

# OLLRA News

Volume 1, Issue 2

April 2024



## Editor's Update – Your Leadership Team Has Been Busy!

Since OLLRA's leadership team published the first OLLRA newsletter in December 2023, we've accomplished a great deal. Here are some highlights.

### OLLRA Website Launched

We launched Phase 1 of our new website so that we have a presence on the internet. This is key to reaching other life lease communities. You can visit the site at [ollra.ca](http://ollra.ca)

### We Formalized Our Organization

A set of OLLRA bylaws were developed by Co-Chair Dave Wellock. Treasurer Janet Epp opened an OLLRA 'community' bank account (with free chequing!) and we decided on a fiscal year end: October 31st. We formalized quorum sizes and timing for our Core and Interim Executive meetings.

### Our Membership Grew—a Lot

We doubled our membership which now stands at 260. But we need to expand to new communities so we can 'grow our voice.'

You can help build our association. Do you know someone who lives in one of Ontario's many life lease communities or someone who is on a waiting list? Dave, Kathy and I are happy to attend a community meeting anywhere in Ontario to talk about OLLRA and why it's needed.

They can contact us by email at [info@ollra.ca](mailto:info@ollra.ca) or telephone me at 289-213-9624.

### We Presented to the Ontario Government re: Bill 141—A Life Lease Act

On February 6, OLLRA made an in-person presentation to the Standing Committee that is studying the proposed Life Lease Act, Bill 141. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Paul Calandra attended, giving the meetings a higher profile than expected. See my report on page 2.

### What's Next for OLLRA?

Thanks to your membership fees, we've made a start on the OLLRA website, paid the cost of newsletter production and the cost of the trip to Stouffville for our presentation in support of Bill 141.

Our financial focus this year continues to be on outreach and expansion of our membership. In August, we will apply for a federal New Horizons for Seniors grant. See Kathy Walker's article on page 3.

And finally, Dave Wellock is developing a 'position paper' refining what we think should appear in the new life lease legislation. More on this in the next newsletter.

— Lois Marsh-Duggan, Editor

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## OLLRA Meets with MPPs re: Bill 141—A Life Lease Act

In our December issue, I reported that OLLRA had been invited by MPP Matthew Rae to make a presentation to the government standing committee studying Bill 141, the Life Lease Act that he is sponsoring.

Due to a low number of requests by presenters to appear in Niagara (Beamsville) and Newmarket, OLLRA presented at the remaining location in Stouffville on February 6, 2024.

If you'd like to read a full transcript of the four meetings held that day, you can access it on the Ontario government website here:

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/committees/heritage-infrastructure-cultural-policy/parliament-43/transcripts/committee-transcript-2024-feb-06>

### Four Sessions, Multiple Presenters

Nine MPPs who are members of the multi-party Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy were present as were a number of presenters with an interest in life leases including OLLRA. Paul Calandra, current Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing also attended, giving the meetings a high profile.

In the first session, Committee members discussed the life lease concept and what legislation might already cover this housing option. MPP Joel Harden suggested it might fit under the Landlord and Tenant Act, but various presenters disagreed because of the length of tenancy and the large amount of capital paid up front to purchase the right of occupancy. The Ontario government

guide to life leases states that there is no legislation that applies except contract law. This leaves life lease purchasers/residents with no remedy for disputes except costly and lengthy lawsuits.

MPP Rae shared a statement he'd heard recently: "If you've seen one life lease, you've seen one life lease." Most are priced at market rates; but some are fixed value. Some communities have just a few units, others have hundreds. Many are governed completely by residents, others by non-resident boards and still others are a hybrid. While it was acknowledged that many life lease projects are managed fairly and honestly, there are some bad actors in the market. A very common complaint is the lack of transparency by many life lease developers and operators.

For OLLRA's session, I represented our Executive as the Co-Chairs were unable to make the new date. I presented our position supporting the legislation but I also asked that they consider adding an important element which could solve many of our concerns with life lease housing: a legal requirement that all residents be made voting "members" of their life lease corporations.

Why? Because life lease residents own a saleable asset. Even if the "right to occupy" is an intangible asset, the large amount of capital we pay for it should give us rights similar to shareholders of for-profit public companies. This would dovetail nicely with existing Ontario legislation governing non-profit corporations. Under the Ontario Non-

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***See Page 4 to continue reading...***

## Grant Application to Support OLLRA Expansion

The Government of Canada offers a federal grant to support community-based projects that are designed by seniors for seniors. Called New Horizons for Seniors, the program funds projects that empower seniors in their communities to contribute to the improvement of their health and wellbeing.

Eligible nonprofit organizations can apply for up to \$25,000 for projects that are led by seniors and are volunteer based. OLLRA intends to submit a proposal this August. Below is how we hope to meet the grant criteria.

- OLLRA intends to engage the thousands of residents living in life lease units in order to have a strong and significant voice to help get needed legislation passed.
- We will engage in senior-led meetings with other seniors, creating an online support network.
- We want to highlight the potential for financial abuse of seniors when operators of life lease properties do not disclose their financial status to residents. Senior life leasers need to be aware that they have no legislated right to access information regarding the current or future solvency of their life lease communities. This can cause fear

of losing their homes and create a risk to seniors' mental health and wellbeing.

- As a large, province-wide organization, we can also create a greater awareness of the need for this type of housing in Ontario. This supports another of the grant criteria: "supporting the social participation and inclusion of seniors" by promoting the wonderful lifestyle that life lease provides to enhance our senior years.

In order to accomplish our goals, our project proposal will include the following items:

- Office desktop computer and printer
- Legal advice for OLLRA incorporation
- Travel budget to engage with other communities
- Website development (information portal)
- Newsletter distribution

We want to be an encouragement to life leasers and an influential voice on their behalf in the halls of government at Queen's Park. Hopefully we will qualify for this grant so we can achieve these goals.

— Kathy Walker, Co-chair

***"OLLRA intends to highlight the potential for financial abuse of seniors when operators of life lease properties do not disclose their financial status to residents..."***

### Celebrating Best Practices in Life Lease Management

In future issues of OLLRA News, we're adding a new feature: life lease communities that are doing it right.

Examples will include excellent transparency in sales advertising, a focus on relationship building with residents, open sharing of financial information and fair terms for resale.

Let's celebrate our life lease success stories! To suggest a community that's doing it right, email us at [info@ollra.ca](mailto:info@ollra.ca)

## Ontario Life Lease Residents Association (OLLRA)

For more information, see our website at [ollra.ca](http://ollra.ca)

Membership Inquiries: [Imarshduggan@ollra.ca](mailto:Imarshduggan@ollra.ca)

### Canada Post Mailing Address:

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Kathy Walker, Co-Chair

David Wellock, Co-Chair

Janet Epp, Treasurer

Lois Marsh-Duggan,  
Membership Manager

Ron Leamen, Committee  
Chair, Government Affairs

### Newletter Editors:

Lois Marsh-Duggan  
Kathryn Kowal

## OLLRA Meets with MPPs, *continued...*

Profit Corporations Act (ONCA), corporate members have many rights including the right to attend and vote at annual general meetings.

Residents as members could vote on major decisions made by their life lease operators and even, if necessary, vote to remove board members who are not doing a good job. And it wouldn't cost the government anything more to administer because ONCA already provides legal remedies and an enforcement mechanism.

### Other Presenters

Two speakers presented on behalf of AdvantAge Ontario, an association of non-profit operators of long term care and life lease properties. Presenters at the afternoon meetings included two from Northern Gate, a Stouffville life lease community. They were supported by 40-50 of their fellow residents who appeared in person.

Also presenting were two victims of a church-sponsored bankrupt life lease development in Toronto (Trinity Ravine Towers). Like over a hundred others, they lost tens of thousands in deposit money. Their story affected the MPPs greatly and made clear how urgent it is that life lease consumers be protected in the same way that condominium buyers are.

### What's Next for Bill 141?

The day's sessions triggered a number of important questions. It became clear that the proposed Act needs revision. A major stumbling block is what legislative body should take ownership of life lease housing.

OLLRA is now working on a position paper to present to MPP Rae with our recommendations. We hope that a revised bill will be presented soon.

— Lois Marsh-Duggan

## Join us! Become an OLLRA Member Today

OLLRA's goal is to advocate for life lease residents and lobby for laws similar to those that govern condominiums. Many voices are needed to accomplish this.

Become an OLLRA member today! Contact us in writing at the address shown (above left) or by email to [Imarshduggan@ollra.ca](mailto:Imarshduggan@ollra.ca). The cost is only \$15 a year per person.

### Disclaimer

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