

## Saltwire – Chronicle Herald – July 31, 2024

Jason Malloy – Lead editor Annapolis Valley Register | Posted July 28, 2024, 7:39 p.m. | Updated July 30, 2024, 9:47 a.m. | 9 Min Read

# Soon-to-open Wolfville, N.S., development could be the largest net-zero, multi-unit residential building in Canada



*Kings-Hants MP Kody Blois, left, talks with Polycorp Group of Companies owner Peter Polley about the new net-zero building under construction at 36 Woodman Rd. in Wolfville. Blois announced \$10 million in Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation funding to help build 60 affordable units on July 29. “We specifically designed the roof on this building to be very simple to maximize the amount of solar that we could put on it,” Polley said. - Jason Malloy*

WOLFVILLE, N.S. — Peter Polley is pretty proud of his company’s latest apartment building that will complete Woodman’s Grove in Wolfville.

“This building will arguably be the largest net-zero, multi-unit residential building not only in Nova Scotia (and) Canada but possibly the world,” the Polycorp Group of Companies owner said July 29. “We’re pretty excited about that.”

The four-storey, 104,000-square-foot building includes a parking garage on the bottom level. Construction started in 2020 and is expected to be complete by December.

The building’s roof, which Polley compared to the size of a football field, was designed to be able to install as many solar panels as possible – about 1,000.

“(They) will be covering pretty much every square inch of the entire roof,” Polley said.

We’re very proud to be doing work like this. We’re trying to raise the bar for everybody to demonstrate that it can actually be done,” he added. “It’s not easy. A fair bit of technical knowledge goes into being able to do this.”



*Kings-Hants MP Kody Blois, right, talks with Polycorp Group of Companies owner Peter Polley before announcing \$10 million in federal funding for the new Wolfville apartment building. - Jason Malloy*

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Polley estimated the building will cost in the neighbourhood of \$16 million to \$18 million.

King-Hants MP Kody Blois visited the site July 29 to announce \$10 million in federal funding through the affordable housing fund. It includes a \$9.6-million low-cost loan to make 60 of the 72 suites affordable and \$400,000 in forgivable funding for reducing emissions and energy efficiency.

“This is money well spent and it’s help to grow our communities,” Blois said.



*Polycorp Group of Companies owner Peter Polley, right, takes Kings-Hants MP Kody Blois on a tour of the new apartment building under construction at Woodman’s Grove in Wolfville. It will include 72 suites with 60 of them being affordable housing units. - Jason Malloy*

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Polley said the loan is for 10 years with a 10-year renewal. During that period, the 60 units will have below-market rents.

Blois said the 60 units will be 20 per cent below the market rate. As the building has different size units, the prices will vary with Polley estimate some will be less that \$1,100 a month while larger suites will be around \$1,500. It is hundreds of dollars less than its units in buildings across the street.

The new building uses heat pumps with in-floor radiant heating. Polley said 75 per cent of the energy costs are built into the rents.

He said other provinces have significant hydroelectric resources that Nova Scotia doesn't, reducing their energy costs.

"Here, the economics support the renewable far more than they would in ... energy-rich provinces," he said.

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## Federal Assistance

Blois said the federal government is working with municipalities on infrastructure and speeding up the building permit process.

He added it is also working with the provincial government on social and not-for-profit housing and with developers like Polycorp.

"It's a great example of how government can work with the private sector to make this happen," Blois said.



*A new 104,000-square-foot apartment building in Wolfville will be ready by December and complete the Woodman's Grove development in the east end of town. - Jason Malloy*

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## Woodman's Grove

Polycorp purchased the property from the Woodman family and started construction of the first building 15 years ago. The current building will make six in the community on the east end of town.

There are no solar panels on the other five buildings, but Polley said there are plans to install about 200 kilowatts on each of them in the future.

While Woodman's Grove is not exclusively for seniors, some seniors live there.

"They're on a fixed income," Blois said. "The fact that the average rental cost is going to be around \$1,100 is important, especially in today's market."

Polycorp recently purchased a five-acre lot at the corner of Gaspereau Avenue and Highway 101 in Wolfville. Company officials are working on plans for the site with hopes of getting the foundation in this fall.



*Peter Polley, owner of the Polycorp Group of Companies, is looking forward to the first tenants moving into the final building at Woodman's Grove in Wolfville later this year. "We don't think it will be a problem to fill this building, especially at the rent levels that we are looking at. They'll be in high demand." - Jason Malloy*

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