

March 20, 2008

Dear Friends

1050 Expo Boulevard Project

You may know that in recent months the City of Vancouver has made available twelve sites across the City area for development of affordable housing with provincial funding to be provided through BC Housing. Our Society submitted an expression of interest and specified preferences for sites in the downtown south area near our existing buildings. In late January we were selected as Sponsors for development of the site at 1050 Expo Boulevard which was our first preference. St James Community Service Society was selected to be our partner as the Service Provider for the project.

By the time that we came on board, DYSArchitecture had already been selected by BC Housing as designers for the project. We were pleased with this as they had worked with us previously on the Wellspring and Brookland Court and they had designed the Oral Centre for Hilda; we have had a good working relationship with them. We were offered a list of contractors to select from who would provide preconstruction management and ultimate construction of the building. We selected the Scott Construction Group who had carried out the renovations at Christ Church Cathedral and they are now part of our team, consequently we shall be working with staff that we know. Terra Property Management are our housing consultants and we have had a long relationship with them also.

To date there have been numerous meetings with the team of consultants selected by BCH. The building is to be carbon-neutral and so there has been much discussion on the sustainable design considering energy, water, lighting, ventilation, materials, security, etc. It will be built to a LEED Gold standard. The energy sources will be primarily geothermal and solar as the building will be south-facing, with in-slab radiant heating; an add-on could even be a windmill to harness the wind flow along False Creek! All this is in the design process. There is space around the building which is being designed by landscape architects and might even include an urban garden. We may get into the business of selling power from the roof and cabbages from the garden!! Access will be from Expo Boulevard. The building is supposed to be non-smoking but that is still under discussion.

The City of Vancouver has promised an accelerated permitting process. Everyone is currently working fast to enable the development permit application to be made within the next few weeks. The project will then be reviewed by a design review panel with an open house (run by us with the help of CitySpaces, the publicity consultants) planned for the first week of June. We have already been schooled by consultants on the public process on what to say, and what not to say!

The Expo Boulevard project will be a 9-storey building of 129 studio units with underground parking for cars and numerous bicycles (on the present design) and surrounded by trees. The design of the ground floor has much in common with the Wellspring (considered to be the best affordable housing building to date) but with some additions and benefits resulting from our experience with that building. Joanne Graham, our building administrator, and Don LeFort, maintenance supervisor, have been able to provide some very useful advice to the architects on design and operation. The exterior of the building is still being designed in association with Scott who will advise on materials, constructability and cost amongst other things at this stage. Construction is optimistically planned for the fall, opening some two years later in 2010!

There are two major differences from our current operations. There will not be an age limit of 45 and BC Housing will control the waitlists for all 12 projects, the details of how this will work are still under discussion.

We plan to send out periodic updates to keep all of our donors abreast of this exciting development. You will be receiving our usual Spring letter requesting financial support for our community worker program in due course. Please let us know if you would like more information.

With kind regards,

Hilda Gregory (President)

Graham Rawlings (Vice-President)