

## 30. Provide Project Management for Doukhobor Benevolent Society to develop:

### a. Parkside Villa at Grand Forks, B.C. 1983

Located at 2450 - 72 Avenue, Grand Forks, B.C. This a 26-unit seniors housing was financed by B.C. Housing (BCH) and developed by the Doukhobor Benevolent Society (DBS).



The Doukhobor Benevolent Society was registered about 1980 by the three (3) Doukhobor parent groups of Doukhobors:

1. Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC)
2. Canadian Doukhobor Society (CDS)
3. Members of the original Sons of Freedom (no registered Society)

The objective was to construct seniors housing cooperatively and take advantage of grants from the British Columbia Housing which financed seniors housing for *bone fide* bon profit societies that acted as charitable organizations and provided administration for the project.

Ken Konkin Sr. was the first President, but the first project was undertaken in Grand Forks, B.C. by a Committee that included Peter Popoff, Peter Bloodoff, Peter Oglow, (I nicknamed them the “Triple Pete’s”) Joe Nevakshonoff, John J Verigin Sr., (there were other members that I do not recall at the moment).

This group approached me to if I could assist to get the first DBS project going as I had already constructed projects with BCH and knew the personnel in Cranbrook. A package was assembled, and BCH encouraged the Committee to proceed to a land search and preliminary building drawings for about 26 units.

I was able to engage an Architect, Pafford Clay, MRAIC as I was working with him on a project in downtown Trail at that time.

The project advanced to a site selection just below the Catholic Church but needed to be rezoned. A Public Hearing attracted many to oppose a “Doukhobor Project” in downtown Grand Forks. This infuriated the GM of BCH and he met with the mayor and told him that he would support the DBS to

build the project adjacent to the Grand Forks USCC Community Center if the city was not able to find a suitable site within its boundaries.

The result was “quick action” by the city and a site chosen at the former Airport on the South side of town.

The Architectural design was already completed for the original location that was on a sloping site so that the units had a “shanty slope” with windows facing the Sun to capture environmental assets for energy efficiency. Because the DBS could not afford additional architectural fees, the final project has a design now that perhaps does not suit the site, but the project was able to meet the financing requirements after tendering with Bill Pepin, being the successful General Contractor.

Peter Bloodoff was a retired Union Carpenter and he requested that the DBS obtain financing from the Carpenters Union Benevolent Fund (CUBF). I cautioned that the CUBF may dictate that only Certified Union Contractors will be a requirement to construct the project, but Peter scoffed at this notion.

The second low Bidder was a Union firm that was \$1.8 million as compared to Bill Pepin at about \$1.2 million and the acceptable BCH funding amount. As I expected, the CUBF demanded that the award be given to the Union Contractor which meant that the project would have to be abandoned as BCH could not advance any more money.

Interesting that one of the DBS Directors resigned as he would not be able to cross a possible picket line. There was an interesting exchange amongst the Directors which will not be noted here.

The project was in disarray and BCH was prepared to abandon the funding until I suggested a plan:

1. That the DBS reject all the tenders due to financing
2. That they continue with E Verigin Consultants (EVC) as Project Manager
3. That they hire Bill Pepin as a Superintendent
4. That all the subcontractors be issued contracts under the DBS
5. That EVC approach Dennis Chernoff, a Mortgage Broker for alternative mortgage and advise the CUBF that the DBS has obtained funding from another source.

The plan was approved by BCH and DBS and the project was able to go ahead.

Three (3) months later, a contract was executed with DBS / Bill Pepin and the project was completed to the satisfaction of all involved.

The DBS then operated the project for 25 years until the mortgage was paid and passed it over to DBS for continuance.

Edited by EWV November 03, 2021

