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June 11, 2013

File Number: NP-5770-04

Letter to the Pender Island Chamber of Commerce  
President Ina Timmer

Via email: [travel@penderislandchamber.com](mailto:travel@penderislandchamber.com)

Dear President Timmer;

**Re: Correspondence of April 30, 2013 Regarding Short-Term Vacation Rentals**

I am writing on behalf of the North Pender Local Trust Committee (LTC) regarding your Board's April 30<sup>th</sup> letter received via e-mail.

The facts regarding Short-Term Vacation Rentals (STVR) on North Pender are complex yet straight forward and legally tested. STVRs have never been legal under the North Pender Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaws and staff advice to successive LTCs over the years has been confirmed by legal advice and Court decisions.

Your correspondence makes other observations which are not well founded in fact or perception. For example, to say STVRs are "affordable accommodations" is questionable. Carter Cove STVR on North Pender currently quotes rates of \$630 for two nights. Families seeking affordable accommodations might not agree with your characterization of STVR rates.

Your description of the petition started by a local realtor deserves clarification as well. There were 551 'signature' lines used. A significant number of these 'signatures' were illegible, were people who signed more than once, or were people who lived on South Pender. Specifically, at least 20 South Penderites signed this North Pender petition. Another 19 people signed more than once and 38 more 'signatures' were unrecognizable and did not print a name in the column provided. That brought the total number of signatures to 474. Only 232 of the 474 'signatures' were residents of North Pender. When phone book checks and other methods of verification are applied, the petition was signed by about 274 adults who live or own property or regularly visit North Pender. That is a far cry from 600.

During the review of the OCP in 2006/07, the Chamber of Commerce and representatives of the Vacation Rental Association advised they were "unequivocally against any kind of regulation." The LTC recognized the need to balance neighbourhood life with commercial activity and decided that commercial activity should be on commercially zoned property rather than in quiet residential neighbourhoods. This was the safe decision given the feedback received from neighbourhood associations, improvement districts and water boards and it acknowledged the complaint that many Chamber members had raised about paying commercial taxation while STVRs operated under a residential shield.

It would seem that some members of the Chamber have failed to understand that what the petition calls for is largely in place already. Owners of Rural or Rural Residential property can apply for a Temporary Use Permit, good for up to three years and renewable for another three,

to vary zoning and allow a commercial venture such as an STVR in the Rural or Rural Residential zone. In the six years since the OCP review was completed, not one such application has been received by the LTC. Not one!

Such applications would give neighbours and neighbourhood organizations an opportunity to make their views known. Residents of North Pender have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to protect and preserve the character and integrity of their neighbourhoods. An open discussion about the wisdom of such permits in specific circumstances would be the appropriate way of dealing with this issue. Chamber members still argue that STVR are essential to the island economy even though total tourism activity accounts for about 8% of total economic activity on North Pender Island.

The LTC remains very interested in and committed to a sustainable economy on our Island. This is the reason the LTC has supported the Southern Gulf Islands Economic Development Commission and why we have continually advocated for value added tourism. In fairness, however, the Chamber has not made any overtures for co-operation to the LTC other than on the STVR issue. And the Chamber has been unresponsive to any issue on which the LTC has sought engagement with the Chamber.

We would hope that our views on this matter are clear.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Luckham', written in a cursive style.

Peter Luckham, Chair  
On behalf of the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee,

pc: Hon. Coralee Oakes, Minister of Community, Sport & Cultural Development  
Gary Holman, MLA Saanich North and the Islands