

Fall Annual Meeting, Wednesday, November 21, 2007 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

5:30 p.m. Light supper and AGM meeting at The Rockway Gardens Village Community Room. 1420 King St. E. Kitchener, ON.

Cathy Middleton, director of Housing for YWCA (Mary's Place, Lincoln Road Supportive Housing) will share from her many years of experience her knowledge of homelessness and the needs and responses of our community. She will help us formulate our thinking about MennoHomes' role in providing decent affordable rental housing and the responses to homelessness and where we might go in the future.

Parking is available on Edmund St., and behind City Financial on King St.

Please join us. We value your ideas, opinions and contributions as we search for future direction in our continuing journey to respond to the needs of Affordable Housing!

MennoHomes Inc. Board of Directors

Martin Buhr, Chair
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Margaret Nally
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MennoHomes Inc. is a non-profit charitable organization founded in 2001 under the sponsorship of MCC Ontario as a response to the need for affordable housing.

Housing Opus!

by Martin Buhr

Editor's Note: May 25, 2007, was the Official Opening of Six Affordable Housing Projects in Waterloo Region – The Rockway Gardens Village was one of the six. The six housing proponents were each allotted two minutes on the program agenda. We are happy to share Martin's two minutes with you! Please keep in mind that our current Federal government has not allocated any new money to affordable housing. The money we received for The Rockway Gardens Village was previously budgeted by the former Federal government. Thus the choice of words "Requiem" and "Rhapsody" were intentional in terms of saying it would be great if the current government would keep the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Housing Agreement alive (Rhapsody). "Requiem" on the other hand, implies a funeral for housing.



Our Soloist

MennoHomes project is for seniors – 49 of the 50 units are already occupied! I will use a musical analogy for my remarks, a Housing Opus! First, congratulations to our fellow housing proponents! Meeting the pressure from a November '05 allocation to a March 31, '06 building permit, to a Spring '07 occupancy was a great achievement for all of us.

Secondly, congratulations to the Region of Waterloo. You have given bold and inspired leadership to the development of housing. If there was an Affordable Housing Champion MVP award, it would be yours – for all of Ontario.

Thirdly, let me salute the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Housing Agreement:

- The agreement is an excellent model for working together.
- It is the framework under which 1,200 new housing units have already been produced in Waterloo Region.

- It is a model much to be praised and emulated, premised on partnerships and collaboration.
- The model has on it the fingerprints of all political parties – those that created the model and those here today to see its results!

Why is it a good model?

- 1200 units in our Region in 6 years.
- At an average of \$100,000 per unit, this is \$120M of affordable housing stock in six years, a tremendous outcome.
- It cost all levels of Government around 1/3 and proponents 2/3: Governments \$40M and proponents \$80M.
- One Government-supplied dollar was matched by two proponent dollars in equity and financing commitments. That's a good deal for Governments.
- For-profit developers put in equity from their own resources.
- Not-for-profits received donations from 1,000's of individuals, churches

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Can We Retire the Small Mortgage on 39 Stirling Ave.?

As hydro, water and gas costs increase, our refugee family is experiencing difficulty covering the extra cost.

We have a small mortgage on the Stirling Ave. property, and if we could pay off that mortgage, we would be happy to lower the rent for our refugee family.

We have extended our original 2 year contract for them for 1 more year because they were unable to find suitable, safe, affordable housing for their large family of six children this summer.

So, \$25,000.00 would eliminate the debt!

There would be no financing costs, and MennoHomes could reduce the rent for the family. In the absence of financing costs, the rent would be lower now and in the future.

*Thank you, as we celebrate
the goodness and generosity
of everyone who helps!*

Donations Sought for The Rockway Gardens Village!

- By the end of the year we will be placing a mortgage on The Rockway Gardens Village through the Mennonite Foundation of Canada.
- Your donations to the end of this year will allow MennoHomes to keep the mortgage as low as possible. The lower the mortgage costs, the lower the rents can be.
- We look forward to your assistance keeping the rents affordable for local seniors of low and modest income.

Please contact:

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*Thank you for your
ongoing support!*

Housing Opus continued...

and businesses. Local foundations gave very strong support.

- Altogether a superlative demonstration of community ownership to build affordable housing.

Now the Housing Opus, the main theme: This morning I was listening to the notes produced by our political leaders. For this model to continue (the Fed-Prov-Terr Agreement), we need political champions of affordable housing at every level. Were we hearing a Solberg-Milloy* Requiem to Housing – or a Rhapsody? Requiem

or Rhapsody? If a Rhapsody, it will evoke a responsive chord in Waterloo Region. If it is a Rhapsody to Affordable Housing, it will continue to unleash a crescendo of activity in this Region. The housing model we have – as demonstrated here – deserves a rousing encore – and a standing ovation.

Thank you!

*Monte Solberg, Federal Minister of Human Resources and CMHC and John Milloy, Provincial MPP were political speakers at the event.

The Village News

Our second family has been able to move out of Affordable Housing and on to owning their own townhouse. We will miss them, but celebrate with them!

Several families continue to experience ongoing financial difficulties, so the Special Needs fund has been a wonderful gift as we've helped with purchasing much needed school supplies for one family, helped to pay "last month's notice" for hydro/water bill, purchased grocery gift certificates to buy turkey and food for thanksgiving, and one time partial supplement for rent after resident suffered cash stolen from her ODSP cheque. I've had people in tears ask who is helping to provide this "ready" cash and why are we doing this? This is a great opportunity to share that we are so thankful for what we have, and are happy to help out in their time of need. All part of the MennoHomes Inc.'s mission to provide more than bricks and mortar – to provide care and support.

We are busy planning for our fall BBQ which we hope will happen October 21!

I'm also happy to report that Karen Lebold has accepted the position of Community Worker replacing me at The Village. She is on contract and will be working 15 hours a week reporting directly to MennoHomes. Her main focus is The Village 16 families, but will work at The Rockway Gardens Village on an "as needed" basis. Karen has experience working with Hanover Family Resource Centre as well as interacting with seniors in a helping position. I will continue on the Board in public relations/fundraising and will support Karen in her Community Worker role.

At the moment we have one market rent vacancy. If you have someone in your church or community who would like to live in Westmount/Village Rd. area, and would qualify on an annual income basis, please phone Donna Stewart at Dubrick Property Management, 519 578-6077, for details.

Dorene Rudy-Snyder, Board Member



Good News from The Rockway Gardens Village!

As Superintendents, Tom and I were the first to move in on February 28, 2007. Other residents began moving March 10, 2007 and by March 31, 21 apartments were occupied. Needless to say, the tenants were anxious and excited having anticipated this day for a couple of months. Some were so excited that they came 2-3 hours early for their move in time! The month of April had 18 more apartments move in and the balance moved in during May – one whole month early! We had our first Potluck Supper on June 7, with 58 out of 62 tenants attending as well as a few members of the Board of MennoHomes Inc. who welcomed the tenants to their new home.

June saw the completion of the landscaping surrounding the building as well as the paving of the parking lot. The installation of park benches welcomed the tenants to sit outside, visit with each other, and view their new surroundings.

In July, we had a large screen television, together with a combined DVD/VCR player delivered and we now hold movie nights every Thursday night, cards and games night every Monday night, as well as our monthly Potluck suppers. A

beautiful quilt, and a colourful knotted quilt were hung on the wall in the Community Room. The tenants have formed a social committee and are presently meeting to gather information as to activities the residents would like. Over 90% of our people are now on a first name basis and really enjoy the activities in and around the building.

MennoHomes, along with the Construction Manager, the Architect, and Engineer, should be tremendously pleased, and complemented on the successful completion of this beautiful building and its surroundings. My husband and I are happy to be associated with MennoHomes, and appreciate the wonderful cooperation and understanding of the Board of Directors of MennoHomes Inc.

Pauline Beltrami
Superintendent
The Rockway Gardens Village



Delicious Potluck