



FOR RELEASE

Thursday, May 13, 2021

Council approves land transfer to support affordable housing project

OKOTOKS, AB: During the regular meeting May 10, Town Council approved a motion to transfer 2.3 acres in the D'Arcy neighbourhood to Westwinds Communities (WWC) and the Brenda Stafford Society (BSS) to advance affordable housing choices in Okotoks.

While the Town will contribute the land, WWC and the BSS will assume all costs for site development, permitting and construction costs for their portions of the site.

"This is an important step in ensuring there are diverse housing choices to fit all residents' needs at every age and stage of their lives," said Mayor Bill Robertson. "In making this decision, Council recognizes that we all share ownership in creating a welcoming, inclusive community that we all want to live in."

WWC proposes to build 50 below-market rental units in two buildings, which will be completed in two phases, and provide housing primarily for seniors, families and some youth who are currently on housing waitlists. The BSS proposes to build 42 transitional housing units with common amenity spaces and staff accommodations for women and families fleeing domestic violence.

"The Brenda Stafford Society is thrilled about the possibilities our partnership with the Town of Okotoks represents and the positive impact our collaboration will create in the lives of women and children impacted by family violence. We applaud the Town of Okotoks for their commitment to fostering creation of a safe, inclusive, and responsive community," said Executive Director Linda McLean.

An additional acre is available to develop 48 market-rate rental units, which may be owned and operated by a private builder.

The Town originally purchased the land in 2019 for \$2.6 million in a partnership with WWC and Rowan House. When Rowan House withdrew from the agreement, an opportunity arose for a new partner. The Town will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with both WWC and the BSS in the near future, with construction expected to start in 2022.

While WWC originally proposed repaying 50 percent of the land costs, this would have restricted the ability to price the units affordably, which is an essential component of the project.

WWC is a not-for-profit organization that provides quality housing and supportive services for seniors, as well as subsidized housing and services for individuals and families. The BSS, also a not-for-profit agency, provides a safe housing environment and comprehensive support services for people at risk of family violence.

– 30 –

For media contact:
Joan Botkin
Community Engagement Manager
403.605.4377
jbotkin@okotoks.ca

www.okotoks.ca