

# Thornhill Green Member Update

June 5, 2008

## ***Message from the Board***

There has been a lot of activity since we first learned of the proposed takeover of our co-op by Housing York Inc. We have put together this update to try to keep you informed of what we have done so far, and what we are planning to do to fight this takeover. Over the coming months we will do our best to continue to keep you informed. If you have any questions or want to get involved please contact Jim Commons or Tibor Barsony. Their contact information can be found at the bottom of the second page of this update under "How to get involved."

## ***Court grants delay for Thornhill Green***

We have joined with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada to retain lawyer Murray Klippenstein to fight the proposed takeover by Housing York Inc. Murray asked Judge Colin Campbell, in a pre-court appearance on Thursday May 29<sup>th</sup> to put off the court hearing to give him more time to prepare a response. We were informed of York Region's plans less than two weeks before the original court date. Judge Campbell granted the parties a delay until June 11<sup>th</sup> to file legal papers opposing the sale.

## ***Thornhill Green members and neighbours rally outside of courthouse***

We would like to thank our members that turned up at the courthouse on May 29<sup>th</sup> to show their opposition to this proposal. We would also like to give a big thank you to the group of residents from our neighbouring condominiums who rented a bus to come down. We estimate about 60 people were on hand for a brief gathering we held outside of the courthouse.

In the coming month we will likely be holding a rally to demonstrate and build our support in the community. The rally is still being planned but we will keep you informed and will be looking for volunteers to help out in the next few weeks.

## ***Stronger together***

As we move ahead with the court case it is vitally important that we remain united in our fight to keep our homes as a non-profit co-op controlled by its members. The road ahead is going to be difficult. We will only be successful if we stick together. We need to send York Region and the Provincial government a clear message: the members of Thornhill Green Co-operative and it's surrounding neighbours strongly oppose the takeover of our co-op by Housing York Inc. Please see the following page for a brief description of the issue and a list of just a few of the reasons why we oppose this proposal.

## ***The issue***

On Friday May 16<sup>th</sup> the co-op's receiver, Mintz & Partners, served the Board of Directors notice that it was putting forward a motion to the courts on May 29<sup>th</sup> recommending the co-op be sold to York Regions housing company, Housing York Inc. If this proposal is successful our homes will no longer be a non-profit co-op controlled by its members.

## ***Why we oppose the takeover***

### **York Region has not dealt with our co-op in a fair manner**

- Regional Council approved the proposed sale in February 2008 but we were not informed until May 16, 2008, two weeks before the court date. The suddenness and secrecy surrounding the decision is astonishing. People affected by municipal government decisions usually are given notice. In this instance we have been kept completely in the dark.
- York Region originally presented the proposal to the Board as something that already had been accepted, not that they still need Court approval.
- York Region has had a deliberate policy of misleading our co-op board, stating we have no responsibility or authority and then serving us with court documents at the last minute.

### **We will no longer benefit from the co-operative model**

- Mixed-income co-operatives are the only form of resident-managed social housing in Ontario.
- What underpins our success is that our community has the responsibility for, and real control of, the important decisions about how our housing will be run.
- This will be lost when our members are no longer collective owners but tenants.

### **They are trying to takeover our co-op without exhausting all other options**

- York Region has not given any consideration to other less drastic options for dealing with a co-op in difficulty that have been successfully employed in other municipalities across Ontario.

## ***What happens now?***

On June 11<sup>th</sup> Murray Klippenstein will submit our response to the proposal to Judge Colin Campbell. After June 11<sup>th</sup> a schedule will be established for court proceedings. This will likely take a number of weeks or even months. During this time we will be very busy trying to generate support in our community, from politicians and the media. We will keep you informed of what it going on, and how to get involved as events unfold.

## ***How to get involved***

If you have any questions or want to get involved in our campaign to save Thornhill Green Co-operative please contact either Jim Commons at (416) 885-6211 or Tibor Barsony at (905) 881-9365. For more information please check out our website at [www.thornhillgreen.ca](http://www.thornhillgreen.ca).