

Non-profit housing board resigns

By Tony Pearson

The entire board of the North Hastings Non-Profit Housing Corporation has resigned as a body. In a notice distributed to every unit in the Woodview public housing complex, the board stated that "it can no longer effectively govern the corporation."

As a result, Hastings County (which owns the non-profit housing) has declared Woodview to be "a project in difficulty." According to the Ontario Housing Services Act, this declaration can be triggered by "an accumulated deficit on the balance sheet, or other indication of mismanagement."

The County's Director of Social Services, Stephen Gatward, told Bancroft This Week that it is launching "an in-depth operating review."

"In the meantime," said Gatward, "residents are assured that the operation of Woodview will continue as usual." He declared that the County remains committed to continuing to provide affordable social housing.

The outgoing board chair, Bancroft council member Bill Kilpatrick, would make no statement about the board's decision. Neither would Rory McRandall, Woodview's administrator and property manager.

When I spoke with Woodview residents on the weekend, reaction was mixed. Some said they had no particular grievances with the administration of the complex. Others said that maintenance was behind schedule, since there was only one maintenance staff, and he was limited to 35 hours a week. Still others complained that basic repairs, such as siding ripped off by a windstorm, had never been repaired, and that as a result, water and mould damage was visible, and units let in too much cold. Then again, some said that a lot of the damage was caused by the tenants themselves.

Everyone seemed to agree that the construction of five new units last year had taken far more money and time than was thought necessary.

Obviously there is more to come on this story.