

# FOSTERING A FUTURE ORIENTED BOARD

# Housing Partnership Canada (HPC)

## Who we are:

- ▶ Peer based network of the CEOs of Canada's larger social/affordable housing providers.
- ▶ Dynamic and collaborative group which meets on strategies, business practices and policies to support the development, operation and sustainability of social/affordable housing in Canada.
- ▶ HPC members manage close to 200,000 housing units.

# Housing Partnership Canada

- ▶ Members of the **International Housing Partnership**; peer based exchange amongst CEOs of housing providers from UK, USA, Australia and Canada. IHP has 175 housing providers as members who manage over 1 million homes for more than 2.5 million people.
- ▶ Drive and promote innovative and creative approaches to the future of affordable housing; including alternative financing.



# DARLENE COOK

- ▶ CEO, Peterborough Housing Corporation since Dec 2000 (same month as devolution from Province to Municipality)
- ▶ Winner of the 2017 Sybil Frenette Outstanding Leadership Award presented by ONPHA
- ▶ First Executive Director CIH Canada 2013–14
- ▶ Worked in social housing since 1994
- ▶ Previously in Health Sciences in various capacities

# PHC: Who We Are

- ▶ Peterborough Housing Corporation is the largest provider of rent geared to income in the City and County.
- ▶ PHC (and Finally A Home) have been the most active developer of “affordable” housing in the region, both for our own corporation and in partnership with other not for profit corporations
- ▶ PHC has formed many partnerships with like minded agencies to provide opportunities for our residents



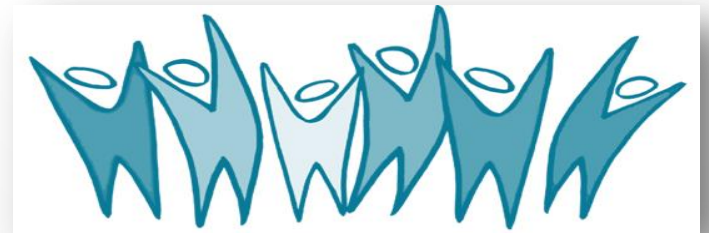
# Peterborough City and County

- ▶ The City of Peterborough has the Service Manager responsibilities for City and County
- ▶ PHC has received enormous support from the staff and elected officials of the City and County of Peterborough
- ▶ We have properties in the City of Peterborough, Lakefield, Apsley, Norwood, and Havelock



# Since Devolution 2001

- ▶ Peterborough Housing Corporation , formerly part of Ontario Housing Corporation, is a stand alone corporation whose Shareholder is the City of Peterborough.
- ▶ Our Board is a skills based board of ten members, appointed by council, made up of community volunteers from various backgrounds with allocated positions for one County and one City elected representative.



# PHC: What we own and manage

- ▶ PHC owns and operates 1 175 units, comprised of 818 rent geared to income (OHC stock), 110 non-profit, 8 supportive housing for frail elderly and 239 affordable rental and manages 42 units on contract.
- ▶ On behalf of the Service Manager, we administer approximately 250 units of rent supplement and manage the Centralized Wait List for social housing providers which currently has approximately 1 600 household applicants.





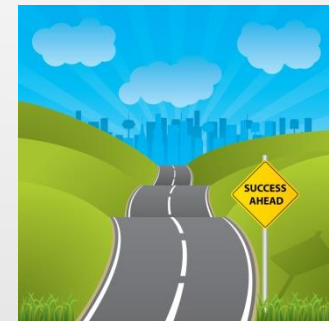
# Who we were:

- ▶ Former Ontario Housing Authority, one of 47
- ▶ Board was politically appointed, resolutions came from the Province
- ▶ Very little autonomy for local board, process driven
- ▶ Core competencies, all services, HR, Legal, etc done at provincial level
- ▶ Download to municipalities, regions and DSSABs in late 2000....orphaned!



# Our Journey in a Snapshot

- ▶ Municipality decides to bring in house or stand alone, we became a stand alone
- ▶ Core business from onset and structuring for service; IT, banking, HR, benefits, legal....
- ▶ Gifts from OHC, conversion of 11 in-house programs to YARDI
- ▶ Governance model; board recruitment
- ▶ Business model from the start because of my background



# Board Model



- ▶ Governance model, skills based board with one representative from County, one from City (not necessarily elected)
- ▶ Nominating Committee, interviews, skills and selection matrix
- ▶ Nominees sent to City (SM) for approval through council
- ▶ Orientation to organization (now web based through board portal)

# Board: First things first

- ▶ Needed a Strategic Plan in the first year (3 yr), plans to refresh every 3–5 years
- ▶ Work plan that staff refreshes quarterly and posts to keep Strategic Plan alive
- ▶ Board evaluation each year
- ▶ Housing tours, access to conferences, education
- ▶ Working committees
- ▶ Guest speakers and local experts



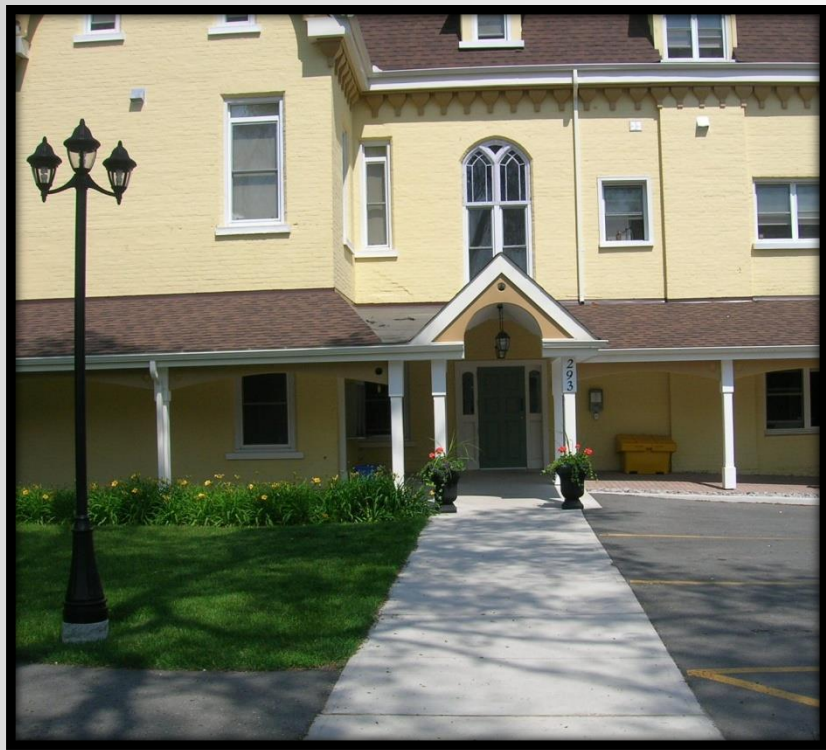
# And so it went

- ▶ In 2004 PHC with partners, PHC started to think about new development opportunities
- ▶ We incorporated Finally A Home, our development corporation in 2006
- ▶ By 2011 we had built under 8 affordable housing agreements, added 244 units of new housing
- ▶ In the same time period we project managed 4 projects for other non-profits for a total of 84 units



## New Developments





## Along with core business, new development came the usual hiccups and projects along the way

- ▶ PHC suffered catastrophic flood conditions in 2002 and 2004 with over half the portfolio affected and then back to full recovery
- ▶ We converted 350 units of housing to ceramic storage heating units
- ▶ Worked with partners to bring food banks, recreation programs, community gardens and home care to our communities
- ▶ Had a massive fire destroy 8 townhouses with one loss of life



ABSOLUTELY  
SIR, THE  
BOATING AND  
FISHING IN  
THE AREA  
IS QUITE  
SPECTACULAR!

# PETERBOROUGH & KAWARTHA LAKES

TOURISM AND RECREATION





# And then it was time:

- ▶ To start making long range plans for the future, to start thinking about being “Captains of our own ship” instead of jumping at every opportunity
- ▶ To start fresh; evaluate our needs for the future
- ▶ Assess goals for the Board, skills and knowledge for staffing, our entire portfolio; what served us well, what is failing, what can be improved, what needs to go



# FROM 2012 til now:



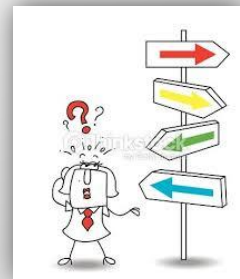
- ▶ PHC developed a new strategy that aligned with the provincial strategy (LTAHS)
- ▶ We began an End of Debentures Committee that looked at each and every property and evaluated debt, FCI and value to community
- ▶ We commissioned a study of the entire portfolio that generated a 15 Year Capital Finance and Community Revitalization Plan
- ▶ We did a complete reorganization of our staffing model and refreshed the board matrix



- ▶ To position ourselves for the future
- ▶ To become less reliant on government funding
- ▶ To create our own opportunities
- ▶ To have a strong business model, with a social heart
- ▶ To create vibrant communities, utilize community partners, strengthen our ability to generate change
- ▶ To serve our clients better

# So where is the magic and how do you get there?

1. Determine where you want your organization to go in the future; what does it aspire to do?
2. How is that different than your current mandate?
3. Are you responding to change? anticipating change? seeking efficiencies? looking for new opportunities? Increasing demands and reduced funding?
4. What are your options; status quo/change
5. What do you and your Board need to do to prepare?

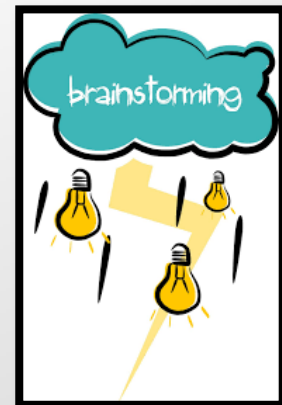


# A Supportive Board

- ▶ Encouraged in their duties through strong support from government; thorough and inclusive appointment process
- ▶ Led by a strong Chair, one that has been exposed to the broader sector, has encouraged other Board members to participate in committees and be engaged
- ▶ I think a governance model is best, a board that sets the strategic direction, works on policy, enables the ED/CEO to provide leadership to staff and understands smart, comparative risk taking
- ▶ Board that is connected to the broader community

# Expose the Board:

- ▶ To alternate models, entrepreneurial opportunities, changes in demographics and what that means ie: growing # seniors = supportive housing
- ▶ Talk about what ifs: what if we do nothing, what if we take this journey? What if we tear down this community, intensify, mix the housing and have private and community partners build on the same site?
- ▶ Exercise their brains, take them out for retreat, let them brainstorm





# Develop and Educate

- ▶ Show them what happens in the community
- ▶ Expose them to the hoarding, bed bugs, pressures but let them know that the staff has the core competencies handled
- ▶ Talk about the changes coming in housing; portable housing benefits and how that changes how we need to do business
- ▶ Encourage them to see the housing world through the eyes of the future and how we need to change to fit, its exciting!

# Bring in the experts:

- ▶ On development; opportunities we can create or have come to the organization
- ▶ Whenever there is a risk, have someone other than you to answer questions, need to be clear on due diligence
- ▶ Creative partnerships with others (PHC does not do health but with a strong partnership we will deliver 24/7 care in our newest building)
- ▶ Ensure the Board that the organization is not suffering because of the “sexy stuff” and that you have the capacity and are developing the skills and knowledge your staff need for the future



# Share the success

- ▶ Make it the Board experience anyone would want to be part of, that has outcomes that align with the values of the Board members ( PHC has developed a community partnership and has 12 participants in a Homeward Bound program)
- ▶ Successful projects bring good press and I always ensure it is the Board members at the microphone for building openings and not me.
- ▶ Get your organization and yourself out there, be recognized, it brings confidence at all levels



# Solution minded not problem challenged

- ▶ Freshen up your Board, practice good succession planning, evaluate skills needed for the future
- ▶ Bring in the skills you need; marketing, real estate, successful business , financial experts, legal, community leaders
- ▶ Revisit or plan your next Strategic Plan
- ▶ Are your mission statement, vision and values current?
- ▶ Define what your organization is and what it is not

## So what do we need?

- ▶ Skills and knowledge that we don't have presently ( board and staff)
- ▶ Outside expertise ( staff or board??)
- ▶ Guiding principles ( do what we do best; we are experts at housing)
- ▶ Desire and capacity to take on more
- ▶ New ways of doing business
- ▶ New types of housing, profit for purpose



- ▶ Changing the way we view who we serve, marketing, model suites, etc
- ▶ Building strong partnerships to deliver services
- ▶ Strong, consistent financials
- ▶ Review your stock, what is still useful? (Don't be precious)
- ▶ Alternative revenue generation (selling units)
- ▶ Change in culture and how we support change
- ▶ Influence change at all levels

# It Starts with Leadership

- ▶ Strong leadership at all levels
- ▶ Ability to govern, without getting mired in operations
- ▶ Leveraging the organizations strengths to be able to do more
- ▶ Having a shared corporate vision
- ▶ Reaching and aspiring to do more
- ▶ Celebrating success



# Is it Easy?

- ▶ No, it isn't easy to change organizations or culture and it doesn't happen overnight
- ▶ It starts with knowing where you want to go
- ▶ There will be hiccups, things will not always go as planned but adjust your sails
- ▶ A slight change in direction sets you to a whole new destination. Don't lose the shared vision!
- ▶ Keep track of your accomplishments, build on your strengths and remember who you serve and why we do the work we do



# Thank you

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