



Islands Trust

The Hornby Island Trustee Allen Report

Thank you to those who re-elected me. I do look forward to working with you all again this term and actually completing some projects. And as a community, I look forward to having some big conversations with every one of you, from housing to vacation rentals, and everything in between.

This is a first in Islands Trust history, apparently. Two trustees and then one – a week after the election. There will be a by-election next year to elect a new trustee, unfortunately, at this time, we have no idea when this will happen, but will be most likely in February.* The issue is finding an electoral officer who even wants to take it on so soon after the municipal elections. Once an officer has been appointed, the by-election must be held within 80 days.

On that note someone said that it will be a new era on Hornby Island after the by-election and I agree.

A wee confession: in my two terms serving with Tony, I managed to reply to one email before he did, by five minutes...one. How could I compete with someone who spent hours on their computer every day? It was frustrating. I worried not being available 24/7. But then I said to myself, the community didn't elect two Tony's, they elected me.

And speaking of Tony, I would like to say that it was an honour to work with Tony over the past two terms. His love for our community is huge. Each one of us has a story of Tony's dedication serving our community, from volunteering at The Kitchen, invasive plant eradication to creating so many committees! I have learned a lot working as a co-trustee with Tony (especially about "consensus and clarity") and as Tony said, you never stop learning, that's why you want to continue as a trustee. I'll carry the baton Tony, with care.

In my first week as a lone trustee, I had over 20 telephone messages, six emails from some concerned individuals, and five emails from five different people persistently wanting a detailed answer to a detailed question regarding details about some detail that happened over three years ago – in one day. Most of you are no doubt aware that trustee remuneration is more like a stipend. One could not live on it unless they were retired with a pension or lived under a tarp in the woods. I supplement my income by having a full-time job and mowing lawns. Hence, I am not able to respond to all your emails right away. "Did you get the email I sent you five minutes ago?"

Being a trustee is not about how fast you respond to an email or return a telephone call. It is not about how many meetings you attend or committees you join. It is not about the money. It is not even about the glory. It's about our mandate: to preserve and protect our islands and the Salish Sea. It's about serving you, the community, as best as I can without pissing too many of you off. It's about listening with an open mind. It's about making informed decisions. It's about working together on what matters most.

With that, a new era has begun:

I will not be checking my email 37 times a day. That's right. I will only check them twice a day. Once in the late afternoon and once in the early evening. Not checking my emails every few minutes is not about being insensitive, rude, or disrespectful. It is about being productive, getting work done, and not playing silly email back and forth games.

Maybe I'm dated, but I prefer my communication face-to-face or over a good old-fashioned telephone call. And if I am off island or unable to respond in a day or two, auto response will let you know. And now a word about my presence on Facebook Word of Mouth. Sorry, I will not be engaging in any conversations on this site, whether it be on the varying surface tension of black coffee or the location of a bilge pump two feet too close to your property line. I will not go there, because, as Will Self beautifully wrote, online conversations have "wilful misunderstanding and misinterpretation of my original statements, together with criticism that is either ad hominem or else transparently animated by a superimposed ideological cleavage."

I agree, disagreements are a fact of life, whether you're online or off it. But it's a fact universally acknowledged that arguments are frequently more entrenched on the Internet.

I will continue to post Islands Trust information, like meeting dates, upcoming forums/consultations, Trust Council announcements on Facebook but with the "notifications" option turned off.

And finally, please welcome our new vice-chair, Sue Ellen Fast, Bowen municipal councillor and trustee with the Islands Trust from 2014 to 2018. A few highlight's of Sue Ellen's background: she was a wildlife biologist and field technician in Ontario, Quebec and Yukon and she founded Peregrine Watch, one of the earliest nest cam programs connecting children and families to nature outdoors.

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*At time of writing.