

Summary – MB Life Lease Forum (Feb 6, 2020)

Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association (MNPHA) and Manitoba Life Lease Occupants Association (MLLOA) co-sponsored the MB Life Lease Forum inviting Board members, EDs, managers and tenant representatives from 15 Life Leases to discuss key issues unique to Life Leases in Manitoba and provide input for a training package for stakeholders in the sector. The training package may become part of the MNPHA's educational workshop series, conference, webinars, or online/printed materials. The forum was held at Colorado Estates (140 Ferry Road) on Feb 6, 2020.

Training Needs Discussed

Here is a summary for trainings that are agreed to be helpful for both Landlord Board members and Tenant Reps:

- Board basics training including strategic planning, making the most of an AGM, roles and responsibilities (particularly fiduciary responsibilities), policy development, succession planning (including board job descriptions)
 - “Certificate of Completion” (as supporting doc for funding/grant application) – MNPHA will consult MHRC and CMHC on governance capacity
- Understanding the financial structure of the organization and facility, including the purpose of reserve funds, refund funds, mortgages, operating budgets, capital budgets
- Understanding Tenant rep's role, and Board Members understanding of role: having a rep, being a rep, good board practices, job descriptions
- Understanding Management's role, and how to evaluate management
- Life Lease Legislation: Life Lease Act, Residential Tenancies Act, Human Rights legislation, fire safety, Elderly and Infirm Persons Housing Act, Accessibility Act
- Communication and engagement: Establish communication channels between Board members, Managers and Tenants

For Landlord Board Members:

- Future planning: financial statements and audits; alternative revenue sources; is life lease the right model for residents' changing demographic
- Capital planning and reserve funds: advice on savings, spending; 5, 15, and 25 year projections; using a Building Condition Assessment report; accounting models/financial governance case studies

For Tenant Reps, Councils, or Committees:

- Communications with Tenants - a handbook for new tenants
- Welcome committee best practices and lessons learned
- Building community; engaging new residents

The final discussion summarizes the priority for next steps:

- MLLOA and MNPHA to meet regularly and plan to collaborate
- Reach out for shared resources
- Support Tenant engagement (template welcome package)

- Define terms associated with Life Leases/create a reference guide
- Support trust-building between tenant associations, boards, and managers (networking events)
- Association of Life Lease managers/landlords

Here is a list of ideas to bring back to your organization to implement right away:

- Make good use of AGM, and plan a tripartite round table to talk about strategic planning, buildings and tenants
- Start a welcome committee, if there isn't one
- Produce a handbook for Board Members (includes Reserve Fund Study), if there isn't one
 - Get tenant feedback for board package
 - Ensure it is used regularly
 - Include training on financial statements and good financial practices (including a discussion of reserve funds, re-mortgaging options, setting entry costs)
- Conduct one-day seminar/orientation for new board members
- Produce a handbook for Tenant Rep (roles & responsibilities; BoD responsibilities; Managers responsibilities), if there isn't one
- Produce a handbook for new tenants, if there isn't one