



ADOPTED

Galiano Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: March 14, 2015
Location: Lions Park Society
992 Burrill Road, Galiano Island, BC

Members Present: George Grams, Alternate Chair
Sandy Pottle, Trustee
George Harris, Trustee

Staff Present: Kim Farris, Acting Planner 2
Colleen Doty, Recorder

Members of the Public and Media Present: There were approximately seventy (70) members of the public present and no (0) members of the media present.

Regrets: Laura Busheikin, Chair

1. CALL TO ORDER

Alternate Chair (A/Chair) Grams called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m., acknowledging that the meeting was being held on traditional Coast Salish territory. A/Chair Grams introduced himself, trustees, staff, and the panel. He explained the format of the meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda

By general consent, the agenda was approved as presented.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1. Staff Presentation

A/Planner 2 Kim Farris gave a summary of the Rogers cell tower proposal and the procedural guidelines. The public comment period ends Monday, March 23rd.

Other cell providers were contacted. WIND was the only provider that responded. They are not seeking collocation, and did not attend the session today. Numerous comments were provided to the LTC and are available on the Islands Trust website. A decision by the Trustees with respect to the LTC's position on the cell tower proposal will most likely be made at the April LTC meeting.

A/Planner 2 Farris clarified that public notification is not required for collocation. Staff will be creating a staff report for the April 13th meeting.

3.2. Proponent Presentation

The proponents were represented by the following individuals from Rogers and Rogers' agent, Altus Group: Leifka Vissers, Altus Group; Sam Seguita, Rogers; Yan Feng Zhu, Radio Frequency Engineer, Altus Group; Brent Laoun, site selection expert; and Jamie Douglas-Blake.

Leifka Vissers spoke with respect to public consultation and zoning requirements. Altus Group received 93 different comments from the public, most in support of the proposal. She noted that wireless is more often used as a business tool these days. Health Canada's Safety Code 6 was updated March 13, 2015. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified radiofrequency as a class 2B carcinogen, possibly carcinogenic to humans. With respect to anticipated coverage, she noted there would be some improved coverage, once another tower on Salt Spring Island (SSI) was installed and if Galiano's Stockade Hill proposal was approved. Rogers considered Stockade Hill to be well suited, with minimal aesthetic impact. A high site is preferable. Bluff Park was considered, but is a nature protection area, so was deemed unsuitable. With respect to Stockade Hill, Ms. Vissers stated that Rogers has done due diligence. The site has a cleared, existing access road and existing power. This would dramatically reduce the environmental impact.

A/Planner 2 Farris cited the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee Land Use Bylaw 127, Subsection 2.1.1 that the following uses are permitted in all zones except in the Nature Protection zone: conduits, poles and towers for the transmission by cable of electricity, telephone signals or cablevision signals. The cell tower use is not considered 'towers for transmission by cable' therefore the cell tower is not a permitted use in the Galiano Island Land Use Bylaw.

Leifka Vissers stated that notification of the cell proposal was expanded to all surrounding neighbours.

A short film, produced by Rogers, was shown in support of increased wireless coverage from an emergency access perspective.

4. COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING RE ROGERS CELL TOWER PROPOSAL

A/Chair Grams explained that the community information meeting format gives the public an opportunity to comment and/or ask questions. A speakers list was presented.

A/Chair Grams asked the public to limit their questions to three minutes.

Debbie Holmes stated the LTC is responsible for land use planning within the Galiano LTC area. She noted there is currently no cell tower on Stockade Ridge. The area of the proposed cell tower is located between two mapped fault lines, with evidence of land movement and high risk of geophysical movement and slide activity. Recently BC Parks removed campsites on Montague Park because of the earthquake risk. Industry Canada cannot control the integrity of the land. In 2005, careless activity caused a large fire. The province does not have the resources to come to our aid in the case of an earthquake. She advised the Trustees against the cell tower.

Christina Stechishin spoke in favour of the cell tower proposal. She noted that in the event of an earthquake, land lines are the first to go. She asked Rogers to address what seismic research they have done. She indicated that cell phones are an important part of emergency response and was concerned with climate change increasing wild fire risk. She asked whether Rogers supported the *5555 Wildfire emergency call service.

Leifka Vissers (Altus) stated that in the event of a natural disaster, the structure they are considering building would be built to today's most stringent engineering standards and regulations. Rogers' structure would be more secure than the existing Capital Region Emergency Service Telecommunications (CREST) tower. Battery back-ups would be in place. Bedrock is at the Stockade Hill site. With respect to *5555, she thought it was supported.

Sylvie Beauregard is in favour of increased cell coverage and the current proposal. She noted that volunteer work is harder because she's on dial-up. She was involved in three emergencies on Galiano where her cell phone was useless. Life is vulnerable for some people on Galiano.

Frances Tessier spoke in favour of the cell tower proposal. She is an avid dog walker who is concerned about possible emergencies while out walking her dog.

Rose Longini spoke against the cell tower proposal. She expressed concerns about Rogers' misleading public notices which made it seem as though Rogers was replacing one tower for another. She asked why many people thought there was an existing cell tower there?

Leifka Vissers stated that language to the effect of "telecommunications structure" was used.

Rose Longini was concerned about humming noises being emitted.

A Rogers representative stated that noises could be from cooling units for equipment and that the humming is not necessarily associated with telecommunications equipment, but it could be. Sometimes air conditioning units are required but this is site specific.

Rose Longini stated her opposition to the tower. She lives within 500 meters of the tower and there is a covenant on her land.

Glenna Mattin does not currently have cell service. The new proposal would not improve her service but she was supportive of the tower.

Rogers' engineer stated that a higher tower would not improve service.

Leifka Vissers noted that increased tower height would result in marginal improvements.

Sam Seguita (Rogers) stated the LTC could request Rogers to look into areas that are without service on Galiano.

Doug Latta spoke against the cell tower because it's located in his backyard. He doesn't see the safety advantages for the cell tower proposal. Low level electromagnetic frequency radiation (EMFR) causes problems in humans and animals. He referenced the history of tobacco to illustrate current problems with the telecommunications industry. He asked for respect of neighbours and wondered if he had any choice in the matter. This is a land use issue. He asked the Trustees to consider the preserve and protect mandate of the Trust.

Elizabeth Latta spoke against the cell tower proposal. She lives within 400 meters of the projected tower and is very frightened. She fought this fight in 2002. She is concerned about the vast proliferation of EMFR and its cumulative effects. She has scientific documentation to support her concerns. Those within 400 meters of a cell tower have a 200-300% increased chance of getting cancer. She noted that the US Navy will be conducting tests in the Strait of Georgia on EMFR as a weapon. She asked what impact the proposed tower will have on property values.

Ed Andrusiak spoke in favour of the tower. With respect to the publications listed by World Health Organization on their website, he noted Factsheet 193 (Oct. 2014) which stated that EMF radiation from cell phones was fairly low. He felt there was no scientific basis linking EMFR to health effects.

Jennifer Garton-Hamer spoke against the cell tower proposal. Speaking from the perspective of a young family who recently moved to Galiano, she noted there were other ways of creating coverage that are safer but more expensive. She asked whether Rogers could give information about radiation emitted from broadband versus wireless. How does radiation affect bees? It's her strong belief that if all of us were living within scope of the tower we'd want to have a strong say. The neighbours living within close proximity should have the loudest say. She asked about the possibility of satellites enhancing telecommunications.

Rogers' engineer spoke about broadband and indicated there would be electromagnetic waves. He noted that in a big city with a dense population there is a trend toward small cell sites. The transmitting power would be smaller. Due to Galiano's population, the small cell solution is not appropriate.

Peter Midgely has been a resident of Parker Island for 15 years; he spoke in favour of the cell tower proposal. He has no land line and probably never will. His cell phone reception is very spotty so he felt it would be beneficial to have improved coverage. He has a radio background and appreciates concerns from people about radiation. Personally he doesn't have concerns about radiation and would not mind a tower in his backyard from a radiation perspective. With respect to seismic potential, he trusts that Rogers will protect their investment. He is concerned about customer costs with respect to Rogers proposed improved internet access. His other concern is that Rogers ensures collocation access for other providers.

A/Chair Grams questioned whether cost is a relevant land-use issue.

A/Planner 2 Farris stated it would be worthwhile for Rogers to provide an answer, but was unsure if Rogers answer could impact the Trustees' decision.

Leifka Vissers provided some information on improved wireless communication, specifically with respect to data sticks, cell phones, and video streaming.

Marg Upcott stated she was in support of the cell tower.

Louise Decario had questions and sought clarification about Rogers' maps. She thought the maps were misleading. She thought the existing cell coverage was actually better than represented.

A Rogers representative stated that the first map was of "known indoor" coverage. Rogers is currently collocated on a Telus tower on Mayne and potentially on Salt Spring.

Louise Decario noted that with respect to the proposed coverage on map 2, the proposal doesn't appear to provide that much more coverage. The anticipated coverage map shows what is anticipated only after the Salt Spring Island tower has been built. She suggested the current tower proposal is in the wrong place. She requested the Trustees to do some research on the CREST system. Does the CREST system have mobile trucks that go up and down island? She also asked why fire departments did not want cell towers on their buildings. She stated that we cannot ignore the neighbours. This tower proposal will not help people walking in the woods.

A Rogers representative noted that many hospitals have the cell stations on their roofs.

Rose Longini noted it was the IAFF (International Association of Firefighters) that prohibits cell towers on their stations.

Brad Lockett addressed the issues with the maps presented by Rogers. He has a cell phone with Rogers, an iPhone 6+. He gets LTE currently inside his house. He lives within 500 meters of the proposal and does not want the tower here. EMFR is a form of environmental pollution in a sensitive ecosystem. Such a tower should not be constructed in areas of high biodiversity. The Pacific Flyway goes over Galiano, with nesting sites around Stockade Hill. He is a beekeeper and is very concerned with increasing EMFR affecting bees' homing ability. Their immune systems fail, leading to colony collapse disorder. He has made the mistake of going up to his bees with his cell phone on and he has witnessed the bees react negatively. He received a letter from Altus/Leifka. He contacted LTC planners to see whether they had walked the site with Rogers. He would have assumed that a site walk had happened. He asked who owns the tower once built. What rent is being paid? Is the CREST equipment analogue or digital?

Leifka Vissers noted that she identified existing known stream locations. Rogers walked the site, although not with Islands Trust planners. With respect to ownership, Rogers owns the tower on land leased from someone else. They require a longer lease. She did not know what Capital Region Emergency Service Telecommunications (CREST) pays. With collocation, CREST can be granted access for free, but the landowner must agree. There was some discussion about whether the CREST equipment was digital or analogue. Rogers would follow up on finding out.

A/Chair Grams questioned whether the lease amount was a land-use decision, or a commercial decision.

Michele Cantelon has shared similar concerns, in the past, about radiation, and, having done more research over the years, she has come to the conclusion that many things are dangerous. She wants to know that she has access in case of an emergency. She favoured the cell tower proposal and would welcome a tower on her own property if it would create more security for rescue services.

Diana Lilly experienced Christchurch post-earthquake and questions the proposal to build on a fault line. She wants the trustees to look at alternatives to providing services. She wants the LTC to follow the precautionary principle and doesn't think a tower is the right way to go. The area is too populated, with too many food growing sites. There is already good coverage in the area. The Rogers' maps are very misleading. The Islands Trust needs to develop policy and regulations on this type of issue.

Nadia Krebs asked how long the proposed lease would be.

A Rogers representative didn't know the length of the proposed lease, and wasn't sure it could be divulged publicly.

A/Planner 2 Farris stated the LTC makes the decision if they support the cell tower proposal, or not, and why. The trustees will vote on this. Industry Canada has the final say.

Trustee Pottle noted that Industry Canada has weighed local community input.

A/Planner 2 Farris indicated that case law is evolving on this issue.

There was some discussion as to the necessity of the building that accompanies the proposed tower.

Bowie Keefer spoke in favour of the cell tower. He is concerned about the lack of cell phone service with respect to public safety. He stated that telecommunications infrastructure is essential to a diverse economy.

Suzanne Fournier was concerned about the lack of service in the north of the island. She would like to see a model that gives everyone equal access to safety, and would like an effective telecommunications strategy that will benefit everyone.

Risa Smith is currently a Rogers customer, with coverage provided by a tower on Chemainus, which was not reflected on Rogers' maps. She stated it was important for businesses to have coverage. She expressed concern for the neighbours living close by. She was disappointed in Rogers' poor maps. The maps indicate that the tower proposal will do little to improve coverage on Galiano. She questioned where the detailed maps were. She is in favour of a tower, but not this proposed tower. She thought this tower proposal was useless. She wants to see a comprehensive telecommunications strategy for this island.

A/Planner 2 Farris noted she has heard from several people about a telecommunications strategy, but indicated that was outside of the jurisdiction of the LTC.

Sam Seguita from Rogers noted that communities could voice their concerns about a lack of service by making the business case to Rogers to make that investment.

Sidney Brannan is an adjacent landowner to the proposed tower, and she received no communication from Rogers about the proposal. She would have appreciated some communication. She is concerned about the migratory paths of birds and bees. For 25 years, she worked for BC Ambulance as a paramedic. She spoke to the beauty of the islands, which are not covered by infrastructure. With regard to the location of the tower being in such a high earthquake zone, she questioned whether Rogers would bring in generators if we had a full scale emergency.

A Rogers representative explained that cell phone towers would have a battery back-up.

Sidney Brannan asked how long a battery would last.

A Rogers representative noted four (4) days. Diesel generators are noisy and have fuel issues.

There was further discussion about Rogers ability to provide detailed maps and the notification of neighbours.

Therese Ramond spoke against the proposal and wanted to address the safety issues; she referenced global microwave radiation studies which have shown cancer clusters. What assurances can Rogers give the residents of the neighbourhood of their safety? What if they wanted to sell their property?

A Rogers representative noted that they follow Health Canada's code 6 regulations.

Therese Ramond noted that Health Canada was the worst in the world on its safety standards.

A/Chair Grams requested that Ms. Ramond send relevant health information to the Trustees.

Gary Coward stated that he came to the island in 1968. He spoke against the tower. He noted that the Islands Trust, the wild that we are protecting, must mean something. This is a question of Galiano moving from what it was to something servicing a city mentality. He doesn't like how Telus is getting away from serving our telecommunications needs. A telecommunications strategy is in order to prevent fast-moving decisions.

Walter Forstbauer spoke in favour of the cell tower. He doesn't see any credible evidence of risk to people's health. He works alone in the forest and is concerned about health risks of not having service.

A Rogers representative noted that the EMFR of using a cell phone is dependent on the model; it could be 10-60% of the Code 6 limit, versus living within 100-200 meters of a cell tower where you are within .1 -1% limit. The nearest residential property is less than 1/10 of 1% from the proposed cell tower. He couldn't find an area on Galiano that exceeded 1%.

There was discussion about power and frequency.

Ken Millard questioned whether, if the LTC decides in favour of the cell tower, there would be a rezoning of the property hosting the lease?

A/Planner 2 Farris noted that a rezoning would not be required because it is a federal decision.

There was further discussion about federal powers and jurisdiction over the land at issue with the cell tower proposal.

Trustee Pottle noted the LTC has a legal opinion on this *Privately Managed Forest Lands Act* (PMFL), which will be available at the next LTC meeting.

Joan Robertson asked how one could find the new Safety Code 6?

A Rogers representative stated it was available online with Health Canada.

Joan Robertson expressed concern that the lack of land line service is a red herring. She recommends we find a way that is safe for everyone. It is unfair and unfriendly to ignore the neighbours. She was disappointed with Rogers' maps.

Avis Seeds spoke against the cell tower and wondered if Vineyard Way had been considered as a possible location.

A Rogers representative noted it had not been considered.

Roger Pettit noted that if there were a site proposed on Vineyard Way, he would support it. He is concerned about the emotion of the issue and questions the science behind the opposition. He spoke in support of the tower.

Tom Mommsen stated he was a Rogers customer. He is a scientist and is appalled by Rogers' maps because they are trying to convince North Galiano Islanders that a south tower would help them. He commented that the lack of data produced by Rogers is not helping him make a decision.

There was further discussion about the lack of data in the cell tower proposal, and how all residents should be provided with further information from Rogers.

Jenna Falk noted she was greatly troubled by the process and framework. The language used in public notices suggests it's a done deal. She felt this was a disrespectful process not to consult the neighbours or consider community values. She spoke against the tower, noting it may not be the best solution.

Marg Mattin lives on the east side of island, and asked whether one would have to have a Rogers phone in order to experience improved coverage.

Rogers engineer noted that Rogers' customers and others would have improved service.

Sher O'Hara spoke in favour of the cell tower.

Carolyn Jerome was opposed to the tower. She was very concerned for those living near the tower and wants Rogers to take their health and safety concerns seriously. Will Rogers buy their properties?

Judy Garland asked when the Salt Spring Island (SSI) tower would be completed.

A Rogers representative responded that the SSI tower would be installed over the next two years.

Sharon Gove stated that Galiano is a community of older people that needs more young people, but Galiano is not going to get younger people moving here without cell service.

Christina Stechishin noted she would like to focus the discussion on the future of Galiano as a community. She was concerned about connectivity for the future generations.

Ken Morrisette has been involved in search and rescue for over 25 years. He was not concerned about human health threats from this type of radiation, but he is concerned about the bees being threatened by radiation. He stated that he still favours the tower.

Akasha Forest indicated she was troubled that many people are concerned about safety and health. She noted that Rogers proposal does not address the interests of the community. A cell tower would be conveniently located at the highest point to provide services for travelers along BC ferries and Galiano is only incidentally covered. Are emergency services actually going to improve? The facts presented by Rogers are problematic. If we are really concerned about what is good for Galiano, we need to look at the data, and at alternatives. She was opposed to Rogers unconvincing presentation and proposal.

A/Chair Grams agreed that Rogers' case has been less than compelling and they should take it back to their management.

Trustee Pottle thanked everyone for coming out and expressing themselves on a divisive issue. She stated that we are in a world where communities have made decisions and Industry Canada has adapted to those decisions. She wants to look at more data, more alternatives. She would like to see a telecommunications strategy, and such a strategy is increasingly coming within our jurisdiction. She wants a made-in Galiano solution.

Trustee Harris indicated he was very happy that Trustee Pottle is able to share her experience. It is a difficult decision. While he personally feels that cell phone service is important, he notes that Rogers' maps do not address community concerns. He is concerned that getting Rogers back [to Galiano] might be more difficult. He commented that the lack of internet is more important than a cell phone. Other providers are not that interested, seemingly. He spoke to the importance of this issue and the need for a telecommunications plan.

Alternate Chair Grams cautioned against assuming responsibilities beyond our jurisdiction and resource capacity. He suggested the LTC might want to seek assistance from the Capital Regional District with respect to developing a telecommunications strategy.

There being no further comments from the public, Alternate Chair Grams closed the Community Information Meeting.

5. Adjournment

By general consent, the meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

George Grams, Alternate Chair

Certified Correct:

Colleen Doty, Recorder