

OLLRA News

The newsletter of the Ontario Life Lease Residents Association



Welcome to OLLRA!

The Ontario Life Lease Residents Association (OLLRA) is an association of people living in life lease housing or interested in the concept.

Although the association is only a few months old, we already have over 200 members and we've had huge success at each property where we've made a presentation.

When asked at meetings if they love living in Life Lease, every hand goes up. We love the strong sense of community! But we all feel a need for a unified voice to help us deal with common issues that come up between residents and property sponsors or management.

The mission of OLLRA is to represent the interests of existing life lease residents and educate future buyers of life lease units.

Our first goal is to ensure the Government of Ontario's first Life Lease legislation is passed into law. Unlike rental housing and condominiums, there is no legislation in Ontario that specifically regulates

life lease housing or protects the legal rights of residents.

To achieve this goal, we are working to build a substantial membership of Life Lease residents and their supporting family members to provide a legitimate voice to both the Government of Ontario and the Life Lease housing industry.

We began the association because we love the life lease model but want government regulation to protect us financially and to require transparency in governance from the corporations that own our homes.

Our members also want to encourage the building of more life lease housing – we think it's an ideal solution to the coming shortage of senior-friendly housing as a wave of "Boomer" seniors looks for a new independent living option. And at no cost to taxpayers!

We're confident that with a basic legal framework in place, life lease will grow as a popular and affordable choice of housing for active seniors.

– Lois Marsh-Duggan, Editor

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Report from OLLRA's Government Affairs Committee

OLLRA's key goal at this time is to do everything we can to get Ontario's first life lease law passed.

Bill 141, "Life Leases Act, 2023" is virtually identical to the earlier bill that failed to pass into law in 2017. An even earlier one in 2010 also failed.

What is OLLRA doing to make sure this bill passes? Our committee, led by Dave Wellock, was busy with a letter writing campaign to every MPP in Ontario and we've had some remarkable results.

Meeting with Matthew Varsava, Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility



We had a very satisfying virtual meeting on November 15th with Matthew Varsava.

Mr. Varsava had prepared well before meeting with us, researching various forms of existing legislation in case they might already apply. He thanked us for bringing Bill 141 to his attention, as he didn't know it had been put forward.

In response to stories of intimidation of resident committee representatives, he said "Residents should never feel that their living situation is at risk because they're involved in advocacy."

When asked if his ministry would take the lead in supporting Bill 141, he explained that legislation is always attached to one specific ministry.

He suggested we contact the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing since it's the most obvious ministry for our cause.

He also mentioned there is a new consumer protection act that has been

tabled. They will be seeking public comment and we should register to present our issues.

Mr. Varsava was very supportive of our efforts and said this would be the first of a series of meetings with him.

Meeting with Matthew Rae, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing



On December 8th, we met with MPP Matthew Rae, the new sponsor of Bill 141 and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Paul Calandra.

We asked Mr. Rae what ministry would regulate life lease once legislation is in place.

He explained that, from the legislation standpoint, life lease is in a grey area. Condos are regulated by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, but tenancies are regulated by the Ministry of Housing. Since life lease is a mix of both, he suggested that both ministries may play a role.

Mr. Rae has spoken with a number of other life lease communities that share our concerns including issues with Boards of Directors, and that is an area that will be looked at.

He told us that the Standing Committee will be seeking public comment on Bill 141 in February 2024. He invited OLLRA to make a deputation or presentation to the committee.

The public meetings will be held in Niagara, Stouffville and Newmarket.

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What Is Life Lease Housing? Tell Your Friends...

Although the first life lease community in Ontario was only built in the early 1980s, the concept goes back hundreds of years.

Life Lease is an ideal housing solution for many Ontario seniors. It offers freedom from heavy home maintenance chores but more importantly, freedom from isolation as we age.

You become part of a community of people with a lived experience that is likely very similar to your own – where you can join in as much or as little as you like in shared activities.

A key thing to remember is that “In life lease housing, the buyer does not own the property...The life lease sponsor owns the property.”

– *“Life Lease Housing: Practical information about owning a life lease” - Min. Municipal Affairs and Housing*

Before signing a life lease, make sure you are well-informed.

There are many different forms of Life Lease housing available and the contract terms vary from one project to another. Before you sign a Life Lease contract, it’s advisable to:

- Carefully read over the contract to make sure you understand it. Discuss it with a friend or family member and/or talk to a lawyer who understands life leases **
- Be aware that unlike condos or rentals, **there is no legislation governing life lease in Ontario.** Only contract law applies

- Find out if you’re allowed to register your lease on the property title. If you do this, you’ll be notified if the life lease sponsor applies for a mortgage or other debt
- Ask to see the corporation’s financial statements to confirm its financial health and there is an adequate reserve fund in place to pay for major maintenance costs in the future
- If your life lease tenancy is bought and sold at “market value”, understand that there may be restrictions as to when you can list it for sale

For a copy of Ontario’s guide to life lease housing, see <https://www.ontario.ca/document/life-lease-housing>

The definitive source on Canadian life lease at this time is a book by Kate Mancer titled “The Magic of Life Lease – A Seniors Housing Solution for the 21st Century.”

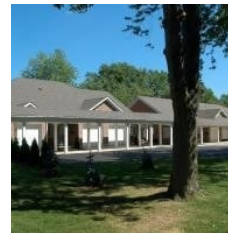
You can order copies directly at mancer@luminaservices.com

– *Lois Marsh-Duggan*

** For a list of lawyers with life lease experience, email us at info@ollra.ca

it’s important to understand what you’re getting and what you’re not when you “buy” a life lease.

“In life lease housing, the buyer does not own the property... The life lease sponsor owns the property.”



**Ontario Association of
Life Lease Residents
(OLLRA)**

For more information:
info@ollra.ca

Membership Inquiries:
Imarshduggan@ollra.ca

**Canada Post Mailing
Address:**

OLLRA c/o L Marsh
PO Box 20015
ST CATHARINES RPO
GRANTHAM
ONTARIO L2M 7W7

**Interim Executive
Committee:**

Kathy Walker, Co-Chair

David Wellock, Co-Chair

Janet Epp, Treasurer

Lois Marsh-Duggan,
Membership Manager

Ron Leamen, Committee
Chair, Government Affairs

Newsletter Editor:

Lois Marsh-Duggan

Government Affairs report, continued...

**Meeting with MPP Jennie
Stevens**



We also had a meeting with St. Catharines MPP Jennie Stevens who pledged her support and that of MPP Wayne Gates. She promised a follow-up contact in the new year.

Our next meeting will be with MPP Nolan Quinn, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community & Social Services.

Bill 141 is the third time life lease legislation has been put forward in Ontario – let’s hope this third try is the charm!

— Ron Leamen, Dave Wellock

Interim Executive Committee Elected

At the November 8th meeting of OLLRA’s Core member group, an Interim Executive Committee was elected to steer the further development of OLLRA.

Lois Marsh-Duggan stepped down from her Co-Chair position to take on Membership development. Kathy Walker continues as Co-Chair, and is joined by Dave Wellock as the

new Co-Chair. Janet Epp is our Treasurer. This month, Ron Leamen was elected to the Executive as Government Affairs committee chair.

The Interim Executive will develop and propose projects and policies to the Core members for approval. We look forward to the challenges ahead!

Coming Soon – the OLLRA Website!

OLLRA’s Communications Committee is busy getting ready to launch the association’s website at ollra.ca.

Watch for a “go live” announcement soon!

Disclaimer

The content contained in this newsletter is general in nature and is for information purposes only. The information is provided by non-experts on a best effort basis. It should not be considered expert advice, and as such, it is recommended that you seek legal advice regarding your individual needs and requirements.