

Trailer dwellers move on

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The tenants are gone but many of the homes have been left behind, stripped of anything of value.

On Friday, Junior and Debbie Molloy were still hauling furniture and small items from their home of 16 years, but they're leaving the structure behind. Like most of the Falls Road residents, they've been unable to sell the home they've been paying taxes on for years. The Molloy's have been forced to compress their possessions into a rented apartment on Sixth Avenue.



CREDIT: Shayne Morrow / AV Times
Junior, left, and Debbie Molloy are in the last stages of moving out of their Falls Road home of 16 years. Residents have until Sept. 1 to vacate.

"This was OK when we were young and in the military," Debbie said.

"In the military, in the 1960s, you could be moved every year. When we got out of the military and bought a home 16 years ago, we allowed ourselves to accumulate."

Debbie said the previous owners of the park encouraged tenants to expand and improve their homes. For most, that's made their mobile homes immobile and, more importantly, unsalable. Neighbour Jack Goldie, whose unit was declared in good shape and still road-certifiable, received only \$3,000.

Still, next-to-nothing is still better than nothing, she said. The main issue now is disposing of the trailer itself. Debbie and her husband do not have the resources to move the unit and pay for disposal and they will likely be charged back by the developer.

"When I went to the regional district to ask about waiving the tipping

fees, they said they could only do it for charities," she said.

On Friday, regional administrative assistant Wendy Thomson confirmed that the district is unable to offer waivers to individuals.

That includes the Alberni Athletic Association, which will receive rebates for tipping fees on the cleanup of the Athletic Hall site. Hupacasath First Nation was given a deferment of fees for disposal of rubble from the former First Nations Seafood site, but no waiver, Thomson said. The board now wants to make sure that protection is in place in the event of further trailer park redevelopments, she said.

"Our directors have requested a meeting with the minister responsible for housing at the upcoming (Union of B.C. Municipalities) convention, to discuss changes to the Manufactured Homes Tenancy Act, to ensure that tenants who are being displaced by development are given assistance," Thomson said.

The convention is Sept. 28 to Oct. 2.

Earlier in the week, one of the developers, who asked not to be identified publicly, said the site will be cleared soon.

"The trailers will be moved to a field and we'll put them up for sale individually," he said. "We're going to be levelling out the lot and making it a desirable property."

Any possessions left behind will be stored where they can be recovered by the owners, he noted.

Debbie pointed out that the original eviction notice was contingent on the developers having permits in place.

"They don't have the permits from the city or from Fisheries and Oceans, but the requirement was overturned by an arbitrator," she said.

City planning director Scott Smith confirmed that the permit process is still in the works.

"We have not seen a report on bank stabilization or the fisheries report," Smith said. "Whatever is proposed by any engineer will have to be approved by DFO and the city."

That's because the Somass River, which the site overlooks, is a major salmon-bearing stream and subject to stringent protections, he added.

As for the Molloys, they have to be out by Sept. 1.