

Hidden Village Park – a success story...

The statutory 12 month closure notice indicated that they would have to be out of their community by November 1, 2008. Instead, on October 30, 2008, the manufactured homeowners at Hidden Village Park (formerly known as College Street Mobile Home Park) celebrated the conversion of their community to resident ownership as a limited equity cooperative. This is the story of how they were able to do this.



A new owner purchased College Street MHP in November 2006. He offered to sell the individual lots to the homeowners for \$95,000 each – a price that was well above what any of them could afford, especially since the majority still had sizeable mortgages on their manufactured homes. Fortunately one of the homeowners had seen a newspaper article about manufactured housing communities that had quoted CLS attorney Ishbel Dickens. They called Ishbel and she met with the homeowners in October 2007. She helped them form a homeowners' association and about the same time she contacted Eileen Piekarcz of Rural Community Assistance Corporation, a Nevada non-profit that had some funding to help with the conversion of manufactured housing communities in rural Washington to cooperative ownership where the majority of the homeowners were low income seniors. College Street MHP met these criteria.

Together Ishbel and Eileen helped the homeowners apply for county and state funding which they were awarded.¹ The county money came from Thurston County's 2060 Affordable Housing Fund and the state money was available through a special set-aside in the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) specifically for manufactured housing community preservation that CLS had worked to have the state create. Gap financing was made available by the Washington State Housing Finance

¹ CLS was able to participate in this conversion project thanks to generous funding from the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED). The model project that was created for the Hidden Village homeowners' association is now being used to help another manufactured homeowners' association in Buckley convert their community to resident ownership.

Commission (WSHFC) and is administered by the Washington Community Reinvestment Association (WCRA).

Andrew Kashyap of CLS also assisted the homeowners' association in drafting their governing documents including Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Proprietary Leases, and Subscription Agreements. CLS was also fortunate to be able to draw on the pro bono services of Trevor Livingston, formerly with Heller Ehrman LLC who helped consult on the content of these documents as well as the Purchase and Sale Agreement. Additional support has come from the Northwest Cooperative Development Center which will help train the homeowners in cooperative governance.

The resident owners of Hidden Village Park hired the Manufactured Housing Community Preservationists to assist with the day-to-day operations of running the community.

Mike Gregoire, the Governor's husband, congratulated the homeowners on behalf of the Governor at their Open House. Other speakers included Commissioner Kathy Wolfe, Mr. Allan Martin representing the WSHFC, Dan Riebli of the HTF and Dulcie Claassen, VP of the WCRA.

Hidden Village Park will provide affordable housing for low income families in Washington for the next 40 years.