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Maplewood Gardens residents: Mark LeBlanc, Robert Barrett and Bob Hjorthoy

DEVELOPER GIVES RENTERS A VOICE

North Vancouver's Darwin Properties hopes to revitalize the heart of Maplewood with the redevelopment of Maplewood Gardens (located behind the new Stong's Market), currently home to 58 rental apartments built around 1972.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this proposal is how Darwin plans to protect the interests of the 58 families who currently call Maplewood Gardens their home. Over the past 12 months, Darwin has hosted a series of meetings and workshops with the Maplewood Gardens residents to obtain their input into the design of the project and to understand their future housing needs. The outcome of these meetings is an affordable housing strategy that provides long term security for the existing residents. Darwin proposes to replace 100% of the existing units with new rental housing at capped rent rates based on Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation affordability levels.

"Our message to all Maplewood Gardens tenants is simple: If you rent here now, we want to build you a new a home in the new development and we will make sure the rent is affordable" explains Oliver Webbe, President of Darwin Properties.

In 2012, Coriolis Consulting Corp. issued a rental housing report for Greater Vancouver

concluding that 93% of the existing rental housing stock in the District of North Vancouver is at risk of redevelopment over the next 10 years.

"Many of the residents at Maplewood Gardens have been living here for more than a decade. They are embedded in the local community and many of their children attend local schools," adds Webbe. "It is time that developers start listening to tenants and become part of the solution, not the problem."

Maplewood is envisioned as a complete and balanced community with thriving local jobs and businesses that reflect high environmental and aesthetic standards, complementing the community's outstanding natural setting. The District of North Vancouver are currently preparing a detailed planning policy framework for the Maplewood area. For more information on this process, please visit www.dnv.org.

Darwin looks forward to participating in the District-led community engagement process and hopes that they can start construction on the affordable rental housing project by 2018.