

Affordable Housing – Spotlight #3

This year, Mississippi Mills has taken a proactive approach to help support the development of both market and not-for-profit affordable housing in our community. To help, Council approved seven initiatives to help remove barriers to affordable housing development, increase housing stock and reduce the upfront costs. The 7 initiatives in Mississippi Mills are:

- 1. Housing First Pilot Project** – Housing First is a strategy where the number one goal is to provide people with stable housing, after which other services and supports are provided. Several municipalities in Ontario that have surplus lands have adopted a “land for housing first” policy. The policy means that the Municipality prioritizes their surplus lands for affordable housing development. If there is no interest from affordable housing providers, the surplus land will then be offered for sale to the general public.

The property at 34 Victoria Street is a municipally owned parcel of land that is currently vacant. Mississippi Mills Council has recently approved a pilot project as part of a “housing first” initiative to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with a not-for-profit housing provider, Carebridge Community Support Corporation. This pilot provides Carebridge secure access to property to develop affordable housing units in the community as funding opportunities become available from other levels of government.

- 2. Planning fees exemption for not-for-profit housing developments -** Mississippi Mills Council recently passed exemptions to our local Planning fees for not-for-profit housing developments. The Municipality already exempts not-for-profit housing developments from a large portion of Development Charges and this new exemption from Planning Fees will further assist in reducing the upfront costs to develop affordable housing projects.
- 3. Building permit fees exemption for not-for-profit housing developments –** Similar to the exemptions to planning fees, not-for-profit developments will now also be exempt from related building fees. These reductions in fees will help reduce the costs for the development of affordable housing units in our community.
- 4. Cash in lieu of parkland exemption for not-for-profit housing developments** – The *Planning Act* allows municipalities the option to collect either physical land for parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland from developers. To help reduce costs, not-for-profit developments would no longer be required to pay the cash-in-lieu of parkland. The current calculation for cash-in-lieu of parkland is 5% of the appraised land value. For example, if the land was appraised at \$300,000 the cash in lieu of parkland fee would be \$15,000.

- 5. Development Charges exemptions and will be reviewed further in 2024 –**
The current Development Charges by-law will be reviewed in 2024. As part of the review process staff will be looking into comparable data and will bring forward recommendations to Council regarding any potential new changes to the Development Charges by-law for non-profit housing for consideration

- 6. Affordable housing grant program –** The approved 2022 budget included \$50,000 to go towards an Affordable Housing Grant Program. Staff will be utilizing some of these funds in 2022 to develop a comprehensive grant program in time to be considered for the 2023 budget. This initiative will target the development of affordable market housing in the municipality.

- 7. Additional Residential Units –** Staff will be bringing forward proposals to Council regarding changes to the Zoning By-law to permit Additional Residential Units (Secondary Dwelling Units) in more areas of Mississippi Mills to encourage the development of rental units.

The goal with these initiatives is to support and encourage affordable housing development in our community. The municipality will continue to work with other levels of government, organizations, and developers to help increase the affordable housing stock in Mississippi Mills.