

## **Community and Provincial Leaders Gather to Launch New Beginnings Proposal - A Collaborative Approach to Housing Solutions**

*(Gander, NL – January 15, 2025)*

The Town of Gander and the Housing and Homelessness Hub held a press conference today to announce the launch of the New Beginnings Proposal, an innovative initiative designed to address critical housing needs within the community.

In attendance were the Honourable John G. Abbott, Minister of Housing and Minister of Mental Health and Addictions; the Honourable Dr. John Haggie, Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs and MHA for Gander; Mayor Percy Farwell; and members of the Town Council of Gander, as well as representatives from the Housing and Homelessness Hub, Central Residential Services Board, and Raising the Roof. Community leaders and residents also participated, reflecting a united effort to address housing insecurity and enhance overall wellbeing in Gander.

The New Beginnings Proposal aims to provide a holistic approach to housing by addressing the entire housing continuum. At the multi-purpose site located at 59 Elizabeth Drive, individuals and families will find housing options along the continuum, including a range of options tailored to diverse needs, from emergency to transitional, affordable and permanent housing. Coupled with essential wraparound support services such as education, career planning, life skills development, and mental health support, to empower lasting independence and improve overall community resilience.

In response to the community's growing needs, the Town Council of Gander purchased the property at 59 Elizabeth Drive. To explore effective, community-based solutions, Council issued an expression of interest in 2022, inviting proposals focused on enhancing community wellbeing through student and affordable housing, health education, recreation, and social services programming.

Following a comprehensive evaluation process, the Housing and Homelessness Hub's New Beginnings Proposal was selected, aligning with the Town's "Build up Gander" initiative. The agreement outlines two pathways for transferring the property: an outright purchase for \$500,000 or a lease-to-purchase agreement. Additionally, the Hub has exclusive rights to secure funding and carry out necessary pre-construction work.

During the press conference, Minister Abbott highlighted \$117,000 in provincial funding allocated for the New Beginnings project for operational expenses and pre-development costs. This is in addition to \$300,000 from the Federal Government's Reaching Home Program.

During the planning period of the project, Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services will occupy the property on a short-term lease while their permanent facility is being constructed.

This initiative is a proactive, community-led approach to addressing housing insecurity, fostering stability, and improving overall quality of life in Gander.

**Quotes:**

"This is an exciting milestone for the Town of Gander. The New Beginnings Proposal aligns perfectly with our Build Up Gander initiative and our commitment to community well-being. By working together with the Housing and Homelessness Hub, and other dedicated partners, we are actively addressing one of the most pressing issues our residents face. This community-led initiative will bring positive and lasting change to many lives, and I extend my sincere gratitude to all those involved for their commitment and support." **Mayor Percy Farwell, Town of Gander**

"This latest funding to the Gander Housing and Homelessness Hub is a sign of our ongoing commitment to their efforts to address homelessness in the central region. My thanks to the Board, to Mayor Farwell and the town council, and to my colleague Minister Haggie for their continued collaboration in supporting the most vulnerable in the region."

**Honourable John G. Abbott, Minister of Housing and Minister of Mental Health and Addictions**

"I am pleased to be a part of this announcement and would like to thank the Housing and Homelessness Hub and the Town of Gander for their vision and perseverance. Along with wrap around services from many community partners, these first steps along the housing continuum are a move in the right direction for individuals, families and our community."

**Honourable Dr. John Haggie, Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs and MHA for Gander**

"Today's announcement is to bring a dream into a reality by creating New Beginnings. This project is so much more than a roof over your head. In fact, our aim for this project is to address the need - whether a person needs emergency or short term or long-term housing. All these housing options can be found under one roof with the added support from wrap-around services on site. With the collaboration within the partnerships that are present, we are confident that New Beginnings will accomplish these goals."

**Kimberly Beers, Chair - Housing and Homelessness Hub**

"One of the most basic human needs is the need for safe, secure housing. Central Residential Service Board is pleased to partner with a multitude of community organizations and all levels of government to increase the availability of housing options for individuals and families. We

look for continued and expanded partnerships as we address housing challenges in our community and region."

**Lori Moulton, Executive Director - Central Residential Services Board**

"As a national organization dedicated to supporting the reduction and ending of homelessness in Canada, Raising the Roof is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the HHH and the town of Gander in bringing much needed affordable housing to the community. As we have seen in so many parts of Canada, providing these kinds of supportive housing options in communities of all sizes, not just large urban centres, is essential for the well-being of Newfoundland and Labrador."

**Sheldon Pollett, Executive Director - Raising the Roof**

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