

Hanson's motion calls for new approach to rental housing

BY BARRY REUGER

Councillor Jim Hanson has proposed that District-owned rental housing should be earmarked for use by non-profit agencies who are able to provide housing to clients.

During the April 1st Council meeting he presented a report on 'Prioritizing District-owned residential-rental housing for non-profit organizations' which asks staff to develop a new policy. Council specified that there is no intention of evicting existing tenants.

Hansen explained, "The District does for various reasons own residential properties, in many cases on a temporary basis. To the extent that the District owns residential properties, and to the extent that those are rented for whatever period of time during which the District is considering the long-term use and purpose of those properties, it make sense that they be used for a social purpose."

In an email Janine Ryder, the District's Manager, Real Estate and Properties, said the district currently owned 14 single-family homes, four of which were already rented to non-profit agencies and 10 of which were rented for residential use. This week a 1,404 sq ft ranch house on Belle Isle Place in Lions Gate is being advertised to qualified

renters for \$2400 a month. Ryder added, "The district purchases residential properties for other purposes not specifically for rental. The rental properties turn over infrequently."

Hanson described the Marineview Housing Society as the type of group that could benefit from this policy. Marineview is a non-profit society incorporated in 1975 and is dedicated to providing safe, affordable housing for people on the North Shore living with psychiatric illness. Marineview currently operates four facilities, three in the City which is owned, and one of which is rented in the District. These include Chesterfield House, a 24-unit apartment building located near the civic center in the City of North Vancouver.

Marineview Executive Director Madeline Boscoe says that the motion is "a step in the right direction" but that much more housing stock is needed, not just for "teachers and nurses", but also for those who can't afford market rents. Boscoe was unfamiliar with Hanson's motion, but explained that in order for a house to be used for their purposes it needs to be specially licensed, and would require a number of specific changes including fire sprinklers, upgrades to electrical systems, and other renovations specific to a residential care facility.