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Co-op housing project beats the odds

Posted By LARA BRADLEY, THE SUDBURY STAR

Updated 9 months ago

Barb Millsap became emotional as she recounted some of the hurdles in realizing a 14- year dream.

"At points I didn't ever think we were going to do it," said Millsap, the president of the board of the Raiffeisen Cooperative Homes (Phase I) and soon-to-be-open Raiffeisen Phase 2.

"Last summer, when we couldn't find a lender. We weren't expecting that."

It wasn't easy leveraging almost \$12 million for Sudbury's first affordable housing project since 1994 -- even with \$3.3 million from the Canada- Ontario Affordable Housing Program and \$1.3 million in financial incentives from the city.

Actually, the project marks another first -- the first time in a decade all three levels of government have contributed toward building affordable housing.

Sudbury MPP Rick Bartolucci and Mayor John Rodriguez spoke about the importance of working together at the press conference.

"In difficult times, it is always good news when the Canadian community rallies together to put together solid projects that will help citizens achieve a greater quality of life and living," said Rodriguez.

"We are proud to support initiatives such as this, which will provide long-term affordable housing for vulnerable persons in Sudbury," said Bartolucci.

On Tuesday, drills whirled and a giant spool of cable whined as workers pulled wire into the frame of an 80-unit affordable housing apartment for low-income individuals and families.

Of those units, eight will be set aside for clients of the Canadian Mental Health Association and 12 will be for people with physical challenges. However, the complex is still searching for funding to make those 12 apartments into supportive housing units, which ICAN would look after.

"These 12 units will free up desperately needed hospital and extended care beds in the community," Millsap said.

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Two years ago, Millsap brought an idea she had been dreaming of since the 1990s -- of building an apartment complex providing affordable housing next existing the Raiffeisen Co-operative -- to the board. While she suspects some board members thought she was "dreaming in technicolour," they gave her the green light to pursue it.

"But I think many had thought it was futile since no new non-profit housing had been built in the city since 1994 when the province cancelled the last project," she said.

After a few snags, by 2008 it appeared viable and confidently they began to move ahead.

Yes, there were frustrations. "Because the three levels of government had not been doing new development in over a decade, rules and requirements were often a moving target," she said.

One problem they weren't expecting was finding a lender. One bank after another showed initial interest, only to back out at the last minute.

"I didn't dare tell Sam (Biasucci, the builder) because he was already into the project by a million bucks," she said.

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Articles & Blogs

Questions About Fired Members of 6500

I am sure I am not alone when I find it confusing that those fired members of the union bargaining team or the executive are still active, I mean if you are fired or otherwise no longer employed at Vale, than what right do these people have to represent those who are employed by Vale? It seem

moments in time ... humanity may well have gotten as far as it has ... because (at select times) practically was allowed to merge with the gentler art of dreaming; that 'ying and yang' of bygone times - i am completely unable to explain it. I do feel that we might be less quick.

Xstrata
My blogging followers, The source I have is from Xstrata in Toronto so be nice and I will let you know more. The fact of the matter is there is pressure on both sides to get a deal done and if the BC is down in Toronto then they are close. In Collective Bargaining there is a thing calle

No News is BaD NeWs
Since it has been reported that the deal could take as little as 48 hours of negotiating I believe that because there has been no news that this may be bad news for the United Steelworkers Local 6500. We will see what will happen though. There is still 24 hours left!

Charity free wills program in Sudbury
People aged 55 and over are being offered a free Will-writing service by three local firms of lawyers as part of a charity initiative called Free Wills Month. The service is a new initiative and will run through the month of May. Five national charities are behind the project which they hope will

Vale Inco loses over 200 million in first quarter; had to buy 91 million of nickel to supply customers

Millsap went through many sleepless nights in July and August of 2008 looking for a lender, "even though we had all this money coming in and a 100% guarantee from CMHC," she said.

Finally, People's Trust of Canada agreed to take the project on at the end of August, offering it a 35-year mortgage.

Much of the work has already been done. Builder Sam Biasucci, owner of Saldan, reported that the project is one week ahead of schedule for opening Nov. 1.

"Construction is always a challenge. We worked for Barb before. She's probably the hardest working woman I've ever met. When she starts something, she doesn't give up," he said.

"She brings your enthusiasm along with her's. Once you start, you know you will go all the way to the end ... It's what we do for a living. We wouldn't do it if we didn't enjoy it. We wanted to make sure it looked as good as the rest of the houses."

Biasucci lives just up the street in one of Saldan's brand new houses in the Sunrise Ridge Estate development off Mount Adam. His company built Raiffeisen Co-operative (phase 1), which is next door to this new apartment building.

"It's going to have exciting colours. Stay tuned for that," Biasucci said.

To inquire about the units available, contact the Raiffeisen Co-operative Homes office, at 151 Mount Adam, or call 674-6818. The board is still sorting through applications, but expects it will be full before it opens.

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Now this is the Sudbury that I know and love! It's the Barbs of this city, the caring, the optimistic, the hard working doers that make Sudbury so Great. On behalf of many people, I thank you Barb!

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Post #1 By [lanny](#), 9 months ago | 0 Votes | **Vote:**



Way to go, Barb, and thank you to all of the other community builders who were involved with this project. Greater Sudbury has been enriched through your efforts!

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Post #2 By [Sudbury Bull Dog](#), 9 months ago | 0 Votes | **Vote:**



Good on the Harper government for funding this Sudbury project.

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Post #3 By [bullblaster](#), 9 months ago | 0 Votes | **Vote:**



Yeah, millions of thanks to the Harper government finally giving us some our share of the tax pie for this project. Let's make Sudbury a PC stronghold now.

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Right on!!!
 This year has got off to a good running start. Winter has ended and construction season has started. The city has actually started like they

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 I hear it way too often: why are they going on strike for a pension that doesn't affect them and only the new employees?

city council passed the same draft in 2000 & 2004.
 Hello people before you all get up in arms with what city council passed on wed, please remember that they issued the same thing in

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