181,224, in July. The number of households in arrears increased slightly from 180 in July to 186 in August.

Woodbridge Lane, in the City of Vaughan, is continuing the rent up process

As of August 31, 2020, Woodbridge Lane was 87% leased. Market units are sold out, with 22 subsidized units in progress. Of these, two are being leased for a second time as the original residents passed away. Most of the remaining subsidized apartments are modified for people with physical disabilities. Leasing these specialized units can take some time, as the number of units required under the Ontario Building Code exceeds the number of eligible households on the Region's subsidized housing wait list. Once the wait list is exhausted, HYI works with community agencies that provide support services to lease the units to households who need modified units. Leasing is progressing and rental revenues needed to sustain the building will be achieved over the long term.

Touchless activation door opener upgrades

The buttons that residents and their guests push to open automatic doors are generally referred to as push plates. Since the start of COVID-19, damage to these push plates has been increasing as a result of people using their knees, feet or hard objects to activate the door.

For this reason, and with the health and safety of our residents in mind, HYI is piloting touchless openers that activate when a hand is waved in front to the panel on selected high traffic entrances to assess performance and durability. HYI is also replacing damaged push plates with these openers. The initial resident feedback on the new technology has been positive. Touchless openers are comparable in price to traditional push plates, approximately \$700 per opener exclusive of installation costs. The project is being managed within the existing budget.

360° kids program, YOUTHrive – providing back to school supplies at Mulock Village and Brayfield Manors, both in the Town of Newmarket

YOUTHrive, an after-school program delivered by 360°kids and funded through the Social Services Branch of the Region, has adapted to continue supporting Brayfield Manors and Mulock Village during COVID-19. Recognizing the importance of staying connected with residents, the program has supported families with food, activity packages, virtual programming for children and youth and, most recently, school supplies.

On Friday September 4, 360°kids provided items such as backpacks, pencil cases, paper, binders, hand sanitizer, school safe snacks and more. Outdoor appointments were scheduled to support physical distancing.

The feedback HYI received is that parents appreciated the support and were glad to see the program team members in the community again. At Mulock Village, six families who previously connected with the program and one new family received supplies. At Brayfield Manors, nine families who previously connected with the program and six new families received school supplies. The school supplies made preparing and transitioning children back to school easier for these families and eased some of the financial burden during these difficult times.

Housing development updates

Unionville Seniors Affordable Housing Development, City of Markham – ongoing construction work

Martinway, the general contractor for this project, continues to progress with work on the underground parking area, including building foundation work, excavation of soil and moving of building materials. COVID-19 precautions remain in place. The project team and the contractor are also assessing the opportunity for capital enhancements (e.g. triple glazed windows, centralized heating control system), with the goal to extend the overall lifecycle of the building and reduce operating costs. Shared site servicing, and a new driveway, through the Unionville Home Society, are nearly complete, with final asphalt and landscaping being completed by this fall.

Stouffville Affordable Housing Development, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville – site plan application work continues

The site plan application approval process is nearing completion with the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's planning staff. A virtual public information process was launched in September. This includes a short video explaining the project, adjustments to the design, and the timeline for the project. The public has the opportunity to complete an online survey to provide feedback. Approval of the planning application is anticipated in the fall. Demolition of the existing commercial structures has begun and will conclude in November.

Kathy Milsom
General Manager

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