



Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee

Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: March 23, 2026

Location: Electronic Meeting,
and a physical location to view the livestream of the meeting:
Islands Trust Gabriola Office
700 North Road
Gabriola, BC V0R 1X3

Members Present: Laura Patrick, Chair
Tobi Elliott, Trustee
Susan Yates, Trustee

Staff Present: Stephen Baugh, Island Planner
Narissa Chadwick, Island Planner
William Shulba, Senior Freshwater Specialist
Lisa Millard, Meeting Administrator/Recorder

Others Present: There were approximately 31 members of the public in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Patrick called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Patrick acknowledged that the meeting was held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

4.1 Major Project: Gabriola Island Comprehensive Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Review - Communication and Engagement on Official Community Plan Draft - Staff Report

The Planner summarized the staff report and noted the report provides an updated Project Charter reflecting the Local Trust Committee's request for an in-person meeting to be held prior to First Reading of the draft Official Community Plan and a Communications and Engagement plan to support community engagement to Second and Third readings.

Discussion ensued and the following comments and clarifications were noted:

- The public feedback form will include key questions to help guide feedback;

- New Development Permit Areas are not included within the project scope; however, the Official Community Plan has a section on implementation and advocacy which identifies next steps for Development Permit Areas;
- Alternative dates for a community engagement session will need to be identified.

GB-2026-023

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee endorse the revised project charter.

CARRIED

GB-2026-024

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee endorse the communications and engagement plan for the next steps in the Gabriola Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Review Project as amended.

CARRIED

4.2 Islands Trust Freshwater Footprint Methodology Development and Gabriola Island Case Study - Staff Report

The Senior Freshwater Specialist introduced the staff report and provided background to the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy and the Freshwater Footprint Project and highlighted the following:

- Throughout the development of the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy there was a parallel process undertaken with Indigenous knowledge holders and Indigenous youth;
- Islands Trust staff and GW Solutions consultants coordinated with partners including the Regional District of Nanaimo's Drinking Water and Watershed Program, the Province of BC, and Island Health and also engaged residents, subject experts, and interested parties throughout the process;
- The Islands Trust Freshwater Sustainability Strategy was released in December, 2021 and can be located by following this link:
<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/freshwater-sustainability-strategy/>
- The purpose of the strategy is to have freshwater sustainability be a key lens through which Islands Trust land use decisions are made, to support research and advocacy, and provide public access to information about water resources and associated data;
- The goals, objectives, and core programs were outlined;
- The Freshwater Footprint is a keystone project that has been developed on technical foundations including aquifer conceptualization, groundwater region mapping, groundwater availability analysis, risk of seawater intrusion studies, and groundwater recharge assessment;
- Planning outcomes from the Freshwater Footprint project include identifying options for decision making and land use intensity and density changes.

GW Solutions Consultant Sylvia Barroso provided a presentation on the Freshwater Footprint project and detailed criteria and methodology used to develop the Gabriola Case Study. For full details, the link to the study is:

<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/islands-trust-freshwater-footprint-methodology-development-and-gabriola-case-study/>

- The Gabriola Case Study presentation included information on freshwater resources, results of the 2025 water survey, freshwater hazards and risks, groundwater recharge potential, estimated residential groundwater use, mapping related to aquifer stresses, contaminants, seawater intrusion, water quality, and intrusion hazard zones, conclusions and recommendations.

4.2.1 Question and Answer Period

The following questions and answers were noted:

The Senior Freshwater Specialist noted 60 questions were received in advance of the presentation and he chose common themes to address.

- How were the aquifer stress rating assigned?
 - Areas of water stress were identified in areas of high density on smaller lots and commercial use and based on usages of more than 40% of groundwater recharge.
- How were water environmental flow needs and water required to sustain terrestrial life accounted for in the water balance?
 - As an indicator of sustainability, they looked how much water was discharged to freshwater ecosystems after groundwater extraction; however, flow data was not available so quantitative analysis was not provided.
- How should future phases of this work improve coordination between Islands Trust, Island Health, First Nations, the Regional District and provincial ministries with freshwater-related responsibilities?
 - Islands Trust plays a significant role and as water is distributed over multiple jurisdictions and there is need to work in a broader context.
- How should the project results be situated in the context of the Official Community Plan Review?
 - Areas where data will influence recommend policy options will include identifying locations where secondary dwelling units will be considered on lots that are not in a high hazard area.
- How should the Official Community Plan integrate localized hazard areas into a water neutral / sustainable water use mandate and how can recharge keep pace with total consumption?
 - The Official Community Plan provides direction on land use planning and data will be used in decisions related to density through applications and Local Trust Committee initiatives. Any direct changes in the Official Community Plan that impact density will be

looking at where additional secondary units, that are not already permitted, can be located.

- What authority does Islands Trust have over freshwater through land use planning and how does that authority relate to Island Health and Provincial regulation?
 - Islands Trust's jurisdictional focus is related to what kind of development can go where and what should be protected and the data can be used to inform those types of decisions.
- What type of water use responses can be used to address vulnerability to existing or new coastal wells with relation to salt water intrusion?
 - Many existing wells are domestic use which do not require a license and a large component of addressing vulnerability is owner management and education in well testing and managed uses.
- Was the effect of tourism or summer use directly or indirectly accounted for in the study and if so, how?
 - Peaking factors in the study looked at summer demand of which outdoor water use is a significant component of increased water use. It is not possible to separate outdoor use from increased residency in terms of population statistics. The study sought all sources of information to determine where non domestic use is occurring but they do not think this would have made a difference in the final results.
- Are neighbours justified in being concerned about heavy pumping from a well adjacent to domestic wells?
 - Under the *Water Sustainability Act*, users are required to have a license for non domestic purposes and terms and conditions of the license determine how much use is permitted.
- Is the model applicable to other islands?
 - Many components of the methodology could be readily available on other islands.

The Senior Freshwater Specialist noted the questions asked from attendees will be collated and a FAQ posted to the project webpage.

GB-2026-025

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee receive the GW Solutions report titled Islands Trust Freshwater Footprint Methodology Development and Gabriola Case Study.

CARRIED

GB-2026-026

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to consider the Freshwater Footprint Hazard map, associated analysis,

and recommendations in the development of Official Community
Plan review policy options.

CARRIED

5. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Laura Patrick, Chair

Certified Correct:

Lisa Millard, Meeting Administrator/Recorder