



Islands Trust

**GABRIOLA ISLAND  
LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE  
AGENDA**

**REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
OF THE GABRIOLA ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE**  
held at 10:15 AM on Thursday, June 27, 2013 at the Women's Institute,  
476 South Road, Gabriola Island, BC

**LATE ITEMS, ADDITIONS**

**AMENDMENTS/ADDITIONS  
TO ITEMS:**

- 7. NEW BUSINESS**
- 7.4 Proactive Bylaw Enforcement of Illegal Structures on the Foreshore  
Memorandum dated June 18, 2013 - attached
- 7.5 Development Permit Fees for Riparian Areas Regulation - *discussion*
  
- 6. REPORTS**
- 6.1 Work Program Reports
  - 6.1.1 Top Priorities Report and Projects List dated July 10, 2013  
Riparian Areas Regulation Meeting - *discussion*



# Memorandum

---

Date June 18, 2013 File Number 4020-20 Foreshore Structures

To Local Trust Committee

From Local Planning Committee

Re **PROACTIVE BYLAW ENFORCEMENT OF ILLEGAL STRUCTURES ON THE FORESHORE**

---

At the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Local Planning Committee (LPC) meeting the following resolution was passed:

***It was MOVED and SECONDED***

*That the Local Planning Committee direct staff to ask the Local Trust Committees if they are willing to pilot a project on proactively enforcing illegal structures on the foreshore.*

**CARRIED**

As a result, this memo is to ask whether there is willingness to participate in a pilot project regarding proactively enforcing illegal structures on the foreshore. Attached is a copy of the staff briefing report considered at the LPC meeting.

The purpose of this project is to address the issue of proactive bylaw enforcement of illegal structures on the foreshore and to develop a generalized approach that all islands could use through education, proactive enforcement and regulation. The intent of this project is to address the issue of illegal foreshore structures (e.g. buildings, decks, seawalls, etc.) through various methods of improving awareness about, and enforcement of, regulations pertaining to structures built near the sea.

At this stage, it is just to gather the interest of the LTCs and then a decision will be made on which LTC and what sort of pilot project it will be given the resources (staff and funding) available.

Please indicate your interest by e-mail to Kris Nichols, Island Planner at [knichols@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:knichols@islandstrust.bc.ca) . The LPC will take the LTCs interests and comments into consideration at the August LPC Meeting.

Attachment: Staff Briefing Report

Pc David Marlor, Director



**To:** Local Planning Committee

**For the Meeting of:** May 9, 2013

**From:** Kris Nichols, Island Planner

**Date Prepared:** April 30, 2013

**pc:** David Marlor, Director

**File No:** 4020-20 Foreshore Structures

**SUBJECT: PROACTIVE BYLAW ENFORCEMENT OF ILLEGAL STRUCTURES ON THE FORESHORE**

---

**DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE:**

Local Planning Committee (LPC) has as its number one priority on its Work Program, “Develop Mechanism for Proactive Bylaw Enforcement of Illegal Structures on the Foreshore”. The purpose of this work program priority/project is to address the issue of proactive bylaw enforcement of illegal structures on the foreshore and to develop a generalized approach that all islands could use through education, proactive enforcement and regulations.

Initially, this priority was to be addressed in the form of a project charter. It was decided by staff in consultation with the LPC Chair and the Director of Local Planning Services that a project charter would not be the best approach to take at this time given the uncertainty of some of the issues around doing proactive enforcement, participation by the Local Trust Committees and resources (staff, time and money) required to carry out the project given the current budget of \$2000.00. Staff determined that a report would be the best approach in order to provide information to understand the issues around proactive bylaw enforcement of illegal structures on the foreshore and to present options for consideration of moving forward.

The intent of this report is to outline the issues and the possible scope of enforcement that could occur and present options for LPC discussion and direction for moving forward.

**BACKGROUND:**

This project has been initiated by the Local Planning Committee (LPC). This topic is in the Strategic Plan as item 2.2. The intent of this project is to address the issue of illegal foreshore structures (e.g. buildings, decks, seawalls, etc.) through various methods of improving awareness about and enforcement of regulations pertaining to structures built near the sea.

Residents that have built within the setback to the sea have done so either through not being aware of current bylaw regulations or thinking that a replacement structure is permitted without adhering to the bylaws. Some may also believe that if a building permit is not required (e.g. seawall construction) there is no issue with other local bylaw requirements such as setbacks from the sea or development permits. As well, those that do build ignoring the regulations recognize that currently there is little risk. The structures are also generally not that visible except from the seaward side of the property that bylaw officers cannot easily access, making proactive enforcement difficult when you don't know where the structures are. The best option for viewing these foreshore structures is by boat, plane or helicopter, but to do this for all the islands with approximately 1377 km of shoreline may not a feasible solution. Residents that chose to ignore the regulations are generally aware that they can apply for a development

variance permit retroactively and in many cases these get approved, thereby weakening the argument for restrictive development of structures within the foreshore.

Generally, bylaw enforcement is complaint driven. That being said, the Islands Trust bylaw enforcement policy does permit bylaw enforcement officers to initiate enforcement on the foreshore without complaint as these areas are considered as environmentally sensitive. Proactive enforcement is generally the best approach which should be combined with education (i.e. workshops, letters, brochures, web postings, newspaper advertisements, etc.) as bylaw officers have limited resources and capacity to do this on their own. Increasing proactive enforcement should result in greater compliance as it would increase the risk to property owners who ignored the regulations, but more importantly education of the regulations and their rationale and subsequent enforcement should help to reduce the number of bylaw infractions and protect these environmentally sensitive areas.

### Rationale for Proactive Enforcement of Illegal Foreshore Structures

In establishing some of the background rationale for this priority staff has met with Bylaw Enforcement staff to gain a further understanding of the need for proactive enforcement and the specific file types (e.g. docks, decks, seawalls, etc.). Staff has reviewed the bylaw files pertaining to illegal foreshore structures on each of the islands. There are 38 files bylaw enforcement files currently open. They are as follows:

Island	Files	Generalized Type
Denman	6	Stairs to Foreshore: 5 Building: 1
Gabriola	1	Stairs to Foreshore & Log Seawall: 1
Galiano	2	Retaining Wall: 1 Stairs to Foreshore: 1
Gambier	8	Concrete Dock: 1 Structure (not specified): 5 Rip Rap Seawall: 2
Hornby	0	N/A
Lasqueti	0	N/A
Mayne	0	N/A
North Pender	5	Wooden Ramp to Foreshore: 1 Seawall (Possibly Rip Rap): 1 Dock: 2 Stairs to Foreshore: 1
Saturna	3	Deck: 2 Platform: 1
Salt Spring	8	Seawall (no indication of what type): 2 Groyne: 1 Deck with Stairway to Beach: 2 Deck: 2 Concrete Seawall: 1
South Pender	0	N/A
Thetis	5	Concrete Seawall: 1 Deck and Dock: 1 House/Deck/Stairs: 1 Float/Boat Ramp/Stairs: 1 Addition to Cabin: 1
Totals	38	Stairs to Foreshore: 7 Building: 1 Stairs to Foreshore & Log Seawall: 1 Retaining Wall: 1 Concrete Dock: 1 Structure (not specified): 5

		Rip Rap Seawall: 2 Wooden Ramp to Foreshore: 1 Seawall (not specified what type): 3 Dock: 2 Deck: 4 Platform: 1 Groyne: 1 Deck with Stairway to Beach: 2 Concrete Seawall: 2 Deck and Dock: 1 House/Deck/Stairs: 1 Float/Boat Ramp Stairs: 1 Addition to Cabin: 1
--	--	---

*Table 1 – Foreshore Enforcement Files*

The files listed above give a good indication of the issues that are prevalent for bylaw enforcement in addressing illegal structures on the foreshore with the most prevalent being providing access to the foreshore through the construction of stairs. The enforcement of these files will help to establish that there are regulations pertaining to illegal structures within the foreshore. It is hoped that through such enforcement that others will learn of the need to follow the regulations. This would have to be coupled with proactive enforcement in order to be more effective in getting the word out or to tackle those that were not a result of a complaint or happened upon by the enforcement officer. Again, bylaw enforcement will have to consider existing resources in order to determine whether they can expand their current enforcement program which will be needed at the outset. It should be noted that because four local trust committees do not have foreshore violations does not mean that they do not have illegal structures on the foreshore, they just don't have any recorded complaints.

**Project Outline:**

Staff has outlined in brief the project objectives and scope to address illegal foreshore structures. This is based on the original discussion at LPC, however, after some analysis staff realize that the project will have to be further defined prior to proceeding with further (more detailed) project evaluation.

Proposed Project Objectives

- Initiate proactive enforcement through regulation, education and awareness.
- Reduce the number of development variance permits that are applied for retroactively in the foreshore areas.
- Educate property owners with sea frontage on the importance of maintaining these environmentally sensitive areas and providing alternatives to hard structures where "green" structures could be utilized lessening the environmental impact.
- Educate agencies (e.g. CRD, VIHA, etc.) and contractors that deal with property owners with sea frontage (e.g. building permits, septic fields, etc.)
- Develop as required regulations that will help to protect the foreshore areas from illegal structures (e.g. development permits, additional setbacks, etc.)
- Establish general procedures for the enforcement of regulations with a combination of proactive enforcement and education. This would include an analysis as to the best way to establish a benchmark and the subsequent reviews of the island shorelines.

## Proposed Project Scope

- Increase communication around education and awareness regarding foreshore/setback from the sea structure construction.
- Review of existing regulations on all Islands to determine if new regulations are required.
- Review of differing island approaches being taken for pro-active foreshore enforcement (i.e. existing bylaws, communication, etc.)
- Review of the current regulations used on each island regarding the ability to construct structures within the foreshore/setback to the sea.
- Determine the best approach to identifying structure on the foreshore (i.e. boat, plane, helicopter, roads, etc.) initially and a timeframe for subsequent analysis.

## **ATTACHMENT(S):**

---

## **AVAILABLE OPTIONS:**

### Options to Consider for Proactive Enforcement

There are a number of options that should be considered by the LPC as to the direction to take toward increasing proactive enforcement of illegal structures on the foreshore. It is important to remember that currently the budget for this project is \$2000.00 and that as this is an enforcement issue there are limited staff resources that need to be considered.

#### 1. Trust Wide Proactive Enforcement

This would be the most financially, staffing and time dependent option. It would involve researching the shorelines of all the islands to locate through GPS possible infractions and then identifying the specific properties and determining whether they had been given variances to accommodate the infractions or to determine when they may have occurred. It would then entail being proactive with the land owners and following up with their infractions. Follow up would be required by either bylaw enforcement staff or planning staff. Creating a foreshore picture of illegal structures would be a useful tool, but would have to be maintained every 2-3 years to be effective.

Pros – this would create the best record of structures on the foreshore for all the local trust areas. It would enable staff to be proactive in their approach by identifying specific properties and thereby proposing specific remedies.

Cons – It would be costly and time consuming for staff to establish the record and for follow up. Additionally, funding would be required and buy-in from all the local trust committees and respective staff. It would also have to be done every 2-3 years to remain effective. It would take staff away from current bylaw enforcement duties and file management. It may increase staff requirements for follow up.

#### 2. Island Proactive Enforcement – Establish Generalized Approach

The intent would be to take one local trust area to establish a proactive enforcement approach and to use that approach, once determined, in other local trust areas (with variations).

In addition, this approach could involve establishing an education and awareness program that could ultimately be used for other islands.

Pros – this approach would create a sample proactive enforcement approach for a specific local trust area that could be used in other local trust areas. It would provide an

idea of what extra resources (i.e. staffing, time and money) would be required to do the proactive enforcement.

Cons – this approach would be specific to one local trust area and not address illegal foreshore structures immediately in all the local trust areas.

### 3. Education and Awareness Approach – Trust Wide

This is would be the least resource dependent approach and would deal with ways to educate land owners of the need to protect the shoreline and likely could be started with the \$2000 allocated at this time. However, it could be argued that this is the least likely way to get results.

1. Mail outs – to select foreshore property owners for a targeted mail out of information regarding island specific enforcement (i.e. setbacks, development permit areas, etc.)
2. Pamphlets/Brochures – a more general approach through the development of a brochure to be available at offices and possibly used for a mail out and placed on website.
3. Website Updates – to be placed on all Island's web pages in a similar format with the brochure, but with island specific references (i.e. links to zones, Development Permit Areas, etc.)
4. Information meetings – build on Shoreline Workshops held over the past couple of months, but with specific reference to enforcement issues and what can and cannot be built in the foreshore areas.
5. Encouraging Local Trust Committees to adopt Development Permits for Shorelines Areas – while this may not stop illegal structures from occurring, the process of implementing Development Permit Areas will help to educate people about the importance of protecting the foreshore areas.

Pros – this approach is the least costly method to get information out to the residents. It ensures that those that are most likely to be able to impact the foreshore will be made aware of what is permitted to be constructed and what is not. May be a first approach to enforcement and could be evaluated at a later date to see what else may be needed. It fits within the allocated budget.

Cons – this approach may be the least likely to get results as it may just be considered another piece of paper and or meeting by the local trust committee.

### 4. Status Quo Approach

Given that illegal foreshore activities are only 13.9% of enforcement files and the anticipated impact that proactive enforcement may have on current resources (staff, time and money) that no proactive enforcement be taken.

Pro – keeps resources as they are currently being used.

Con – illegal foreshore structures may continue to be an issue for many islands and enforcement will remain to be both complaints driven and proactive where noticed.

### Staff Summary:

It should also be noted that the active files indicated in the table (See Table 1) represent 13.9% of the total number of open enforcement files (273) currently. It should also be noted that being proactive regarding illegal foreshore structures is important in order to address some environmental concerns; however, the reality is that it will have an impact on the existing enforcement resources and will undoubtedly increase the number enforcement files that staff will have to address. It will also likely impact planning staff for follow up where applications are made. It has to be understood that a shift in the allocation of the limited resources (i.e. staff,

time and money) would be required to be more proactive in enforcement thereby impacting what kind, how and when infractions are being dealt with.

A sample approach could be done with the \$2000 currently allocated for this project, but certainly not the most effective approach, which is to survey all the foreshore properties in order to be truly proactive as to what currently exists on the foreshore properties. The LPC in making its decision about how to proceed will have to consider:

- The amount of resources (staffing, time and money) they want the Islands Trust to spend on being proactive?
- Given the amount of resources required to do this proactive enforcement in an effective manner and the resultant impact it will have on current enforcement. Should this still be an LPC top priority for all the Islands?
- There is no additional staffing enforcement resources and that bylaw files will grow and that the initiation of taking proactive enforcement measures will take some time to fully implement?
- Would education and awareness through brochures, website, and/or mail outs be sufficient given the resource limitations?

Given the possible breadth of this project and its scope staff is providing information to inform the LPC discussion on the various options considering the allocated budget available. Given the budget allocated, the most cost effective approach would be to do a brochure that could be useable for all islands and put on the websites as information as to what can and cannot be done and who to contact for further information.

#### **FOLLOW-UP:**

That the Local Planning Committee discuss and decide upon an option regarding proactive bylaw enforcement for illegal foreshore structures based on the information provided in this report entitled, "*Proactive Bylaw Enforcement of Illegal Structures on the Foreshore*" dated April 30, 2013.

---

**Date: April 30, 2013**

**Prepared By:** Kris Nichols, Island Planner

**Reviewed By:** David Marlor, Director of Local Planning Services