

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

HOUSING ISSUES IN NORTHLANDS TRAILER PARK

June 1, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Recently, I had two constituents contact me with regard to housing issues in Northlands Trailer Park. About 1,100 people live in this area of Yellowknife. This neighbourhood has a long and complicated history. It was developed around 1977 by a private developer and was turned into a condominium corporation in 1989. At that point, the infrastructure became the responsibility of the corporation. In 2010, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation stopped offering assistance with mortgages in this area due to the poor condition of infrastructure. A deal was reached between the condo corporation and the City of Yellowknife in 2013 to replace the infrastructure, with the City up-fronting the money and recovering through local improvement charges on individual properties. I applaud the efforts of the condo corporation board and the City in reaching this arrangement. The infrastructure has now been replaced, and the City will take over the responsibility for its maintenance. CMHC is again providing assistance with mortgages, and there is significant redevelopment happening within Northlands.

All of this is good news, but some residents in Northlands have found it difficult to adjust to the local improvement charges and the continuing condo fees. I am confident that the condo corporation board is making every effort to keep the condo fees as low as possible.

Much of this situation is a matter between the condo corporation and the City of Yellowknife, but it does highlight a gap in support for our residents, especially those on a fixed income. We have the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation programs that can assist homeowners with retrofits and programs for seniors to assist with home heating and municipal taxes, but there are still problems with affordability. One of the five priorities of the NWT Seniors' Society is to "support more seniors and elders living independently in their own homes."

We should be doing more to enable citizens on fixed incomes to stay in their own homes and not go into arrears on municipal taxes, local improvement charges or condo fees.

I support the efforts of our housing Minister in carrying out the housing survey and beginning to redesign our programs and services. She kindly agreed to meet with a couple of my constituents recently to talk about the issues at Northlands and had some helpful suggestions. I'll have questions for the Minister later today on assistance with housing in Northlands. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.