

Notes from a Trustee – March 2016

Submitted by David Critchley

Prior to the March meeting of the Local Trust Committee a public hearing was held on the proposed bylaws numbered 219 and 220. These are bylaws to enable the transfer of a portion of land on Lacon to the Trust Fund Board for conservation purposes and to transfer "densities" associated with the land. Actually, the meeting was formally started and then "recessed" to have the public hearing. This is an interesting process since it underlines the fact that a public hearing is not a "meeting" of the LTC. I admit this seems a little strange.

Anyway, we held a public hearing. And we "got an earful" from the public about the lack of a Trust-sponsored community information meeting (there had been an applicant-sponsored community information meeting last year), the confusion arising from maps, confusion over the number of densities to be transferred etc., as well as comments about the bylaws. We also had confirmation, on behalf of the applicants, that the intention is to have one of the two densities from the conservation property transferred to the receiving property on Crescent Road, and the other density put into the community density bank. When the item later came up for consideration in our "meeting", we asked our planner for a further staff report and a re-draft of the bylaws. We also indicated our intention to conduct a Trust-sponsored community information meeting and a second public hearing.

Another matter on our agenda concerned an application by Denman Community Land Trust Association seeking exclusion from the Agricultural Land Reserve for land located approximately behind the Denman Guest House. Of course, the actual location is precise - I just mention its proximity so you have an idea where it is. If I gave you the legal description you would have to go to a map. Also, I should mention it has nothing to do with the Guest House.

The DCLTA wants to create an eight unit seniors' affordable housing project. This is not seen as an agricultural use of land, hence the application. The process requires that the LTC have input. Our options were to support, to not support or to support with comments. We decided to support with comments. This raises a slightly awkward situation because the project will require rezoning if it emerges out of the Agricultural Land Reserve, and we must keep an open mind to public input on every rezoning. It isn't that we cannot have "initial leanings" but we have to remain open to changing our mind, i.e. that we are "persuadable". If we have a closed mind we are said to fetter our discretion, and that is something we cannot do.

With these principles in mind we included a number of comments that are generally supportive of the removal of the property from the ALR.

We also issued two development permits, one for property on Owl Crescent, the other on Tristone. The first was required due to steep slopes, the second because of riparian areas. Applications of this sort are supported by technical reports from qualified professionals. These reports can be quite lengthy and, let me just say, complex. In reading such reports I have been amazed at the diversity of geology and soil types existing on our small island. I wonder if we can claim some sort of record in that respect?

A particularly interesting bit from a report:

"A magnitude 7.2 earthquake occurred in the central Vancouver Island area on June 23, 1946. Many soil failures from that earthquake have been documented, including beaches disappearing

at Goose Spit and the Deep Bay Spit on Vancouver Island, and a 9m water spout was reported between Denman Island and Deep Bay."

The internet adds to this by informing me that this event was centred in the Forbidden Plateau area and was the largest recorded onshore earthquake in Canada. (N.B. the qualifying words). It is said that it resulted in two deaths and toppled 75% of the chimneys in nearby communities.

I will end by noting that the LTC has asked staff to prepare a project charter regarding implementation of certain prioritized recommendations of the Denman Farm Plan. Rest assured there will be an abundance of public input opportunities.

As I usually repeat, these notes are my own, are not official and do not summarize everything that happened at our often lengthy meetings.