



# MOLE HILL NEWS

## **Mole Hill Community Housing Society Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting took place on November 24, 2009. The meeting began with a presentation by Sean McEwen, the architect for Mole Hill, who gave an historical overview of the history of Mole Hill. The Executive Director took the time to thank the many volunteers who have participated over the last year.

We are also very pleased to announce the acclamation of new directors Antonio Baro-Castilante, Carellin Brooks, Kevin Chan, Jacinta Eni, Gillan Jackson, Robert Nickerson, Matthew Oliver, Stephen Reid, Ken Wong and Derek Wood. Bria Scott and Marvin Bates will remain on the Board for their second year of a two-year term.

We would like to thank Terry Lavender, Kathleen Leahy, Stan Roberts and Sharon de Souza for their many years of participation on the Board of Directors.

The Executive was elected as follows: Gillan Jackson as Chair, Bria Scott as Vice Chair, Derek Wood as Treasurer and Robert Nickerson as Secretary. The new Privacy Officers are Antonio Baro-Castilante and Matthew Oliver. The Board will be undertaking various projects, including the review and rewriting of the constitution, over the next several months.

*Please see the back page for the report from the past chair and treasurer.*



## **Tenant Meeting**

**Come and meet our new Board of Directors**  
Information and Discussion  
Thursday, February 4, 2010  
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm  
**Mole Hill Community Room**

### **Please Welcome our New Cleaners**

Baogang Cai (Bobbie) and Jikai Tang (Catherine) have been doing cleaning work for over 7 years. They are originally from China, where Bobbie taught Secondary School and Catherine was an administrator. They have one 25-year-old son, Dave, who works at Canadian Tire.

### **Do you have content's insurance?**

Many people who are renters do not remember the importance of having contents insurance. Management is investigating a group insurance plan for tenants. If you are interested, please let us know and we will provide you with the necessary information.

### **Suggestions and Feedback**

Please feel free to make use of the suggestion box in the laundry room if you would like to provide the Board with suggestions or feedback. The box will be checked regularly by one of our Privacy Officers.

### **Parking**

There are available parking spots at Mole Hill! Please contact the office (604-687-1145) if you are in need of a spot.



**Mole Hill Community Housing Society  
AGM  
November 24, 2009**

**Treasurer's Report**

It is my pleasure to present the Mole Hill Financial Statements for the period April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009. Although I was not the Society Treasurer during this period, I have reviewed the statements with COHO Management and with the Society ED, Margot Beauchamp.

I would like to draw your attention to a few areas:

1. On the Statement of Operations for the year ended March 31, 2009:
  - a. There have been substantial reductions in expenses in office overhead, grounds maintenance, garbage removal and security and we commend management for its efforts in cost reduction.
  - b. Although the Statement of Operations indicates an excess of revenues over expenses of \$57,740, this balance does not take into account two important transactions:
    - i. The transfer of \$109,681 from operations to the Replacement Reserve Fund.
    - ii. The transfer of \$18,222 of prior year operating expenses into the Replacement Reserve Fund, resulting in an increase in our surplus.

These transfers are shown on the Statement of Changes in Net Assets. Note that with the \$18,222 added back to the operating fund, and the \$109,681 transfer from it, we finished with a small operating deficit of (8,628) at year-end.

- c. Each year, we are required to transfer a specific amount to the replacement reserve to fund the future cost of replacing capital items like roofs, appliances, carpeting, etc. Last year, we were required to transfer \$204,614 to the reserve, but because of our deficit position, we obtained BC Housing's approval to transfer \$109,681.

While the society's decision to reduce the replacement reserve transfer for last year by almost \$100,000 was reasonable, it causes considerable concern for the future of Mole Hill. The property is getting older. The improvements that were originally done are now aging. If we continue to under fund the replacement reserve, we are in danger of not having sufficient funding for capital replacement in future.

BC Housing and your Board have instructed management to reduce expenses to ensure the replacement reserve is adequately funded. We're pleased at the efforts Margot has made to bring Mole Hill to a more sound financial footing, to preserve Mole Hill for the long run.

I also want to recognize & thank COHO for their management services since Mole Hill began, and particularly for their assistance to me in understanding last year's financial statements.

Jacinta Eni  
Treasurer

**Chair's Report**

This past year has been challenging for the Society. Because of how our funding formula is calculated, we started the year with a large - and growing - deficit. Through the efforts of our executive director, Margot Beauchamp and former treasurer John Trueman, we have found significant one-time and ongoing savings. Our executive director will be implementing other cost-saving measures and continues to search for new ways to economize without compromising the quality of service to tenants.

However, these measures are not enough to close the deficit gap, given the basic problem in our funding formula, and we were forced to ask BC Housing to address this issue. They agreed, on condition we apply for an extraordinary rent increase for market tenants.

The decision to apply for an extraordinary rent increase was made after lengthy and well-informed debate involving the whole board. We continued to negotiate with BC Housing and to lobby local and provincial politicians to try to minimize the effect of these increases on tenants. Through the efforts of the board and tenants we succeeded, and BC Housing agreed to come to our assistance and we were able to withdraw the application for the rent increase, pending a new assessment in the new year. This will continue to be a crucial issue and one on which we will need to work together for the benefit of the Society and of all Mole Hill tenants.

Also this year, the board voted to move to a different model of governance. Since the founding of the Society, the board has been what's called a "working" board -- besides policy matters, we dealt with issues such as evictions and maintenance, and the so-called "three p's" - parking, pets and plants. But the reality is that Mole Hill, with more than 300 residents in 28 houses and with a multimillion-dollar budget, is too complex to be managed by a volunteer board of directors. There is also the danger of conflicts of interest, especially with tenants serving on the board and unavoidably dealing with issues relating to tenancy, for example in situations involving their neighbours. Accordingly, we hired an executive director and have delegated day-to-day responsibility to her, leaving the board free to consider broader matters of policy and governance. This is a standard model for societies such as Mole Hill. This process is well underway and should be completed next year.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow board members -- Marvin Bates, John Burton, Sharon de Souza, Jacinta Eni, Kathleen Leahy, Stan Roberts, and Bria Scott. I must also acknowledge former members Antonio Baro-Castilante, Lawrence Clayton, Celine Goddard, and especially former secretary Beth Lopez and former treasurer John Trueman. They have all devoted long hours to ensuring that Mole Hill continues to be an affordable, sustainable, livable and secure community. And of course, thank you to Margot Beauchamp, for her hard work on behalf of the society. I have enjoyed working with her and am confident that the day-to-day operations of Mole Hill are in good hands.

As this is my last term on the board, I would finally like to thank a few others with whom I have worked over the past seven years -- Blair Petrie, Sean McEwan, Leah Miniuk, Bisera Baksa, Mike Walker, and the many dedicated board members, such as Vanessa Geary, Don Allison, Tom Durning, Jessica Land, Kurt Siegert and Drew Dennis. And finally, thank you all for coming out to tonight's AGM and demonstrating your dedication to Mole Hill.

Terry Lavender – Chair of the Board