



Islands Trust

Your Island Trustees' Report

Alex Allen and Tony Law

Community Housing

Accessible housing is a topic we and many in our community have been focusing on lately. In May, we hosted two Community Information Meetings about our revised OCP, which contains a whole new section on housing and our revised LUB, which includes new provisions that support housing solutions.

In June in Cowichan Bay, through the Islands Trust Local Planning Committee, we organized an Islands Trust Housing Forum, bringing together islanders and professionals actively involved in housing issues to share information and brainstorm on common challenges we all face. Discussions were on three key issues:

Community Housing Organizations

Many community housing organizations are struggling with initial infrastructure costs, determining how housing will be made available and managing existing units. Another challenge was finding effective ways to establish and monitor Housing Agreements (which ensure that the intent of non-market housing is maintained). This is something the Islands Trust will be exploring. The good news, is that the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and BC Housing have new funding programs available to non-profit housing initiatives.

Rental Housing

The lack of affordable rental accommodation has reached a crisis point across our islands. On many (like ours), there are about as many houses built as there are residents. A large percentage of houses are used for non-residential purposes (such as for second homes, recreation and accommodating tourists). Creating new rental housing is expensive and can have impacts on the environment and island character. There was much discussion at the Forum about how to encourage existing residential development to be more available for residential use. Two ways were identified: to allow secondary suites (as is now legalized on larger lots on Hornby); and to connect potential landlords and tenants in creating good rental relationships.

Bricks and Mortar

On all of our islands, we are finding our own housing solutions that may or may not comply with land use, health and building regulations. These can take the form of trailers, caravans, cabins, etc. In many cases, there can be health, safety, environmental and security issues. Forum participants explored ways in which a range of permitted housing could be expanded to include alternative options but without the bureaucracy. This included discussions about redefining “density” and focusing on impacts upon the land and water resources.

Michael McNamara, ISLA board member, gave a presentation on ISLA and Elder Housing and Shannon Warwick, a member of the HIRRA Committee on Housing also attended the Forum. We encourage you to read the ISLA and Housing Committee reports in this *First Edition* and to participate in the Committee’s survey if you are a home owner at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZTTFY77>

You can read the new “Housing” section in our OCP and the associated regulations in the LUB. Simply go to the Islands Trust website and then click on “Islands;” on the drop-down menu click on “Local Trust Areas” and “Hornby.” On the “Hornby Local Trust Area” page, click on “Bylaws.” [If you have problems navigating the site, please get in touch with one of us.]

Our project list includes: “Establish a community process to review residential density to address community housing needs.” We will consider initiating this project after the report from the Housing Forum in September and once you have had a chance to digest the existing provisions in the OCP.

Have a sane summer.

Next Local Trust Committee Meeting: August 12, Room to Grow, 11:30 am.

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Islands Trust website: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/>

Meeting notification service: <http://islandstrust.bc.ca/meetingnotify.cfm>