

Housing Regeneration Forum, Brockville, June 25, 2010

Strategies on Community Revitalization - Open Discussion

Table 1 Questions:

- How did you overcome NIMBY?
- What were the specific steps in your strategy and how did this impact project timelines?

Discussion highlights:

- ▶ NIMBY is a phantom – people don't admit it
- ▶ Build supports, focus on positives
- ▶ Aim for broader picture of community and fit
- ▶ Some will deny the facts - focus on positive benefits (put face on the issue, these are people in our community)
- ▶ Be a good neighbour

Table 2 Questions:

- What accessibility and/or energy efficient features did you incorporate into your design?
- What resident group did you target? If mixed-use how was this determined?
- Were there support services?

Discussion highlights:

- ▶ Energy efficiency: solar hot water system, photovoltaic
- ▶ Shield tenants from energy costs
- ▶ Accessibility – Ontario Accessibility Act, Duty to accommodate
- ▶ Target groups: seniors, persons with mobility issues, hearing and vision impairment issues

Table 3 Questions:

- What resident or cultural issues had to be addressed?

- What heritage features did you preserve?

Discussion highlights:

Chinese Community Building Regeneration

- Limited disruption of tenants/residents. Tenants did not want to be displaced to another building during renovations. Housing provider also wanted to avoid having to “house” tenants in temporary accommodation. It would have added to the overall costs of the social housing repairs.
- There was a need to hold meetings before the renovations took place to explain to residents what was being undertaken.
- There was a need to determine if there were any communications issues – did all residents understand English? If people understand what is being proposed they will be more willing to cooperate and tolerate some degree of temporary inconvenience.

When undertaking renovations at buildings that considered to have “heritage” features which need to be protected, there is a need for a balance between the maintaining the heritage features and the cost to undertake the renovations.

Renovations also have to “fit in” with the streetscape. The building where renovations are occurring may not have heritage features but if it is located in an area where there are older buildings, any exterior repairs to brickwork or walls should complement these buildings whenever possible.

Other cultural concerns:

- Do the majority of the residents of the building come from a different cultural background. Are there different norms to consider – in one project, the male head of the family was reluctant to allow his wife to co-sign the lease.
- Understand the different cultural backgrounds you may encounter.
- Be prepared to modify your approach to accommodate different cultural backgrounds
- Be flexible in your approach – keep in mind that your objective is to undertake the renovations/regeneration at a reasonable cost. There may be a number of ways that you can achieve this.

Table 4 Questions:

- Discuss acquisition/rehabilitation or conversion of existing properties under the Affordable Housing Program or AHI.
- How did you make the decision to convert versus to build new?

Discussion highlights:

- ▶ Know where buildings are located – inventory
- ▶ Ways of acquiring
- ▶ Adaptive re-use

Convert vs. Building New:

- ▶ Costs (higher?)
- ▶ Be open minded
- ▶ Heritage value
- ▶ Target tenants

Table 5 Questions:

- How did you finance your project? Describe the process and timeline.
- What alternative sources of financing, grants, loans, etc did you tap in to?
- What were the challenges?

Discussion highlights:

Project (semi-detached) - HFH/GRTR Kingston/Frontenac

Financing:

- ▶ Donation of land
- ▶ Gifts/community contributions
- ▶ Sweat equity
- ▶ Corporate bill/days
- ▶ In-kind contributions (trades /services)
- ▶ Municipal contributions (fees - \$28,000)
- ▶ Property rebate - \$29,000
- ▶ \$115,000/yr "Restore"
- ▶ AHP – Homeownership - \$50,000/unit
- ▶ SEED \$ - new project
- ▶ Trillium Grant (volunteer recruitment and retention)

Challenges:

- ▶ Land