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Former hospital could be occupied quickly

It appears Dufferin Treasurer Alan Selby wasn't far off the mark when he predicted that the 24 housing units at Dynes-Grey Village would be fully occupied when the former hospital opens the units at mid-2014.

Unofficially, at least 20 of the units have already been spoken for. That doesn't mean that 20 tenants have been selected but it can be viewed as an indication of the popularity of the development.

Shelburne Mayor Ed Crewson, who serves as the county's chairman of the Community Services Committee, would only confirm that Dufferin Housing Authority has 30 on a waiting list for affordable housing, and 100 on an a waiting list for assisted living at Dufferin Oaks.

In the selection of tenants for the new units, priority would be given to those already on a waiting list.

The chairman/mayor, speaking to the need for seniors housing in an interview, acknowledged that there is a privately owned building for seniors under way on Riddell Road in Orangeville.

But he said it is his information that an apartment there could be $3,200 a month. Although that would include meals, he said it would be out of reach for most seniors.

There is an evident growing need for affordable housing for seniors, and the need might extend through the generations with the loss of high-paying industrial jobs and the new emphasis on lower-paying ones in the service industry sector.

The mayor, however, was speaking to the need for seniors. He cited the case of a senior couple who, for the time being, are forced to live apart because there is no affordable space available for them to live together.

The county has a moral, ethical and perhaps a legal responsibility to take whatever measures it can to solve the problems of homelessness. The mayor's questions are, essentially, What do we do with them; And how?

By Wes Keller