



DIGBY & AREA HOUSING COALITION

PO Box 250 | Digby NS B0V 1A0 | digbyhousing.ca

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Our Vision

An inclusive, healthy, vibrant, economically and environmentally sustainable community where everyone has access to affordable housing.

Our Mission

To raise money for and oversee affordable, energy efficient, sustainable housing projects in collaboration with all stakeholders: the Town and Municipality of Digby, community agencies and the general public.

Message from the Chair

This past year has been one of steady progress, resilience, and growing capacity for the Digby & Area Housing Coalition Society.

Our central focus has remained the advancement of the Montague Project, a three-storey, 34-unit building near downtown Digby, a development that represents not only new housing units, but a tangible response to the urgent need for safe, affordable, and sustainable housing in our community.

Highlights

The highlights were the obtention of a Development Permit for the Montague Project from the Town of Digby in April and our receiving word in November from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) that our proposal had been accepted in principle for funding (Conditional Letter of Intent). This meant that, with the Province's and Efficiency Nova Scotia's contributions/grants, the Montague Project would be fully funded in 2026, so construction could finally get underway in the spring. While delays at the federal level created uncertainty, we remained ready—continuing to refine our plans, confirm operating costs, and ensure the long-term viability of the project. We thank New Commons Development for their leadership, especially Aida Kudic, our new project manager, the CMHC, Nova Scotia's Community Housing Growth Fund and the NS Federation of Municipalities for seed and predevelopment funding.

Governance

Delivering housing at this scale requires a strong and well-governed organization. We continue to take steps to build that foundation. With our new Treasurer, Cleo Zhong, we streamlined our financial reporting, strengthened internal controls, and continued to formalize our governance policies. Our outside volunteer consultant, Norm Kondo, has continued to advise us in this effort and has helped bring on a new outside volunteer, Allan Reitzes. With their guidance, we began recruiting an Advisory Committee which will link us to the larger Digby community, and support fundraising and volunteer recruitment. These changes are helping us evolve from a committed volunteer group into a more structured and sustainable housing provider.

Community

Equally important has been our work to deepen community support and partnerships. We are in the process of developing a more strategic approach to fundraising, including clear messaging and opportunities for donors at all levels to contribute. Community-based fundraising efforts continued alongside grant applications and outreach to foundations and partners. We held one public information evening and made a presentation to the River Philip Foundation. We continue to work with the Bear River Advent Christian Church to determine the feasibility and type of housing on their lands.

Partners

We thank both the Town and Municipality of Digby for their moral and financial support. We have a working group with representatives from our three organizations to collaborate on the Montague Project, further housing developments and community development in general.

The Community Foundation of Nova Scotia remains a valuable partner, processing charitable donations for us. We thank our other supporters, among them the Tri-County Women's Centre, DALA and NS Works. We were pleased to make a new connection through Lori to Engel & Völkers "A Home for Everyone" charity and thank them for their support of our work.

I continued to organize monthly meetings of local agencies at the Neighbourhood Round Table (a continuation of the DAASH group, from which the Coalition was formed). Several Coalition Volunteers attend these meetings.

We continue to be active members of the Nova Scotia Non-Profit Housing Association (NSNPHA) both provincially and regionally and took part in two province-wide conferences sponsored by them in collaboration with other housing groups, like the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, the United Way and Tapestry Community Bonds.

Conclusion

This has not been an easy year. Like many organizations in the housing sector, we have had to navigate shifting funding timelines, rising costs, and capacity challenges. However, what stands out most is the determination of our Board, volunteers, and supporters. Their commitment has allowed us to continue moving forward, step by step, toward our goal.

As we look ahead, our priorities are clear: to maintain our operations until government funding starts to flow, to guide the Montague Project through the construction phase, and to continue building the organizational strength and community support needed for future developments.

Nancy Robinson, Chair
March 24 2026

Our Team

Director: Nancy Robinson, Chair
Director: Laurie Crosby, Secretary
Director: Cleo Zhong, Treasurer
Officer: Randy Peck
Officer: Murray Trask
Volunteer: Jane Kingston, Fundraising Committee
Volunteer: Lori Prescesky, Chair, Fundraising Committee
Volunteer: Charles Batstone, Project Steering Committee and Building Committee
Volunteer: Yvonne Mullen, Fundraising Committee
Partner Consulting firm: New Commons Development (NCD)
External Volunteer Consultants: Norm Kondo, Allan Reitzes
Diane Levings, Webmaster

We welcomed two new Board members, Murray Trask, Director and Cleo Zhong, Treasurer. Thank you both for volunteering.

On the other hand, we lost two valued Board members this year. Miranda MacLean, with us since the fall of 2022, was a respected voice on the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Governance Committee, which she chaired. We wish her the best in her recent career move.

Unfortunately we lost valued Board member, Harold Alexander, who passed away suddenly in the fall. He served on the PSC and the Building Committee. His expertise and quiet wisdom are missed as we enter the construction phase the project.

We would like to thank Jenny Scott for her time with us as bookkeeper and Brenda Francis and Jenny Bgrand who served on the Governance and Fundraising Committees respectively.

Committees

Project Steering Committee
Fundraising Committee
Governance Committee
Building Committee
Ad hoc Fundraising Committee

Working Group with Town and Municipality of Digby

Memberships: Nova Scotia Non-profit Housing Association (NSNPHA)