



Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

Date:	August 6, 2026
Location:	Electronic Meeting
Members Present:	Laura Patrick, Chair Tobi Elliott, Trustee Susan Yates, Trustee
Staff Present:	Stephen Baugh, Acting Regional Planning Manager Narissa Chadwick, Island Planner Dede Maclean, Office Administrative Assistant William Shulba, Senior Freshwater Specialist Chloe Straw, Program Coordinator Morgana Van Niekirk, Communications Specialist Katherine Vogt, Recorder
Others Present:	There were approximately 18 members of the public in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Patrick called the special meeting to order at 9:00 am. She explained that the meeting included providing members of the public the opportunity to ask questions regarding the Gabriola Island Draft Official Community Plan. She welcomed all in attendance and invited members of the public to type their questions into the chat question function.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Patrick acknowledged that the meeting was held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations. She spoke on her recent attendance at the annual Walk for the Children in Chemainus which is organized by the Penelakut Tribe to honor residential school survivors.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

4. QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

The Program Coordinator read out questions from members of the public in the order that they had been received by email in advance or by the chat question function. The following questions and answers were noted:

- Are the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Official Community Plan (OCP) separate documents?
 - They are separate documents. Whereas the OCP is a broad policy document, the LUB implements policies through bylaws.
- Will there be another series of consultations for the LUB?

- First Reading of the LUB is planned for February 2027 so there is opportunity for Trustees to plan for further public engagement.
- What opportunities for public input will be available before and after First Reading of the draft OCP?
 - The current meeting is an opportunity for trustees to finalize details and direction on the draft OCP so that Staff could draft a document for First Reading; the next opportunity for public input to affect changes would be after First Reading.
- Will there be an opportunity for the community to review the Indigenous context in the draft OCP?
 - Staff are still working with Snuneymuxw First Nation on this item.
- What kind of restrictions will be placed on flexible housing?
 - The usual practice would be to determine maximum combined floor area and number of units per lot in the LUB with bylaws that are crafted through future Trustees discussion.
- What will the ownership model for flexible housing look like?
 - That is to be determined. The intent for flexible housing is that it provides opportunities for intergenerational living and other shared property approaches.
- Will there be a prohibition on houses on wheels or moveable housing?
 - A prohibition exists for homes that do not meet Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards for mobile homes.
 - The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) regulates Gabriola housing through their Building Standards Bylaw; and the OCP can not permit housing that the RDN did not permit.
 - Policy 2.7.2.5 in the states that “Multi-unit housing may consist of clustered detached units such as tiny homes, including tiny homes on wheels or manufactured homes in addition to traditional forms of housing”.
 - OCP policy 2.7.2.6 states: “For bylaw amendment applications to permit detached multi-unit housing, the following considerations should be addressed: Units can consist of tiny homes, including tiny homes on wheels or manufactured homes; Units will be constructed to the BC Building Code, or CSA standards for manufactured homes, or equivalent and receive a Building Permit from the RDN; Units must be connected to a source of potable water, and connected to an approved wastewater system; Communal facilities can be provided, such as laundry or common rooms
- Will there be a hard cap on development based on aquifer limits?
 - The draft OCP had been designed to direct additional housing density to water supported areas; and groundwater and aquifers are strongly supported through detailed permit criteria.
- Why has a hydrological integrity framework not been integrated into the OCP and when will it be done before the OCP is released?
 - The Freshwater Footprint project has been a very progressive and first of its kind initiative that comprehensively integrates water concerns into the OCP.
 - The Freshwater Footprint information provides a scientific basis from which trustees can shape future policy and bylaws.
 - A trustee suggested for the next Local Trust Committee (LTC) that a water monitoring project would be highly supportable.

- How will groundwater aquifers and recharge be supported by the draft OCP?
 - Current OCP policies ensure consideration of groundwater protection when changes in use or density are proposed; and the OCP in its implementation section prioritizes the development of a critical aquifer protection development permit area which Staff will be recommending to the next LTC as a priority minor project.
- How is low/moderate income defined?
 - Definitions as stated in the Appendix-1 section of the OCP, include that low income is commonly measured as having an adjusted household income below 50% of the median population income, accounting for household size; and that moderate income means a level of income that falls between the low-income threshold and the median income of the population.
- Why does the OCP restrict the building of lands, buildings, or structures for the manufacturing or research of genetically engineered seeds, plants or animals?
 - This is a policy carried over from the existing OCP and LUB.
- What is a chance find protocol, and how are they monitored or reviewed?
 - It is a set of procedures to follow if you find heritage materials on your property that is administered by the Provincial Archaeological Branch under the Heritage Conservation Act.
- Why do some policies have the words “would” and “will” and some are “should”?
 - The OCP, as an overarching policy document not permitted to fetter the discretion of future LTCs, supports the use of the word “should” rather than the requirement word “must”.
 - The word “must” is generally reserved for those parts of the OCP established through Provincial regulations; the word “shall” is avoided due to legal interpretive issues.

Trustee Yates left the meeting at 9:28 am and returned at 9:31 am due to a Zoom functionality issue.

- Why do policies read as “aspirational”?
 - Goals and objectives are meant to be aspirational. Policies provide a direction while the LUB is specific. Some policies are provincially required such as greenhouse gas emissions which are aspirational by default given the absence of local monitoring.
- What is the purpose of the reference to 200 meters in the draft OCP?
 - This reference has been misinterpreted as a setback requirement. The 200-metre delineation has been proposed as a best practice policy for First Nations purposes allowing them to review various permits and assess the likelihood of recorded and new archaeological sites being present at the proposed development location. Also, the proposal to not increase density within the 200-metre delineation is slated for future discussion.
 - A trustee requested that staff review the early referral process for First Nations and related ministerial expectations for public knowledge.
 - The Planner responded that the ministry has a clearly defined process for planning staff to report on early engagement with First Nations, and that planning staff are undertaking more engagement than in the past.
- Section 2.5.1 Bylaw Amendment Evaluations refers to non-tangible cultural heritage. What is non-tangible?

- There are values in the land that are not just archaeological for First Nations which will be learned going forward.
- Could you use italics throughout the document for all words that have definitions that correspond to the definitions section of the document?
 - The Planner offered to add this item to the logistics section of the OCP discussion.
- Regarding the Vision Statement, there is the suggestion to remove all the wording except the actual statement to strengthen and clarify it.
 - The Planner offered to add this item to the Vision Statement section of the OCP discussion.
- Regarding the Community Values section, can the word “considerations” be changed to “convictions” for greater confirmation of the values that guide the draft OCP?
 - The Planner offered to add this item to the Vision Statement section of the OCP discussion.
- There is a suggestion for the OCP values be listed in alphabetical order.
 - The Planner offered to include this item for further discussion
- In the Affordable Housing section, could you substitute “affordable housing for non-market” throughout the document? In section 2.7.2.1 non-market is defined as needing a housing agreement, which is the same definition as that for affordable housing.
 - The Planner offered to include this item for further discussion.
- Why are subdividable lands being looked at for development but not as areas to restore forest lands and groundwater recharge?
 - A next step for the OCP is the development of a Critical Aquifer Development Permit Area (DPA); and the existing draft OCP encourages water conservation.
 - A trustee requested future discussion of the use of parcel specific covenants for groundwater protection where increased density is sought on a property, in addition to discussion on a DPA.
- What changes are Islands Trust proposing regarding non-tangible cultural heritage?
 - The draft OCP includes this as a value to be considered.
- Could total maximum floor areas be set lower than other islands. It seems excessive?
 - This will be addressed in future flexible housing discussions.
- When is the First Reading proposed and will First Nations have a formal referral response prior to First Reading?
 - September 3, 2026 is the planned First Reading date, and planning staff do not know if they will receive a First Nations referral response by September.

Chair Patrick thanked members of the public for their questions and comments and encouraged that comments from the public would still be welcome right up to and including the September 3, 2026 First Reading meeting, and afterwards.

Trustee Yates noted that September 3, 2026 was also the last meeting of the current LTC and that trustees have reviewed and considered every public comment. She addressed public concerns that there was a rush to First Reading, explaining that getting the draft OCP document to First Reading is important for allowing it to go out for official referral, after which there is still more time for further public comment and revision.

Trustee Elliot wished to acknowledge all the helpful comments, reviews, and suggested edits from members of the public that contributed to a much improved and refined draft

OCP; and expressed concern that there has not yet been a broad enough public engagement to include people that are underhoused, tradespeople, small businesses, younger people, and families who may not feel familiar with engagement with the Islands Trust. She suggested that more work should be done over the next two months to engage with these groups.

The Planner expressed appreciation for the incredible community effort that has gone into the draft OCP.

The meeting was recessed at 10:01 am and reconvened at 10:12 am.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

5.1 Major Project: Gabriola Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Review: Draft Official Community Plan - Staff Report

The Planner presented the staff report dated August 6, 2026, that includes a table of 44 items that describe revisions to the Official Community Plan (OCP) that have been made since the last meeting of the Local Trust Committee (LTC); a revised draft of the OCP showing these changes through track changes; and a second table of 8 items for further LTC review and discussion.

Trustees reviewed Table 1: Changes Made to Draft OCP since July 16, 2026, noting the following:

- Indigenous food sovereignty was noticed by a spokesperson for Island Health as not being addressed in the Gabriola draft OCP and a trustee supported that LTC advocacy for septic maintenance be added to the advocacy section of the OCP, to aid in the maintaining of indigenous food sovereignty by improving conditions for traditional clam gardens.
- A trustee suggested adding natural landscape preservation and pollinator habitat, and a soil management plan to the draft OCP and the Planner offered that a comprehensive review of the Island Health response could be undertaken in the fall.
- Trustees agreed that the rationale behind the use of the words “must, should, and shall” and other similar words be added to the interpretation section; and that the preamble and the post amble for the Guiding Vision Statement be removed and added to another more appropriate section.
- A trustee proposed that the public’s apprehension regarding flexible housing for allowing too much density as per Policy 2.4.1.2 points to the need for an OCP link to a new zone that could be called “Community Land Stewardship,” as modeled on Cortez Island, to accommodate a clustered cooperative model of shared residential use aligned with environmental protection through parcel specific covenants.
 - The Planner acknowledged the ambiguity regarding flexible housing; and offered that the current draft OCP does support the “Community Land Stewardship” model of development in Multi-Unit Housing Policy 2.7.2.1, including covenants, whereas the flexible housing under Policy 2.4.1.2 supports intergenerational family living or for two friends to buy a property

together; and also supports a means of compliance for people who already have extra accommodations on their properties.

- The Planner added that all environmental considerations for development were concentrated in Policy 2.6 rather than distributed throughout the document to reduce the size of the OCP and to make it easier to navigate.
- The trustee requested that opportunities to convert large acreage properties into cooperative ownership models be clarified for the public benefit; and considered that the term flexible housing was problematic.
- Trustees expressed support for capping flexible housing to not exceed 12; for removing regulatory language on flexible housing from the draft OCP; for reviewing the numbers of existing non-compliant dwellings; for adding a purpose or explanatory statement for flexible housing; amend Policy 2.4.1.2 to allow one additional flex housing unit per lot; and review the policy in its entirety.
- A trustee expressed concern regarding OCP Policies being perceived as handing extra equity to some property owners; a purpose statement for flexible housing would address some of this concern.
- Trustees supported, regarding Policy 2.5.15.6, that it be split into two sections for possible future water desalination technologies; and that a pipeline to Vancouver Island would not be permitted.

Trustees concluded discussion on Table 1 and moved to discussion on Table 2 of the staff report containing 8 question items. The following consensus points were noted:

- There is agreement that parks should not permit a caretaker's dwelling.
- Remove Policy 2.6.1.2 because the adjacent policy captures intent.
- Retain in Policy 2.6.3.4 that subdivision of agricultural land may be exceptionally allowed for environmental conservation purposes.
- Agriculture property within the Freshwater Hazard Area be permitted a detached dwelling unit with a rainwater catchment provision.
- Policy 2.4.9.2 should allow cisterns, or alternately, other storage capacity such as ponds, for new builds.
- Limit numbers of Bed and Breakfast occupants to what is currently permitted in the Land Use Bylaw (LUB).

Trustees concluded discussion of Table 2 and moved forward with discussion on various issues regarding the draft OCP that warranted further attention. The following was noted:

- Agreement that the small lot and large lot residential distinctions be merged into one rural residential designation in the draft OCP for clarity; while maintaining the designations in the Land Use Bylaw (LUB).
- Veterinary clinics as a home occupation are limited to 5-acre properties and this needs to be changed.
 - The Planner offered to review this issue for the LUB.
- The term "Freshwater Hazard Zone" has raised concern for members of the public for attaching the word "hazard" to their property.

- Maps referred to hazards such as saltwater intrusion and shoreline erosion; and that the Regional District and the Province also use the term hazard rather than endangerment to fresh water.
- A trustee suggested referring this issue to the Director of Legislative Services.
- The Freshwater Specialist explained that the freshwater hazard maps were an outcome of the Freshwater Footprint Project; and that the hazard refers to the hazard to the fresh water sources in a particular area; and that the term has a specific technical alignment with the mapping that does not include groundwater recharge or riparian protection areas.
- Trustees agreed that it was late in the process to change the term “hazards” in the OCP before First Reading.
- The Planner summarized recent technical suggestions from the public to use the word “conviction” instead of “consideration;” to identify words that have definitions; to order the “Values” alphabetically; and to use the term “affordable housing” instead of “non-market housing”.
 - Currently, definitions are in the appendix to support the OCP process but are not considered as part of the OCP.
 - Agreement to have the definitions only in the LUB once the OCP process was concluded.
 - A trustee did not support the use of the word “convictions”.
 - A trustee did not support the reordering of the “Values”.
 - The Planner offered to review the terms “affordable housing” and “non-market housing”.
- A trustee recommended that wildfires be addressed in a future development permit area (DPA).
 - The Planner noted that the development of a wildfire resilience DPA is a priority.
- A trustee recommended distinguishing between agriculture and horticulture in the OCP due to down water risks of agricultural operations.
 - Currently horticulture was permitted on all properties; and that agriculture was permitted on lots 2 hectares or larger because it includes animals.
 - This does not preclude the raising of animals for home use, only for commercial use.
 - Trustees agreed to address agriculture/horticulture specifications in the LUB
- Temporary Use Permit (TUP) fees for short term rentals on agricultural properties could be onerous and requested further staff review.
 - The Planner offered that the issue could be reviewed following First Reading

GB-2026-063**It was MOVED and SECONDED,**

that Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff prepare the draft Official Community Plan for First Reading incorporating changes discussed at the August 6, 2026 Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee special meeting.

CARRIED**6. ADJOURNMENT**

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

Laura Patrick, Chair

Certified Correct:

Katherine Vogt, Recorder