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Work start soon

It's official: Apartments for Thurlow seniors

By JACK EVANS
Staff Reporter

"I couldn't be happier," reacted Thurlow Township Reeve Ken Yorke Tuesday when told the township's long-sought housing project for senior citizens has been approved.

The approval has been announced by Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Claude Bennett for a 21-unit complex under the municipal non-profit housing program. Thurlow is one of 26 Ontario municipalities to have such projects now sanctioned by the ministry for the current year.

Bennett attributed the announcement—unexpected at this time—to early decisions on social housing allocations to Ontario by the federal government.

"This has enabled us to move quickly, identify communities to receive assistance and distribute the units to municipalities. They, in turn, can start preparing for early construction starts," Bennett said.

Yorke said Tuesday: "We'll probably start to drill wells on the property this week."

The site is one the township has designated for such use for several years—at Foxboro where the community's school was located.

"We've been working toward this for more than three years now. It has been a long struggle," Yorke commented.

A survey of senior citizens in the township three years ago showed enough interest to make an application, but that was turned down. On a second try, a local housing board was appointed with William James as chairman and a new survey was taken. Again, interest in the survey exceeded the 21-units proposed, said James.

James said plans for the complex are now being drawn and his board will move ahead with the needed water and septic system plans. Like Yorke, he was particularly pleased with the news.

"We're very happy that we can get a project to accommodate our local people in the township," he said.

Costs for the construction will be divided between federal and provincial governments — as will any deficits resulting from the rent-geared-to-income operations.

Additional information re - Seniors' Housing for Thurlow
copied from a newspaper sketch

"Thurlow's three year struggle for senior citizen housing is finally over, as the project has at long last been approved. Under the municipal non-profit housing program, the costs for construction will be divided between federal and provincial governments.

The original survey of senior citizens in the township proved that there was a very strong interest in such a housing project. As far back as 1976 Mrs. Ralph Sills was interested in housing for seniors. At that time so many people went to apartments in Belleville and were very upset and unhappy about leaving their familiar surroundings. Between the Foxboro Second Meters No. 474, and the Cannifton - Corbyville Senior Citizens they passed a resolution on to council to request that they contact the ministry. The ministry then sent questionnaires to the township offices. Four volunteers, Mrs. Ralph Sills, Mrs. Olive Clare, Mrs. Doug. Brenton and Mrs. Stella Steward filled envelopes with the questionnaires and mailed them to all seniors in Thurlow township. The reaction to this was very poor as the questions were quite personal and many people were not willing to fill them out. The ministry turned the application down saying that people from Thurlow could go to Belleville because of its close proximity.

Mrs. Ralph Sills (Luella) was one of the main instigators in getting the ministry to revive this work — while projects since now. Two years ago another study was finally done and early in 1984, when it became apparent that approval could be given for the project, a local housing committee was formed. The late Earl M. Dajac was a tremendous asset to this committee. The

members now are William James - chairman, Ken Yorke - vice - chairman, Marlene Parks - secretary, Rev. Don Rutherford and Bruce McPherson. The long struggle of this committee and the many seniors in Thurlow township to have a housing complex will finally become a reality in the spring of 1985. The well has already been drilled and there is certainly plenty of water available. If there are no major setbacks, the tenders could be out as early as the beginning of April and the building could begin.

The building will be two storeys but by taking advantage of the topography and doing some filling each apartment will be accessible from ground level doing away with the need for stairs and elevators. The