

From: George Walton <[REDACTED]>
Date: January 17, 2016 at 12:08:20 PM PST
To: <dmasselink@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Cc: <dbarber@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: AGE and DISABILITY FRIENDLY STUDY

Hello Derek and Dianne,

I live off island but my wife and I are frequent rental visitors. I recently subscribed to the "Pender Post" and received my first (mailed) copy last week.

I became very interested in the article update concerning "the Age and Disability Friendly Study", which has been completed. I then followed it's progress on the Islands Trust website (North Pender). On page 22 of the January Pender Post it was suggested that any individuals who may wish to express an interest should contact you.

My wife and I are currently looking for a wheelchair friendly home on North Pender. Liz lost her ability to walk as the result of a neurological disorder a couple of years ago. The neurologists stated that she'd never walk again but, thanks to a couple of excellent physio and occupational therapists, she can now walk unassisted for approximately seventy feet or more.

We need to relocate because our home is on two levels with a fourteen step stairway to reach a bath tub ... fortunately we have a half bath on the main level. We're considering one of the "Gabriola Garden Homes" on, of course, Gabriola Island. It's a complex of twenty-four condos of approximately 1000SF each, complete with full kitchens, propane back-up fireplaces, a large bedroom, a study (10'x12'), balcony and individual exterior storage space. The complex also has a 450+/- workshop for the woodworkers and large community garden with individual spaces.

I'm not clear on the initial vision that the Islands Trust had as a model, but as a 67 year old man, with a 66 year old wife (disabled), I think some of the concerns targeted in the survey were slightly off the mark. Our bodies age, but our minds and interests don't ... we're always eighteen. The priorities are wide/clear access (halls and walkways), a walk-in bathtub (huge benefit), handicap height toilet, non carpeted flooring, full kitchen, back-up heat source and a common area (both indoor and out) to socialize in. As mentioned, my wife is typically in a wheelchair but we haven't encountered anywhere that we couldn't access on Pender. Of course the trails are an exception as are the gangplanks on the government wharves ... some things are just plain common sense. The hill at the ferry terminal would be a problem, but that's an issue for the BC Ferries to resolve (fortunately for us we drive on/off). They could provide a couple of electric scooters for those in difficulty ... even our local SuperStore does that for it's customers.

Anyway, just wanted to leave you with an expression of (serious) interest in the event that something more substantial develops. The bus service sounds good, too! The Gertie seems to be doing well on Gabriola.

If any developers are making enquiries about constructing small condo complexes on North Pender then please have me added to their data base.

*All the very best,
George (& Liz) Walton,*

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