

Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation

President's Report 29th Annual General Meeting November 18, 2015

Welcome to the Board, staff and members of the Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation.

The holding of this Annual General Meeting (AGM), signifies that another year has passed. Gignul has enjoyed a successful year, helping to meet the housing needs of Aboriginal people in Ottawa. It will be exactly one year, tomorrow, since our last Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in this room.

In my report, I will try to capture the main events of the year and provide an overview. I will also make an effort to answer key questions that have been raised from time to time at Board meetings. For instance, I think there is a general feeling around the Board table that we could place increased priority on the status and evolution of the Operating Agreements. Whenever their status is raised, I often tell myself, we should spend more time on this topic. Others have expressed this sentiment.

In addition to the presentation and approval of audited accounts, election of directors, and the appointment of auditors for the year to come, I will also explore the Operating Agreements that form the basis for our main business line -- rent geared to income housing.

Like me, I suspect many of you may have watched the Swearing-In-Ceremony of the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Canada's 23rd Prime Minister, and the new Liberal Cabinet presided over by the Governor General at Rideau Hall. As I viewed the ceremony, I was struck by the focus on confidentiality and secrecy in the oaths sworn by the new Cabinet. It occurred to me that just this year the Gignul Board discussed the issue of confidentiality of information as it relates to Board activities. We all signed confidentiality agreements. The significance of the undertakings reflected in these agreements are very much key to the good governance of Gignul.

Let's start by looking at our Operating Agreements:

How many operating agreements are there?

In the course of everyday business, we should keep in mind that operating agreements are normally referred to as Projects. Generally speaking, we have 17 Projects.

How many rental units do we have under these Projects?

Under the umbrella of the above-noted 17 projects, fall 162 rent geared to income units. No two projects are alike. Each project covers various numbers of rental units.

How is the rental units divided among each project?

As an example, in Project 1, there are a total of 9 buildings that contain 16 rental units. In Project 10 there is one building that contains 5 rental units whereas, Project 17 has 2 buildings that contain 6 rental units.

When do the projects sunset?

The term of the operating agreement for Project 1 ends in 2021. Placed in context, that is six years or two three year terms for a Board member of Gignul. In contrast, the term of the operating agreement for Project 17 is quite a bit longer and ends in 13 years in the year 2028.

The other projects fall at varying levels between these examples.

In previous years Gignul has paid off 5 mortgages from Project 1 – Project 5. During the 2014 operational year we paid down an additional 3 mortgages on Projects 6, 7 and 8.

Given the total of 17 Operating Agreements, we have 9 outstanding mortgages remaining on the Gignul portfolio. This is in addition to the Elders lodge at 388 Carmen Street where we also have an outstanding mortgage.

What will become of Gignul in the future?

The answer to this question is taking shape today. The bottom line is it is up to us as board members and to future boards. While in the early planning stages, we have set the goal for ourselves to continue to offer housing services. How will this be possible without the subsidies we enjoy today? The answer, of course, is affordable housing like Madawan Place, Developed by Madawan Management and Development Inc., a subsidiary of Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation.

CMHC provided Seed Funding during the planning stages of Madawan Place. The \$5.5 million project received \$4.75 million in funding through the First Nations, Inuit, Metis Urban and Rural (FIMUR) Housing Program. A few Board members attended the announcement made by former Ontario Minister, Jim

Watson, at the Odawa Centre. One of the first tenants, Liz McRae moved into Madawan Place in November 2011.

The next key topic I mentioned for us to explore tonight is confidentiality and secrecy.

Confidentiality Agreements

As Board members, we have a legal obligation to protect personal information and other kinds of restricted information as defined by Gignul's confidentiality policy. We have agreed to use the information we are privy to, due to our involvement with the Board, only for the purposes for which it was collected and shared.

Confidentiality is an important principle because imposes a boundary on the amount of personal information and data that can be disclosed without consent. Confidentiality arises where a person disclosing personal information reasonably expects his or her privacy to be protected, such as in a relationship of trust.

We have agreed to disclose information only to authorized persons with a need to know position. From time to time, it will be helpful to ask yourselves what efforts you are making to keep Gignul's information secure.

It is quite common for employers/companies to ask their employees to sign a Confidentiality Agreement as a condition of employment. The employee signing the confidentiality agreement states that he/she will not disclose any employer confidential information outside the work place. Typically, such agreements also provide that the employee cannot disclose any confidential information from the work place even where such confidential information is not the property of the employer.

Confidentiality leads to trust. When you are trusted more people feel confident they can communicate with you. Conversely, if you were known as someone who breaches a person's confidentiality, fewer people will want to openly communicate with you.

The Board

The composition of the Board has been steady over the past year. We continue to seek interested community members for membership in the Association and ultimately, for consideration on the Board.

This year Chad Kicknosoway met the criteria necessary for entry as a member of the Association and is eligible for election or appointment to the Board of Directors.

Financial Overview

- In 2013 we had an excess of expenditures over revenue of \$43,000.
- In **2014** we had an excess of expenditures over revenue of **\$53,400**.
- From another perspective, in 2014 the actual manageable spending exceeded the budgeted manageable spending by **\$68,500**.
- Overall budget of \$2.4 Million in 2013 and **\$2.2 Million in 2014**.

Repairs and Maintenance:

- Spending for repairs and maintenance in 2014 was **\$12,300 higher** than the spending in 2013.
- For **2014 Gignul spent \$545,969** in repairs and maintenance, or approximately 35% of the total actual manageable spending amount.
- Actual repairs and maintenance spending exceeded budgeted spending by **\$29,880**.
- Included in the spending of \$545,969 was approximately **\$150,000** for building/unit repairs, etc.

Hydro and Heat:

- Spending in 2014 was \$326,832 while spending in 2013 was \$310,296.

Water:

- Spending in 2014 was \$99,816 while spending in 2013 was \$94,084.

Capital Replacement Expenditures:

- **Spent \$99,062 in 2014;** spent \$70,247 in 2013.

Special Activities

Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition

Gignul Housing is a member of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC), which is currently comprised of 10 Aboriginal service providers. The OAC was initially formed around the issue of homelessness in 2001. Over the years the OAC has provided community leadership around homelessness, a crisis of service provision to the Aboriginal community, a lack of inclusion under the City's Official Plan, coordination of services in the evacuation of Kashechewan and King Fisher Lake, formal recognition of Aboriginal contributions regarding National Aboriginal Day celebrations in the nation's capital, and lastly, joint presentations regarding the municipal-Aboriginal relationship.

In 2007, Ottawa was designated under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) and has received capacity building funding that provides resources to meet regularly, advocate around specific Aboriginal issues with our voice and to develop relationships, build a network of like-minded interests and identify opportunities that build community capacity. Additionally, the UAS resources provides for an annual community forum.

We continue to build on our collective approach of relationship building through relationship streams. The current streams are: City of Ottawa, United Way of Ottawa, federal government through the UAS, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and, the Ottawa Carleton District School Board. We are looking at the development of a sixth stream that would focus on Employment and Training. Our Executive Director is currently the Chair of the OAC.

Aboriginal Working Committee

The Aboriginal Working Committee (AWC) builds on the work of the OAC. This relationship focuses on the City of Ottawa. Membership on the AWC is the OAC, City of Ottawa departments serving Aboriginal clientele, Ottawa Police Services, Champlain Local Integrated Health Network, United Way of Ottawa and the Ottawa Carleton District School Board.

The AWC has aligned its work with the priorities of the OAC and is currently developing a results-based accountability framework to better measure progress across several priority areas such as health education, housing and employment. The AWC is co-chaired by the Deputy City Manager and the Chair of the OAC.

Urban Aboriginal Strategy

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) was initially conceived as the federal government's response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) and formally launched under the Gathering Strength Agenda. Originally the UAS identified eight (8) cities with large urban Aboriginal populations and was intended to deal with the unique circumstances that urban Aboriginal communities were encountering in these cities. In 2006, the government added four (4) more urban communities and Ottawa was added in 2007. By 2012, Montreal and Halifax were included, bringing to 15 cities formally designated under the UAS.

In 2014, the federal government decided to consolidate a number of urban-based programs under the umbrella of the "UAS" and have rolled out the new UAS primarily through the infrastructure of Friendship Centres and administered through the National Association of Friendship Centres and their seven Provincial/Territorial Associations.

In Ontario, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, now Indigenous and Northern Affairs, has maintained a funding relationship with the three cities previously recognized under the UAS (Toronto, Thunder Bay and Ottawa). The department also continues to support other urban communities that had been supported under the UAS (i.e. Vancouver).

We are hopeful that a renewed dialogue with the Liberal government can occur to continue the coordinating capacity that the UAS has provided in the past and how we can support joint collaboration moving forward.

Housing First

The Housing First approach is a relatively new initiative for Gignul, but one that we are experimenting with. The approach is to provide individuals and families with stable housing as an initial first step towards addressing other social issues, rather than the other way around.

It was founded in the early 1990s in New York as an inner-city experiment. Since then, it's had an 85 per cent success rate in the U.S. in permanently housing mentally ill homeless people.

An estimated 30,000 Canadians sleep on the streets every night. The Conservative government accepted the basis of the Housing First strategy, which the Mental Health Commission of Canada has concluded is showing concrete and cost-effective results in five cities.

Supporters maintain Housing First is a proven, evidence-based model that is delivering better results for the most vulnerable, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity, while ensuring the tax dollars of hard-working Canadians are spent wisely.

A massive pilot project called At Home-Chez Soi was created in 2008 following a \$110-million investment from the federal government. The program helped find and pay for homes for mentally ill homeless people in five cities across Canada, and also provided recipients with as many social services as they needed to stay housed.

As of April 1st, the Conservative government's \$600-million Homelessness Partnering Strategy shifted to a Housing First approach. It remains to be seen what the Liberal government will do.

Affiliates

Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA)

Gignul Housing has been an active member in ONPHA for the past seven years. We joined ONPHA (the largest non-profit housing association in Canada) when the provincial Aboriginal housing body – Native Home Providers of Ontario was not sustainable. Our membership provides access to wide body of housing information, training, advocacy and networking. Our Executive Director served on the ONPHA Board for three years and currently chairs the Aboriginal Advisory Committee of ONPHA. There are approximately 36 Aboriginal housing members to ONPHA in Ontario.

Canadian Housing Renewal Association (CHRA)

Gignul Housing joined the CHRA in 2013 when the national Aboriginal housing body could not sustain operations. CHRA is a national housing body and has provided for an Aboriginal representative on its Board and in 2013 initiated an Aboriginal Caucus, similar to the arrangement at ONPHA. Gignul delegates has actively supported the creation and promotion of the Aboriginal Caucus to other Aboriginal housing providers throughout Canada and continue to be part of the organizing committee that oversees the development of a specific day dedicated to Aboriginal housing issues during the annual CHRA congress.

Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH)

The ATEH is an Ottawa-based coalition of like-minded interests that advocate for the eradication of homelessness in Ottawa. The Aboriginal face of homelessness in Ottawa is approximately one third of the homeless population despite the fact that our population represents about 3-4%. The federal government has supported a different policy track through the Housing First initiative which focuses on the chronic and episodic homeless and is intended to help stabilize their lives by facilitating access to secure housing.

Aboriginal Community Advisory Board (ACAB)

Gignul Housing sits on the Aboriginal Community Advisory Board (ACAB) which works with City officials and federal funding to directly deal with homeless programs and services. While we do not provide specific programs and services to this segment of our community we do active support the Aboriginal agencies that to direct service provision. Gignul Housing is in the process of considering a more formal representative role in the ATEH and in the possible identification and provision of units within our portfolio that could be designated for prospective Housing First tenants.

We continue to advocate Aboriginal housing issues specifically at the provincial level and meet regularly with the provincial housing Minister and his staff. We have been very active in all discussions pertaining to the End of Operating Agreements and closely monitor the impacts of this topic on our portfolio of housing.

We advocated for a specific Aboriginal committee of ONPHA and the organization has been very supportive of this capacity building which allows us to provide an urban Aboriginal voice to urban Aboriginal housing issues and to network with other Aboriginal housing providers and the wider sector.

The Staff

The organization cannot function without the hard work of our members, volunteers, and staff. Let's consider how the staff has fared over the last year.

Our longstanding Maintenance Supervisor, Terry Conroy retired this year. Issues related to family and other pressures resulted in the need for Gignul to hire a new Maintenance Supervisor. Terry's replacement, Ken Fraser joined the staff in mid-August. There has already been evidence of improvements in our housing stock and we look forward to hearing about further progress with his work.

Recently, help was hired to help Jerry Rakus as he ensures the bills are paid and keeps our books in order. A warm welcome is extended to Susan Howard.

On behalf of the board, I offer our heartfelt gratitude to the remaining staff who have remained with Gignul over the years. We hope you will remain for the foreseeable future. We can guarantee lots of interesting work.

In closing, I would like to express appreciation for all of the work accomplished by the Board and staff over the past year. I look forward to new success stories.

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Current Board Composition:

Brian Bedwell, President

Richard Martin, Director

Fred Gloade, Vice-President

Barbara Craig, Director

Jo McQuarrie, Secretary-Treasurer

Angela Slaughter, Director

Karen Konwawihon Jacobs-Williams,
Director