



Changing Housing Regulations

Meeting June 10

Doors open 6:00 p.m.

Community Information Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Public Hearing 7:00 p.m.

Any Denman Islander interested in our housing regulations and whether or not they should permit secondary suites and cottages is invited – encouraged, in fact – to mark Tuesday, June 10, in their calendar. On this date, in the Denman Community Hall, the Denman Island Local Trust Committee (DLTC) is holding a Public Information Meeting and Public Hearing about proposed changes to the 'housing' sections of our Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw. Here are answers to some anticipated questions:

1) What changes are proposed?

The proposed bylaws will permit the following on all properties zoned R2, RE, A and F (but not R1 lots, which are smaller):

- a **secondary suite** of up to 90 square metres (969 sq ft), and no larger than 40% of the total floor area, as long as the main residence or the suite is occupied by the property owner, and proof is provided that there is adequate water supply that does not endanger neighbours' water supply.
- the opportunity to apply for a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) to have a **secondary dwelling unit** (cottage or cabin) of up to 140 square metres (1506 sq ft), no more than 100 metres from the main residence. To get a TUP, landowners need to show "provision for adequate sewage disposal," and to address water supply "so as not to create negative impacts upon existing common water sources."

2) What is a TUP?

A Temporary Use Permit is a new (for Denman) tool that is simpler and less expensive than a full-on rezoning process – and, as the name suggests, it is temporary, in this case lasting three years, with an option for renewal after three years. After the renewal, the landowner can re-apply for a new three-year period, and so on. All TUPs must come to the DLTC for decision, and the community must be informed and able to comment.

The proposed new wording for TUPs says they may be issued "to permit secondary dwelling units where considered appropriate to address housing objectives as

defined in the Official Community Plan." For more info on TUPs, find my Trustee Notebook for Feb 2014 on the DLTC website (www.islandstrust.bc.ca, hover the mouse over Denman on the map, click on "reviewing housing policies.")

3) Why are these changes being considered?

Our goal is to address a range of evolving housing needs on Denman. We want to support social diversity, to support elders aging in place, and to make it easier for young people, working people and families to live on the Island. These amendments would also create more housing flexibility on farms, a community need identified in the Denman Farm Plan.

We've seen mounting evidence of increasing housing needs on Denman. There have been quite a number of surveys, reports and past community work on these issues, some recent, such as the Cooking Up Housing Forum and the Denman Housing Association Needs Assessment from last year, some dating back more than decade. A lot of this material is on the DLTC website and is summarized in past Trustee Notebooks (March, July and August 2013), also on the website, and are at the Denman Library in a binder labelled "Cooking Up Housing."

4) What can I expect at the meeting?

The first part of the evening will be a Community Information Meeting, where the DLTC will explain the bylaws in detail and answer questions from the public. The goal here is to make sure everyone understand just what's being proposed.

Then we will move into the Public Hearing, a more formal meeting where all present can share their opinion on the proposed bylaws. If you just don't like these bylaws, this is when you should let us know, and tell us why. Ditto if you like them! And if you *kind of* like them, but want to suggest some changes, tell us that too, because we can take the whole thing back to the drawing board if necessary.

We will work with a speakers' list at both meetings so everyone gets equal opportunity to speak, and comments will be recorded by a minute-taker.

5) What will happen next?

At the next DLTC business meeting, July 15, the DLTC has a few options: 1) move the proposed bylaws forward as written, 2) change, add or delete sections without altering the main direction, and then move them forward, 3) thoroughly rewrite them and then bring them back to the public for another Public Hearing, or 4) drop them entirely. The comments heard at the Public Hearing will play a big role in this decision.

Trustee Notebook continued

6) What if I can't make the meeting and want to comment?

Please do so in writing before the meeting, or verbally at the "Town Hall" at the DLTC business meeting earlier that day. Once the Public Hearing is over, the DLTC can't consider more comments on the proposed bylaws. This is contrary to legislative guidelines which have been set up to keep all political deliberations as transparent as possible.

7) What about the density cap?

The density cap, aka current OCP Policy 11, states that the overall density of Denman Island should not generally increase beyond the amount permitted by existing density at the time the plan was adopted, except for an increase of 5% for special needs and affordable housing. The new proposal will change this by stating that "secondary suites within the footprint of conforming dwelling units are not deemed to contribute to density calculations for the purposes of this policy," and by including "secondary dwelling units approved by the DLTC under a Temporary Use Permit" in the allowable 5%.

8) But this won't stimulate the building of new homes – who would invest in a cabin or cottage if they can't be assured it will be permanently legal?

Temporary Use Permits will let people legalize and then make use of existing cottages, convert non-residential buildings, or bring in a caravan or other small movable home (the proposal removes the current

requirement that residential trailers be on a permanent foundation). Or they can build a cabin that they intend to repurpose, for instance turning it into a workshop, later. For landowners interested in a more permanent approach, rezoning is still an option.

9) Will the housing created be guaranteed specifically for low-income residents?

No. Lately at DLTC meetings we find it useful to differentiate between "small-a" and "capital-A" affordable housing. Small-a means "housing that a range of Denman Islanders can afford" and capital-A means "housing which would typically be sponsored by a community group, controlled with means testing and rent caps, and defined with a Housing Agreement which lay out just what Affordability means and how to ensure it."

Our regulations already have options for Affordable Housing projects, and a number of community groups have been using them to create Capital-A projects. This initiative is envisioned as a way to allow Denman Islanders, on an individual level, to create more small-a affordable housing, as well as to meet other community housing needs (see question #3, above).

10) Will these bylaw changes change the rules for visitor accommodation?

No. When the DLTC started reviewing our housing regulations, we originally considered discussing the use of the proposed units for visitor accommodation, but since then we reconsidered. We removed this topic from the housing review, and put it on our projects list for a future DLTC to consider as an independent initiative. Anyone wanting the DLTC to prioritize this is invited to let us know.

Calling Volunteers for 2014 Readers & Writers Festival

Submitted by Pat Young

With balmy Spring days upon us, the promise of Summer means that organizers are well into the preparations for this year's Readers & Writers Festival, which runs from July 17th – 20th. With Canada's water resources and the muzzling of scientists in the forefront of today's news, Maude Barlow and Chris Turner, two of Canada's most eloquent voices against the corporate control of almost everything should provide a stimulating finale to a spectacular lineup of writer presentations. Be sure to visit the Festival's website,

www.denmanwritersfestival.com for a complete listing.

As in the past, the Festival requires a number of volunteers to help with registration, ticket taking, book sales, clean-up, etc. These positions are highly sought after, as they give islanders a chance to "test the waters" of the Festival. Shifts are generally only a couple of hours

in length, and one has the opportunity to hear and meet internationally acclaimed authors, as well as Denman's own yet-to-be discovered talent.

If you'd like to volunteer, please call Pat Young at 335-2704, or email denmandiva@gmail.com



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