



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Sheldon Laidman, Commissioner, Community Services

Meeting Date: January 6, 2025

Report: Service Manager Consents for Community Housing Amalgamation, Report CSSS25-001

Subject

A report to recommend Service Manager consent under the **Housing Services Act, S.O. 2011** for the amalgamation of Thrive Housing and Support (Thrive) and Northminster Court, and to confirm delegated authority for the signing of agreements related to Community Housing provider amalgamations.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSSS25-001, dated January 6, 2025 of the Commissioner of Community Services as follows:

- a) That Council, acting as the Service Manager under the **Housing Services Act, S.O. 2011, c. 6, Sched. 1**, approve the amalgamation of Thrive Housing and Support with Northminster Court under the name of Thrive Housing and Support; and
- b) That Council, acting as Service Manager, delegate to the Commissioner of Community Services authority to give consent for future amalgamations of community housing providers, under the **Housing Services Act, 2011**, and that the Commissioner of Community Services be delegated authority to execute such documents as are necessary to give effect to the foregoing terms and in forms acceptable to the City Solicitor.

Executive Summary

- This report recommends the amalgamation of Thrive Housing and Support with Northminster Court under the name Thrive Housing and Support to improve operational efficiencies, reduce back-office functions, and achieve cost savings.
- The report proposes granting the Commissioner of Community Services delegated authority to consent to future amalgamations of housing providers to ensure the streamlining of processes and timely outcomes with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- Housing Service Staff support the amalgamation as essential for ensuring financial stability, addressing recruitment challenges, and securing the long-term resilience of affordable housing services.

Background

Proposed Amalgamation of Thrive Housing and Support and Northminster Court

In 2019, the board of Kawartha Participation Projects (KPP) began to discuss the possibility of a merger with Hilliard Park Non-Profit Homes Inc (Hilliard Park). At that time, it was decided that an amalgamation of the boards would be an appropriate first step. The Boards merged in 2020, but still oversaw the two housing providers as separate projects. In 2021, it was decided that a full amalgamation would streamline services and reduce back-office functions, resulting in significant time savings, and minor cost savings.

On February 13, 2023, Thrive Housing and Support (Thrive) (formerly known as KPP) was given Service Manager consent to amalgamate with Hilliard Park through report CSSS23-004. The Hilliard Park amalgamation was completed in May 2023, and the 30-day notice was sent to the Minister as required. Following the amalgamation, KPP formalized the name change to Thrive Housing and Support in June 2023.

Thrive is a non-profit housing provider in the City of Peterborough that provides Rent Geared to Income (RGI) supportive housing for people with physical disabilities, for low-income individuals and families, as well as outreach support services for people with physical disabilities. Thrive owns 71 units of housing at Towerhill Village and 51 units at Hilliard Park Homes. It also provides property management services to four other community housing providers: AOTS Chemong Village, Kairos Non-Profit Housing, Kiwanis Club of Scott's Plains, and as of November 1, 2024, Northminster Court.

Northminster Court, a senior's Community Housing Provider, operates 40 units, 20 units in Phase 1, 294 Sunset Blvd., Peterborough and 20 units in Phase 2, 308 Sunset Blvd., Peterborough. Northminster Court offers eleven (11) units that are RGI Housing and twenty-nine (29) that are considered Affordable Housing where tenants pay 80% of Average Market Rent.

Currently, 12 independent non-profit boards govern 725 units of community housing, including Northminster Court. This represents a substantial number of volunteer hours

needed in a climate where volunteer numbers are dwindling. Additionally, economies of scale can reduce time and costs for housing providers, many of which are operating with slim margins. The Northminster Court Board, facing an aging membership and difficulties with recruitment, recognized these challenges and decided to pursue amalgamation with Thrive Housing and Support. In March 2024, discussions with the two providers began around potential amalgamation at board meetings. As Thrive's mission, vision and values are in alignment with the future vision of Northminster Court, both boards have agreed to move forward with the amalgamation.

Housing Service City Staff fully support the amalgamation and are satisfied that both parties share aligned goals and objectives. Staff do not expect any impact to tenants as a result of this amalgamation.

Delegated Authority Reasoning

With End of Mortgage (EOM) and End of Operating Agreement (EOA) approaching for the City's Social Housing Providers over the next few years, amalgamation is an option for housing providers to help with operational efficiencies such as quality of service and scale.

Over the past five years, similar amalgamations have been brought forward and approved by Council as Service Manager, and it is expected that these types of requests will continue as more Housing Providers are reaching their EOM/EOA.

Granting delegated authority for the Commissioner to sign consents and agreements for amalgamation will help streamline processes with the Ministry, such as delisting properties and making updates to the designated Housing Projects section under the Housing Services Act (HSA), 2011. The Service Manager is required to provide 30 days notice to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing of this consent. This delegated authority will help expedite these matters, ensuring timely and efficient outcomes.

Additionally, the Province can approve Land Transfer Tax for transfers of Social Housing property. This exemption is provided through legislation only on a twice-annual basis. Delegated authority will facilitate meeting the province's timelines for this exemption process.

Housing Service Staff support the amalgamation as a key step in ensuring the financial viability and resilience of the community housing portfolio and addressing challenges such as recruitment and volunteer shortages for board members. This consolidation supports the long-term stability and operations of affordable housing services.

Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillar: Governance & Fiscal Sustainability

Strategic Initiative: Accountable, transparent, ethical, and responsible corporate governance and financial management that supports the needs of

the community into the future. Proactively advocating for Peterborough's interests by working with other levels of government and optimizing strategic opportunities as they arise for the benefit of our City

Strategic Pillar: Community & Well-being

Strategic Initiative: Enhance and protect the health, safety, and well-being of all in our City. Provide robust, affordable and accessible sport, recreation, wellness, arts and social programs for people of all ages and abilities.

Engagement and Consultation

The Service Manager has met separately and collectively with the boards of both Thrive and Northminster Court. Discussions were had around the feasibility of the amalgamation and the rationale behind it. Additionally, Thrive and Northminster Court have held meetings with their respective boards and community members, where approval and support were received by both boards. Tenant engagement sessions were also held where tenants were given an opportunity to ask questions and resolve any concerns regarding the proposed amalgamation.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no budget or financial implications from a City Budget perspective. The mandatory payments to each agency, included in the City's operating budget, to provide rent geared to income housing as required under the Housing Services Act will remain unchanged.

A key objective of the amalgamation is to achieve a measure of financial stability for the new merged entity.

Conclusion

Community Housing is a publicly funded asset and an important component of the local housing system for the City and Peterborough County. Housing Service Staff strongly believe amalgamations and acquisitions between non-profit housing providers will be a key element in ensuring the longevity of community housing providers. It will help to ensure that the City's community housing portfolio remains resilient, financially viable, and capable of continuing to support vulnerable populations well into the future.

Submitted by,

Sheldon Laidman
Commissioner of Community Services

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