

Greetings and Happy New Year!

“In reality, the only thing in which I have been actually thorough has been in being thoroughly unprepared.” – Alfred Stieglitz

It's been an interesting couple of months. After a very full fall we hit the ground running, first with our swearing in and participation in the first Trust Council of our term in Victoria in the first week of December. On December 17th we had our first meeting (and a special one at that!) of the North Pender Local Trust Committee to receive information on the results of an age friendly funding application and to be updated on a number of bylaw issues from our bylaw officers. It was a good meeting – attended by a number of community members.

New Year's Resolution

Christmas provided a much needed break and an opportunity for reflection. With the New Year my mind turned to resolutions and commitments. One such resolution is a commitment to meet with each of Pender Islands' community groups in an effort to better understand more about the important work that is being done, the vision that each of these organizations has for the future on the Penders, and their relationship or understanding of the Islands Trust. This month I have had the pleasure of meeting with members of:

- [Pender Islands Trust Protection Society](#)
- [Moving Around Pender](#)
- [Pender Islands Recycling Society](#)
- [Heartwood Folk School](#)
- [Redfish School of Change](#)

These conversations have been very enjoyable and insightful. This is just the start of what I hope will be an ongoing and evolving activity.

First Official LTC Meeting

January has concluded with the first regular meeting of the Local Trust Committee. On January 22nd, Dianne and I were able to welcome our Chair, George Grams, from Salt Spring Island. George was unable to attend the special meeting in December due to a family emergency. Our first meeting involved hearing a number of development variance and rezoning applications. I had to recuse myself from three of the rezoning applications because of an actual or perceived conflict of interest. This was an exceptional situation and while I do not anticipate having to recuse myself from this many applications in future meetings – I expect that there will be more. Michelle and I are active participants in our small island community as residents but also as farmers and environmental professionals. We work and live in accordance with our environmental and social values. My return to the position of Local Trustee will require us to once again carefully consider and avoid possibilities for conflict.

A number of people have expressed concern about this situation. This may be because it is generally understood that the main role of a Local Trustee is to maintain the [Object of the Trust](#)

by making local land use decisions. While I agree with this, in so far that our role in local land use decisions is an important and necessary responsibility, I do not believe it is the only or for that matter the most important role. I believe that the role of a Local Trustee is about exercising leadership and cultivating an environment so that the [Object of the Trust](#) is realized more broadly and to greater effect. This includes making local land use decisions, building effective relationships with partner agencies and organizations like the Capital Regional District, the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and Parks Canada, and establishing more systemic and strategic approaches and frameworks to help guide decision-making in important areas like waste management, housing and transportation.

So while it is important to participate in specific land use decisions, I believe it is also critical that we work to establish the conditions and direction that allows us to make better decisions together. We are very fortunate to have a fantastic Local Trust Committee. My fellow Trustee and our Local Trust Committee Chair are very, very competent and fair-minded. A team of very capable and professional staff members is there to support and enable us. In the event that I cannot or am unable to participate in a decision I trust that good decisions can still be made on our behalf.

Upcoming Events

To further ensure that the conditions for good decision-making continue to exist and are improved on North Pender we will have a discussion about our work program at a special meeting of the Local Trust Committee at 10 am February 3rd, 2015 at the Pender Island Legion on MacKinnon Rd. The main purpose of the meeting will be to discuss and select the top three priorities for the Committee beyond its day-to-day responsibilities involving specific land use decisions. The previous Local Trust Committee had two priorities remaining on its work program: a Conservation subdivision review and an age and disability friendly community plan. During the election a number of areas came forward as requiring attention: waste management; housing- both seasonal and tourism-related, as well as affordable housing and senior's housing; green and alternative transportation infrastructure; our economy; and the re-engagement of our community and our youth in local politics and governance. I'm looking forward to the discussion and encourage you to come out and participate in the meeting.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions, concerns or you would like me to meet with your organization or group. I can be reached at 250.629.3476 or via email at dmasselink@islandstrust.bc.ca.

Cheers!



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