



Housing Forum
Head of the Lake Hall
Thursday January 26, 2012
6:00 – 8:00 pm

Staff in attendance:

Joe Johnson, Director of Operations, Lands & Housing
Carla Hunt, Housing Officer
Karen Babiuk, Admin Assistant
Martha Poley, Data Entry
Tim Jack, Maintenance/Water Department

Members in attendance:

Anna Marchand	June Cole	Laura Miller
Martie Louis	Mike Louis	Al Louis
Ray Marchand	Cindy Brewer	Molli Bono
Samantha Saddleman	Bernice Jensen	

The meeting started at 6:30. Joe welcomed all the members that were in attendance and introduced staff that was in attendance.

Joe started out with letting everyone know that the Operations department wants to start a new relationship within the community and to revive the housing department as a community. Joe also advised that tonight's meeting was not one for complaints and that we could not address any work order issues as there was not any files on hand to discuss these at this time.

Housing is always a difficult area of any community. If not run properly a housing department could potentially bankrupt a business or a community for that matter. Rental payments and non-payment of rents can either make or break the business. This is one of the items that will be discussed.

We are wanting to share with the community what we will be working on for the rest of the fiscal year and what it is we are working on for the next fiscal. We will be sending out monthly newsletters through several different social networks. They will be in our Senk'lip newsletter, put on to the Band's facebook page, the Band's website and will also be distributed through emails. We are wanting to keep the community informed as to what it is we are working on.

The Operations department also wants to hear from you – the community! We want your input and will be asking that you answer the short questionnaire that is available to you for filling out. What is it that you want to hear from us – housing issues? Infrastructure for the Band that may be coming up? Let's keep the lines of communication open – let us know what it is you want more info on and we can try our best to accommodate and answer all of your questions.



Joe shared with the members that there has been some restructuring of our office and this will be coming out in our newsletter. Joe also shared that Randy Marchand and his Lands department has moved down to the Operations building and joined our team. There is a lot of work in common between housing and lands and it just made sense that we were all in the same building. Joe welcomed Randy to the team.

Joe also welcomed Frank Gelinis back to the Operations department. Frank was working with the Band last year and had to leave (not willingly) but has now returned to assist the Band with all capital projects. With Frank being a past employee of AANDC – he is the perfect choice as he knows all of the ins and outs of AANDC and has plenty of contacts that can assist the Band. Welcome back Frank!

BRADLEY CREEK EXPANASION

Great news – the Bradley Creek/6 Mile new water system is now moving to the final design phase. We plan to have all tenders out by April and no later than June the digging will begin. The new pipe that will be installed down Westside Road right of way is fabulous as it is a 300mm (12 inch) and this size of water line is a big as any municipality off reserve has. With the expansion of the water line and reservoir – the Band will have at its top capacity the potential to pump out a significant volume of water per hour! This is great news!

With the new expansion down Westside road, there could possible impacts to some CP holders but there will be contact made by Randy Marchand with all details of how this could affect them. This work and any work will be communicated to the community well in advance of it starting. More to come!!

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Joe reminded the audience that we are still looking for requests for qualifications in relation to the Bradley Creek project. This will be a great opportunity for members who own their own equipment, that have any type of certificates – get your resumes in to Karen. Joe did advise that we will be preparing a package of sorts with the specs of the job for the public tendering process and will be available to the community in the next couple of weeks.

COMMUNICATION

We at the Operations, Lands & Housing department want to ensure that there is every opportunity for the community to be kept informed of what is happening within our department as there are a number of projects on the go. We will continue to get newsletters out to the community, brochures have been distributed. These will be posted monthly in the Senk'lip newsletter that all Band members receive – we also want to keep all members that are not living on reserve – we need to keep them informed as well. Joe shared with the audience that when applying for funds from AANDC for example – yes, the membership is 1800 people, but, we only have 900 living on reserve. We want to continue to target the off reserve membership as they play a role within the community, and we do not want to continue being leveraged out of funding that is potentially available to the Band.



CMHC-OPERATING AGREEMENTS

These agreements are a two (2) party agreement with in our instance CMHC and OKIB (C&C) being the other. What basically happens is that CMHC provides the Band with funding for homes, reno's etc, we (the Band) provide the service and we also report back to CMHC.

The Band has had 19 different agreements with CMHC in the past. At this time, there is not much that has changed in these agreements from phase 1 – 19. When there is an agreement that is made between the two parties, it lasts until the housing loan is paid in full. The intent of CMHC social housing units is for the Band to maintain these as long as possible. They are meant to be low income housing units. In the housing strategy we need to pose the question whether or not we want to continue with these operating agreements or look to other funding sources for new housing.

As of now, a Tenancy Agreement is signed by the home occupant and the Band. There are a number of restrictions that come with these agreements. The occupant is restricted from subletting and occupancy is restricted to the individuals on the lease. Once lease agreements are signed with tenants, it is important to know that CMHC has the right to come and inspect the homes. This typically happens on a yearly basis. One other important factor to take note of is that there are phases that require the tenant to pay the first \$100 of a repair bill to their home. This maintenance schedule is included with the lease agreement and the tenant has a copy of said schedule. If one is needed by any tenant, these can be requesting at the Operations department.

Again – when rents are not paid and there are arrears happening, the community needs to understand the impact that it has on the community as a whole. CMHC subsidy contribution is less than half of what the payment would be. If there is no rent coming in, dollars will be taken from other funding (education, social development) the Band receives to make these payments.

The question was asked: What is the difference between a CMHC house and an INAC house?
It was explained that a CMHC house is a mix of low end of the market and affordable rental units.

ARREARS

Carla shared with the audience that the housing department has been working tirelessly for the past 3 years to collect some of these arrears. The arrears peaked in 2008 at over \$610,000 and in the past 3 years that number has been brought down to approximately \$310,000.00 and with the New Collection Policy that has a BCR attached to it in place now, hopefully we will be able to bring this issue to a close. It has also been acknowledged by Chief & Council that arrears collection is an administrative issue, not a political issue and that all decisions concerning arrears collection would be made by the Director of Operations, Lands and Housing.

From the audience came the statement that this is great news as there are a lot of families from our Band that are in need of homes and that are willing to pay rent. It was also mentioned that other Bands have a zero tolerance for a non-payment of rent.



Carla also advised that there will be letter going out tomorrow to all tenants who have been avoiding any contact and all requests from the Housing department to make any sort of arrangements to look after their arrears.

There will be a report back to Chief and Council in regards to the progress of this action.

OPEN FLOOR – QUESTIONS

A member had a question regarding her housing subsidy through AANDC. She advised that she has built her own home – did everything right. Applied for the subsidy before the start of her home – and unfortunately along the way, there was the application that did not get filed or was lost in transit. The member also advised that she has actually gone the next step and contacted AANDC to enquire about her situation and was told that AANDC has other priorities at this time that they are working on. Bernice's question was "is there just not any monies for this subsidy". Councillor Al Louis advised that this particular member's issue will be going to council for further discussion and that they would get back to the housing department to report back to the member. This matter will be investigated and a response will be reported back to the member.

Another question from the members was whether or not the Band was still on the freeze list with AANDC. This matter will be further investigated and this matter will also receive a response and reported back to the community.

Next question that was addressed was in regards to home owners insurance on OKIB #1 and the outrageous amounts that were being proposed because there is not a certified fire department. It was brought up that the Band does have part ownership in an insurance company – "Lakehead Insurance" and that our members should try contacting them regarding home insurance. Operations, Lands & Housing staff will further investigate this issue and advise the community of same.

6 Mile Subdivision was the next topic for discussion. People want to know what is happening with the 6 unfinished homes. There was a question from a member that in the past there were ads that went out to the community that the homes were for sale "as is" and wanted clarification of "as is". When the houses were broken into and all the electrical wires were stolen etc...did the Band ever make an insurance claim and if so – what became of that. The items that were stolen – will they be replaced? This will be investigated and Operations will report back to community. At this time the Operations, Lands & Housing department is moving forward with a solution regarding the homes and this will also be communicated to the members soon.

LAND USE PLANNING

Joe brought up the subject of Land Use Planning (LUP) with the audience. Where does the community see itself going in regards to LUP? The Band will need to begin discussing LUP and to be able to identify areas that are no goes for any type of infrastructure - cultural and spiritual areas for example. This is something as a community that should be discussed. The Band at one point was working towards a LUP and we do not want to rewrite that plan, so let's talk about what is good about this older work. We want to begin with communications with the community and engage aggressively so that we can start to define the community. How does the greater community see itself in the future?



By-laws and taxation was brought up – this will be something that will be brought forward only at the behest of the community. There are a lot of non-band members that live on band land – CP lands. These would all have to be approved by C&C. The question was asked – would this not be taking land owner's rights away from them? LUP by nature are voted on by the committee and then this a discussion that happens with the community. OKIB is one of the larger reserves in BC and we need to mature and start taking our place at the table. The OKIB is now maturing as a community – again further discussion regarding LUP will need to take place with the community – so stay tuned!!

There was a question as to why the Band is not taking advantage of any off reserve housing. Maybe the Band should start to consider off reserve housing – in Vernon for example there are apartments for sale – maybe this is something the Band and the community should also be discussing. It seems that we have not attempted to even look outside of the any other funding sources but AANDC and CMHC.

The apartments in Winfield – are they all rented out now was the next question and how many Band members are living in the units was the next question. Carla advised that there are 2 units still sitting empty and one unit has been used in the past for meetings. Carla also shared that there are only 2 Band members living in the apartments. It was questioned as to why students were not living in these units – were they not built for them and how much was the rent that the Band is charging. Carla advised that the rent runs between \$950 and \$1150 per month at this time. Carla also advised that there could possibly be another unit becoming available at the end of the month. There was a bit of a discussion amongst the audience in regards to non-natives living in these units and not our students and why the rent was so high for the units.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting came to a close at approximately 8:00 pm. The members that came out for the forum were thanked for the participation and ideas. These forums can only make our department run more smoothly and we (Operations, Lands & Housing) we will continue to have community meetings to keep all informed. The members were asked to fill out the questionnaire that was left on the tables for future use in regards to upcoming meetings – how we did – presentation of the information shared – was there anything that the community would be interested in hearing about.

Joe thanked all that turned out for our first “housing forum” and advised that we would continue with our Operations newsletter and will continue to keep all updated through social networks (email, facebook) and through the Band's monthly newspaper – Senk'lip.