

New hope for trailer owners

Developer will help evicted tenants move to new site

BY DARRELL BELLAART, THE DAILY NEWS FEBRUARY 19, 2009

A new mobile home park proposed for Ladysmith could provide relief for residents at the Ivy Green mobile home park facing eviction in less than a year.

Oak Bay Marine Group says it has a developer interested in building the new park, which would give residents in 39 aging mobile homes a relocation option when the evictions take effect in January 2010.

Under the Manufactured Park Tenancy Act, mobile home park owners must give tenants a one-year notice before redeveloping the property.

Such development plans often creates a situation where trailer park residents, many of whom live in aging homes and on limited incomes, have few options for relocation. And while Oak Bay isn't saying much about its plans, chief operations officer Lanny Sawchuk insists it will provide tenants with a workable housing solution for when they are displaced.

One other option for tenants could be River Run, an eight-acre property on Fielding Road the provincial government recently announced it plans to buy to create 50 strata lots for evicted trailer park residents. But that project is still under study.

Meanwhile, Ladysmith Mayor Rob Hutchins says the problem is with the Manufactured Park Tenancy Act itself, which fails to protect residents.

Sawchuk said his company will work with the moving costs and tenants will also have the option to move into the new homes Oak Bay will build at Ivy Green, overlooking the Ladysmith harbour.

Lynne Courtney, a spokeswoman for the tenants, said most are skeptical of the plan "because they said the same thing at Petter Bay."

Last year, Oak Bay gave residents of the Petter Bay park in Metchosin 12 months notice, leading to B.C.'s first challenge of the Manufactured Park Tenancy Act. The B.C. Supreme Court ruled in favour of the landlord.

Hutchins said the situation highlights a problem in legislation affecting mobile home living. "The issue is this is a very viable, affordable form of housing, however, because of the uncertainty, it isn't viable," he said.

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