

TDSA HOUSING FORUM-

Tim Neeb from Mahogany Management

Mahogany Management is in the business of creating and managing affordable housing in the Province of Ontario. They have been creating new affordable housing for over 20 years and have earned a solid and successful reputation in this sector. Their affordable housing model is to develop quality apartments for those that need housing the most.

Mahogany Management works together with local residents, the municipality and community agencies to create homes that are part of the community, while providing supports for their tenants. They have worked closely with the City and various non-profit agencies and renovated or built many affordable and supportive homes.

They provide affordable and supportive housing. Their clients include the general public, CMHA, LOFT Community Services, Houselink Community Homes, Regeneration Community Services, Vita Community Homes, Woodgreen, Community Living, Better Living, Bellwoods and Good Shepherd Non-Profit Homes. Their vision and commitment to affordable housing is demonstrated by their ongoing relationships in the sector and the repeat business these relationships continue to bring them.

1. Why are we so committed to building affordable social housing?

Mahogany Management is providing massively important improvement in the quality of life by helping people get into a high quality home, while at the same time dramatically reducing the cost of the social safety net to taxpayers. Taxpayers won't feel that impact, but tenants are thankful every time we open a building. This feeds my passion for the sector and that passion in turn is most likely the reason I get so much support from the other stakeholders like you. It's infectious. As a hands-on developer of affordable and supportive housing for over 18 years, I want you to know this work is overwhelmingly impactful in our communities.

It is important work and much needed. HOUSING FIRST!!! When I built my first supportive housing project 17 years ago, I had a lady come in and start crying, she said she had never seen anything so beautiful and could not believe she would be allowed to live there. It was really an epiphany for a guy like me that had been building warehouse space housing potato chips.

I do not need to make as much money as I would building townhomes, single family homes or condos. I make enough, live well and know I am leaving a positive footprint on the planet.

2. Why do we see benefits of partnering with non-profits?

We can't just put people in a building and tell them to have a good life; we have to provide the supports necessary for an active independent life. I do not have the skills to provide proper supports; I cannot do it alone that takes a community. We can, as a community, build a beautiful and affordable place for seniors, adults with disabilities, everyone; a building that exceeds Ontario building code for requirements for energy efficiency and a building that is universally accessible.

But in the end, we need to make sure the supports are in place! We design buildings conducive to in-house supports, including free office space and common room amenities for agencies and programs.

3. If you had any tips for non-profit agencies on how to build a strong relationship with housing developers?

Like everything else in life, do what you say you will do and keep your promises from the start. It's important that upper management of a non-profit stands behind those commitments of community partnership, but the message does not make its way to the support people and they do not understand the relationship between us and the non-profit and the role of the non-profit in that partnership to create a sense of community with everyone else.

4. What do housing developers need from non-profit service providers?

Open dialogue, commitment, fairness. Making sure all tenants needs are met, not just the people supported by the non-profits. By that, I mean making sure everyone is following the rules of the tenant protection acts and working together for a harmonious, successful home for everyone.

We need to work together to make supportive housing better. For example, right now CMHC has a lending policy that is against head leases. This means that we need open dialogue to figure out how we work together as partners if head leases are not allowed.