

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
QUESTION 121-19(2): ARNICA INN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROJECT

February 28, 2020

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We received notice yesterday that the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation was meeting with the Yellowknife Women's Society yesterday to talk about the Arnica Inn application. I wonder if the Minister could provide us with an update on that meeting? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Housing Corporation did meet with Arnica Inn, and we did come to a conclusion that Arnica Inn will be meeting with their consultant who completed their application to get clarification as to why the application -- it was not denied; I do not want to elaborate on that, but there were concerns for amendments and for the application to be resubmitted. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is committed to following up with them next week, and we will be working in conjunction together to try to help and support the application going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the answer from the Minister. My question is: who is talking to CMHC? It was ultimately them who turned the application back because of a number of deficiencies. Who is working with CMHC to figure out what those deficiencies are and how they can be addressed in the short term?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The application is a federal application, and we don't administer it at a territorial level. We are subject to a funding source for these applications going forward, and the conversation would have to happen between CMHC and the applicant. To be honest to the Member, we have not seen a copy of the application, and I have requested that Arnica Inn provide that to us and have a conversation going forward. I know that it doesn't sound fair, but honestly, this is CMHC's program. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is not involved in the process, but we do support the applicant and assist them in completing the application.

MS. GREEN: Yes, this is a difficult process, obviously, and the Yellowknife Women's Society is committed to making this work, because we need the housing. Can the Minister tell us what lessons have been learned from this first of 12 applications to the co-investment fund about how the Housing Corporation could be involved in a different

way so that applications go in where everybody is informed about the intent and the potential problems?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The Member is correct. This is a new application and a new funding source that is provided to the Northwest Territories from the federal government. In administering and seeing this application go through to the second phase, we have noticed that we need to make improvements with this application process. I am in conversation with my department to establish a position that would be able to work between the Housing Corporation and CMHC to make sure that the application process is clear and communication is flowing.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. One of the lessons learned for me is that communication is really poor around this application process. Is there a way for the NWT Housing Corporation to receive the application as a copy, knowing that there is no adjudication by the Housing Corporation; it's up to CMHC, but can you at least receive the same information that they receive so that you understand what's being requested and how you can support it? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you to the Member. The application is completed between the client and CMHC, and going forward, it's at the discretion of the applicant if they want to share that final information with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Going forward, this is going to be something that I am going to encourage. We do need a working document, because the applicants and the clients are going to be looking for financial support from the Housing Corporation. We need something to work off of when they come forward with their ask, but going forward, I will be encouraging a copy of the application to be submitted as well to the Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.