

## 31. Create Lower Mainland Doukhobor Benevolent Society

This was a combined effort with a Doukhobor Society that was already in place that was a meeting group named Lochdale Group (they met at the Lochdale Hall), attended by Doukhobors from Western Canada. We added Peter and Elsie Rezanoff, Marilyn and Elmer Verigin, Lawrence, and Kathy Popoff together with Nick and Maxine Ozeroff into a committee that named itself The Lower Mainland Doukhobor Benevolent Society (LMDBS) to differentiate from the Doukhobor Benevolent Society (DBS) in the Kootenays who had already developed Parkside Villa in Grand Forks and Rosewood Manor in Castlegar. The LMDBS got permission from DBS to use the DBS Constitution and amend it for LMDBS incorporation.



This project was developed in 1991 under contract with Northmark. Land was owned by this Developer who undertook to rezone it to satisfy the construction of a 48-unit seniors housing. All applications and final submissions to B.C. Housing (BCH) was under their administration. Plans and construction was part of their contract.

All interim financing was also the responsibility of Northmark. LMDBS then used the BCH funding to pay out after all deficiencies were completed to their satisfaction.

- a. LMDBS completed the commissioning and rentals to occupants.
- b. The building was named Cottonwood Manor.
- c. A garden area (upper left-hand corner) was set up on an irrigated garden so that the residents all could grow a hobby garden.
- d. I served as the initial President with Peter Rezanoff as Vice-President. Lawrence Popoff was secretary and Nick Ozeroff served as Treasurer. There was a total of ten (10) Directors including the Executive.
- e. The Society is still active and operates the facility to this day.
- f. Most Doukhobor meetings in the Lower Mainland are held in the Activity Room of the building.



This is the front view of this 48-unit Seniors project, from the West elevation.

80<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be on the right or South side and the access to the project.

This project started with a discussion with an Architect that was travelling by plane to Vancouver from Castlegar and he sat beside me. I knew him to be improving Kiro Manor, Trail, B.C., as well as a project which Marbella renovated for him in Vancouver.

The usual conversation about what was taking place in his sphere of operation as well as mine. I asked if he knew of any Developers on the Lower Mainland that could take a senior's project from concept to commissioning for BCH. He responded with enthusiasm in that he had many contacts, but the issue seemed to be a lack of non-profit societies that would sponsor such projects.

I was in a good mood and suggested that I had a non-profit society but that I did not have the time to find a suitable Developer.

Within a week I received a call from the Architect advising me that he had a Developer, Landmark who was experienced in delivering seniors housing projects for BCH. When could we meet with my Society?

Well, there was no Society at that instant on the Lower Mainland, but I had back in my mind that this was something that could be added to the DBS as that Society was expressly constituted to build seniors projects in Castlegar and Grand Forks so why not on the Lower Mainland?

I called Lawrence Popoff and asked if he had time to come to a meeting and briefed him on what had transpired. "Bring your briefcase and act like you are a secretary," I challenged him.

He got the idea and was ready whenever he was required to meet.

A few days later we met with the Architect and the Developer Landmark. Landmark advised that

1. The intended site was located on 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the Delta side of Scott Road.
2. The property was suited for 75 units as per BCH criteria.
3. That they would submit a 48 unit and a 75-unit proposal at the same time so that BCH could choose one or the other depending on available funding.
4. That a BCH proposal call was expected within a few months.
5. That Fred Minty, was a former BCH Manager and was working for Northmark now and he would undertake the application.
6. That all zoning, designs, construction, and financing would be the responsibility of Northmark with a takeout mortgage by your non-profit society.

Fred ended with "So what is your society's name?"

I looked at Lawrence and explained that we would need to talk to the rest of our group and quite likely form a special Society for this Project. Give us a few days and we will get back to you.

They left and Lawrence and I had a chat as it seemed like this was something that was planned all along. We discussed our action plan, and this is way it unfolded:

1. We had been already associating with the Lochdale Doukhobor Group and so we would have to meet with them and form a committee.
2. We called Peter and Elsie Rezanoff, Nick and Maxine Ozeroff and set up a meeting with the Lochdale Group.
3. We called DBS and their opinion was that a new Society should be formed using the DBS constitution.
4. We met with the Lochdale people, and they agreed to support the project.
5. We formed a Building Committee of Rezanoffs, Popoffs, Ozeroffs, Verigins with some people from the Lochdale Group.
6. We registered Lower Mainland Doukhobor Benevolent Society (LMDBS).
7. We then advised Landmark of the name as we needed to do little more at this time.

Fred Minty stayed in touch and reported:

1. The property required a Public Hearing for rezoning which many of us attended.
  - a. It was rezoned
2. 100 applications were submitted to BCH but about 30 may be approved within available funding.
3. We found out that 26 projects were approved but our number was 27 for 48 units and we were not successful.
4. We asked for a meeting with BCH for an explanation.
5. A very detailed meeting took place and the “point system” was explained and we were 7 points short of success.
6. We were told that we would be short listed for the next allocation of funding.
7. We left with the declaration that we wanted to be approved this time.

The President of the local Seniors Association paid me a visit:

1. Would our intended project be available to the public?
2. Of course.
3. She promised she would call the housing minister and demand that the LMDBS project be built as there was a serious lack of seniors housing in that area.
4. Fred Minty called and said that BCH had finally approved 48 units and the project would start right away.

Development:

1. The project was named Cottonwood Manor.
2. A Housing Committee was formed to receive names for interviews and qualifications.
3. The project got built and accepted.
4. Northmark was paid out.
5. Pete Savinkoff was our society project manager and became the first operations manager.
6. The Activity Room was to be used by the Lower Mainland Doukhobors as a meeting place and furniture was required.

- a. There was about \$30,000 remaining in the funding by good project management.
  - b. BCH policy was that furniture funding had to be separately raised by the Society.
  - c. Peter Fominoff, the Society Lawyer place the money in his Trust Account.
  - d. Peter Rezanoff and Elmer Verigin met with BCH and advised most projects are completed with cost overruns whereas Cottonwood Manor had a surplus.
  - e. We would apply the surplus to purchasing furniture, dishes, etc.
  - f. BCH reluctantly agreed.
7. The project continues to be operated by the LMDBS to this day.

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