



Gambier Island Local Trust Committee

Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: August 4, 2026

Location: Gambier Island Community Centre
Andy's Bay Road, Gambier Island, BC

Members Present: Laura Patrick, Chair
Kate-Louise Stamford, Trustee
Joe Bernardo, Trustee (electronic)

Staff Present: Shalini Nakai, Planning Team Assistant
Sonja Zupanec, Island Planner
Dede MacLean, Office Administrative Assistant (electronic)
Diane Corbett, Recorder (electronic)

Others Present: There were approximately 25 members of the public in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Patrick called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Patrick acknowledged that the meeting was being held on territory that has been home to Indigenous people since time immemorial, and whose connection to and stewardship of the lands and waters of the Gambier Keats Local Trust Area continues to this day.

Chair Patrick introduced Trustees and staff in attendance and noted this is the second of three Community Information Meetings to consider proposed Shoreline Development Permit Area (DPA) guidelines for Gambier Island with the same information being shared at each meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

4. TRUSTEE OPENING REMARKS

Trustee Stamford noted the interest and care the community members had been demonstrating to bring conversations about the land use and livability, shoreline health, and long-term stewardship on Gambier Island and that the proposed Development Permit Area guidelines being discussed spoke to themes on protecting sensitive coastal ecosystems, planning for climate change impacts, managing development in hazardous

areas, ensuring that shoreline activities respect natural processes and the character of Gambier Island, are rooted in Islands Trust's core purpose to preserve and protect the unique amenities and environment of the Islands Trust Area, and support provincial requirements to identify and manage environmentally sensitive and hazard-prone lands.

5. GAMBIER ISLAND DRAFT SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA PRESENTATION

The Planner provided information on the Draft Shoreline Development Permit Area, including the timeline for public engagements, and how a Development Permit Area could work if adopted. No decisions on this subject would be being made at this meeting or imminently.

Points from the presentation included:

- In 2022, community engagement resulted in recommendations to the Local Trust Committee regarding moving forward with an Official Community Plan Review and Land Use Bylaw review, shoreline protection was identified as a high priority and government-to-government engagement with Squamish Nation was undertaken. The Local Trust Committee directed staff to explore a Shoreline Development Permit Area as part of the larger Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Targeted Review.
- An engagement summary will be presented to the elected officials in early 2027.
- Shorelines on Gambier are largely bedrock, mostly characterized by low rock, boulder or sea cliffs, and a few pockets of pebble, cobble, and shell areas. Shoreline mapping is available on the Islands Trust website for those interested in more detail.
- Historical industrial activity, including forestry operations, log booming, and marine transportation impacted the shoreline, nearshore environment, seabed conditions and ecological processes.
- Overhanging trees and native vegetation along the shoreline are critical in providing shade, nutrients and stability of marine habitats for eelgrass, forage fish and salmon, which support species up the food chain. Eelgrass and forage fish mapping is available on Islands Trust website.
- The Squamish Nation and Province of BC have entered into a new land use planning agreement recognizing cultural and ecological values across Howe Sound, including areas on Gambier Island with cultural significance and stewardship priorities. Sites 88 and 83 have been identified in this agreement. The Shoreline Development Permit Area (DPA) is an opportunity to collaborate with other levels of government and reflect these values in future shoreline planning decisions, guiding new development and land alterations.
- The Draft Shoreline DPA has been guided over the past year and a half by shoreline stewardship planning practices, input from the Gambier Island Advisory Planning Commission, and Squamish Nation engagement. The intention is to preserve shorelines and maintain the character of the Island.
- The Draft DPA is available on the website, along with a newly launched public survey (survey open to August 31). The public is encouraged to read the ten-page document and offer feedback to Planning staff or Local Trustees.
- A 30-meter buffer upland and seaward from the natural boundary of the sea is proposed for certain development. This buffer is an area of interest, not a new

setback, park designation, nor guaranteed public access, nor is it prohibiting development. Types of development that could require a development permit include construction of a new dwelling, major additions to an existing dwelling, subdivision of a lot, shoreline protection works, or significant land alterations or excavations with specific exemptions listed in the guidelines on page 3 of the draft DPA text.

- Information on such aspects as biophysical inventory, geotechnical, erosion/hazards/coastal flooding, or drainage might be requested in addition to an application for a development permit, with the intention to understand the impacts of the proposed development before a decision is made by the Local Trust Committee.
- The DPA will favour approaches that work with nature where possible, “softer” solutions that help to maintain habitat, natural processes, and shoreline resilience, over harder armoring engineering techniques.
- The draft guidelines support marine access, encouraging dock design and placement that protects sensitive shoreline habitats and maintains long-term health and ecology of Gambier.
- The intention of these protection measures is to achieve, where possible, natural shoreline processes, natural vegetation, erosion reduction, softer shoreline protection and adaptation to sea level rise, and restoration of disturbed areas.
- The application fee for Development Permit Areas as per the current Gambier Island Fees Bylaw is approximately \$1000.
- People are encouraged to review the draft DPA guidelines and provide the Local Trust Committee feedback on:
 - Does the draft DPA achieve the right balance of human use and ecological protection?
 - Are the exemptions appropriate?
 - Are the guidelines clear?
 - Are there any unintended consequences that should be flagged?
 - Are there important protection measures that have been missed that should be included?

6. QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Members of the public were invited to address staff or Local Trustees with questions regarding the Draft Shoreline DPA Guidelines.

- Will floats on the beach be something that would need a permit?
 - The Planner noted that, if your lot is in a zone that doesn't permit a float, you're not permitted a float. This does not change that. However, if you are permitted a float structure in the water, the current draft DPA guidelines would apply and a permit would be required as it's considered 'new' construction within the DPA boundaries.
- The Squamish Nation has provided their opinions on this matter. Members of the public will provide opinions and will these comments change the proposed draft?
 - The Planner explained that the Local Trust Committee (LTC) directed staff to work with Squamish Nation on engagement on a number of topics, and the

Nation recommended a shoreline development permit area as a tool that this LTC could use to help address many shared interests in the foreshore area. The Nation recommended buffers up to 200 meters as well as a number of other recommendations and the current draft was based on what the LTC wished to consider and would be referred back to the Nation for comment if the draft proceeds to first reading.

- If the guidelines were given first reading as a bylaw, that would be the first step of a formal process towards possible future adoption, and the bylaw would be referred back to the Nation (and other agencies) for their comment which are summarized in a report and presented in a public hearing binder and on the website prior to the Public Hearing process. The final decision on proposed land use planning decisions for Gambier Island is made by the Gambier Local Trust Committee.
- Staff will compile feedback received from the public, agencies and First Nations on the Draft Shoreline Development Permit Area into an engagement summary, to present to the Gambier Island Local Trust Committee in early 2027. The LTC will decide at that time as to whether or not to proceed.
- If the bylaws are approved, can the Squamish First Nation make changes or impose additional requirements through the bylaws? Concern was raised about a situation in Pender Harbour involving eelgrass beneath docks that was considered sacred by the First Nation, which resulted in a lawsuit. How can a similar situation be avoided?
 - This would be a Local Trust Committee bylaw within the jurisdiction and land use planning authority for the land and marine waters within the Islands Trust Area. The Nations are consulted and the LTC must consider all input into any proposed bylaws but are not obligated or required to incorporate public input, First Nation input or agency input into the proposed bylaws.
- A speaker stated they have about 1000 feet of waterfront and this would impact about an acre and a half of their property. They asked if an economic study has been done on how the bylaw could potentially lower the property values and if so, what would the Province do to compensate for lost value?
 - There is no economic study of the impacts that this would have on a title holder. The ability to develop property and to use and enjoy the foreshore area is not being extinguished through a land use planning tool such as this. The DPA could influence where structures are sited, and it is about guiding choices to minimize or mitigate impact on critical habitat or species. The DPA tool is used widely in other municipal governments. The 30-meter DPA area is conservative in a lens for shoreline protection and is a minimum area where there is strongest concentration of diversity ecologically.
 - A Trustee added that one of the things that has attracted people to Gambier Island is its rural, natural environment and these types of land planning tools are put in place to protect that lifestyle as part of the economic value is having a rural, undeveloped shoreline.
- The 15-meter setback seems to work fine. Why is a 30 meters setback being considered? Are there studies that have been done that say 30 meters is what is needed?

- These are two different things. Setbacks to buildings and structures is currently regulated. What we are talking about is alteration to the land as well, which is unregulated and a 30-meter area from the water is critical potential habitat.
- The DPA provides opportunities to increase the awareness of each individual choice of land alteration within this very special region, such that title holders may appreciate and understand the stewardship role they have to elevate the diversity of habitats. The DPA considers how development on the land impacts the marine environment and property owners still have the ability to make significant alterations to their land.
- If the DPA was in place and one spent \$1000 for the permit and paid thousands of dollars for professional studies would the permit be issued and if not, would one have the ability to reapply?
 - You either meet the guidelines or you don't. That is why it is important to read and understand the guidelines because planning staff do an analysis of whether the proposed alterations or construction meets the guidelines. If they do, then the LTC has to issue the permit. There is no discretionary ability for a Local Trust Committee to deny an application if it meets the applicable guidelines.
 - Staff work with applicants beforehand to discuss the application and the applicant gets a copy of the staff report that is prepared for the LTC. The applicant can then attend the meeting during which their application is considered by the Local Trust Committee, at which time the applicant may bring clarification or supplemental information. The LTC can defer a decision if more information is required, and make a decision at another time.
 - A professional report will not be needed for every application.
- Are existing docks grandfathered in?
 - The DPA if adopted would apply only to new construction and new alterations and existing legal construction is there to use and enjoy. If a rebuild is required due to a natural hazard or natural event like an end-of-life span, the rules at the time of re-construction will apply at that time.
- If there are existing docks that are not permitted, would they be impacted by this?
 - There have been retroactive applications where someone's applying for a development permit after they have done the work. Then their Qualified Environmental Professional would need to recommend mitigation measures.
 - This is a highly regulated area in Howe Sound, and these land/marine alterations should be done with a level of care and stewardship.
- How do Islands Trust land use planning and regulations work versus siting and permitting of a dock from the Province?
 - This discussion is related to the zoning of Gambier. A dock is authorized through a tenure agreement with the Province for a specific portion of the water under provincial jurisdiction. The application for the dock would be submitted to the Province. If the Province refers the application to Islands Trust, Islands Trust would confirm whether the proposed dock conforms to the applicable zoning and whether it would be permitted. Staff would also identify whether a Development Permit Area applies to the proposed dock.

There was discussion of the Keats Island Development Permit Area process, where the originally proposed Shoreline Development Permit Area was eventually reduced in size, the list of exemptions expanded, and restrictions on development increased.

Lots on Keats are small; there was development within the 7.5 m waterfront setback prior to the establishment of Islands Trust, whereas on Gambier a lot of development has involved 5 or 10 acre lots.

There has been a lot of ecological enrichment throughout this area over the past twenty years. In going forward, Islands Trust is looking to support the values of livability and respect for the environment in this type of planning tool (DPA).

- When looking at the buffer zone, did you look at shoreline properties that are privately owned that would be affected? Have you actively engaged with those people? Not everybody's on Facebook. I did not see any mail-outs. Some property owners do not receive information posted to the website.
- What is the plan for the future? What is the percentage of shoreline that is owned privately going to be affected by this?
 - Staff did not have the number of impacted lots available at the meeting and noted Crown land and Provincial parks would not be subject to a DPA.
 - If the bylaw were to receive first reading it would formalize the engagement process. There are notification statutory requirements, and Islands Trust uses the mailing address on title for formal notifications. Islands Trust cannot rely on social media for statutory notification; however, elected officials can use their knowledge of the community to determine ways to reach residents. In this case, as the bylaws is still in draft form, staff used official Islands Trust website, email distribution, and subscriber notifications to share information. Staff encouraged people to subscribe to the Gambier Island Local Trust Committee page to receive updates on matters relating to Gambier Island, noting that this is one of the effective ways to stay informed.
 - The Shoreline DPA guidelines are in draft form and are at an early stage of review and engagement. The LTC will determine whether to proceed with the guidelines.
- A lot of my neighbours did not know about this meeting. How can they come and attend and speak to it if they haven't had any mail-outs?
 - Islands Trust tries to find the best ways to communicate. Mail-outs can be challenging because the mailing address on title may not be where the person lives, or where the listed address is the first primary residence and not a secondary one.
 - A Trustee noted Gambier Island is one of the most challenging islands for communication due to its large recreational population and the lack of a central location to reach the entire community.
 - First Reading is the start of the formal process. The current stage is an informal engagement process intended to gather community input. It provides an opportunity to the public to share their views on the proposal and suggest ways to address their concerns.

- How would the proposed DPA affect the New Brighton dock? Through the consultation process, can we as interested parties suggest amendments to the DPA that specifically account for that particular project?
 - The zoning allows for a public dock, and the existing dock is a public structure. The current lease or permit falls under the Province's jurisdiction. Islands Trust does not have authority over federal or provincial lands.
 - A Trustee noted that the New Brighton Dock is a unique situation and that its role within the regulatory frameworks of the Province, BC Ferries, and First Nations makes it difficult to determine who would be responsible for repairing the dock. A Trustee noted jurisdiction of the land status under the dock and the upland part should be confirmed. If under the Province, the LTC would have jurisdiction over it, through both the zoning and the Development Permit Area guidelines to address the need to make sure that the dock can still continue to have an existence and not be so restricted that it stops being useful as a public amenity.
 - In the DPA, in terms of repairing the New Brighton dock, much depends on the wording of the repair and replace exemption with respect to docks, and wording that specifically addresses what limitations, if any, are placed on the repair and replacement of a public amenity like the New Brighton Dock.
 - This early stage is the important opportunity for the public to raise their concerns to the LTC. Residents are encouraged to stay informed, talk to their neighbours, subscribe to the webpage, and provide feedback. The more people share their views early in the process, the better the LTC can understand the community's perspective.
- There are concerns about the proposed restrictions and the need for more information to understand their impact. Concerns were also raised that the 30-metre DPA could affect property values and set a precedent for further restriction on Gambier Island.
 - This is standard planning practice. The guidelines recognize the importance of appropriate development in the foreshore area for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone.

Chair Patrick noted that the bylaw is currently in a draft format. The public was encouraged to review the guidelines and provide comments on any areas that may be too restrictive, unclear, or impractical, and to suggest changes. Comments are welcome until the end of the year, and the LTC will review the guidelines in January 2027.

Further public comments included:

- It was suggested that an exemption to be added for the New Brighton Dock to remove it from consideration under the proposed guidelines.
- It was suggested that the prospective guidelines for water access docks, particularly guidelines 39, 41, and 42, be removed and replaced with general design objectives that are appropriate for a DPA.
- If dock guidelines are required, it was suggested that Islands Trust engage people with knowledge and experience in dock construction on Gambier Island, including

yacht clubs, local businesses, and families who have built docks, and consider creating a task force of knowledgeable stakeholders.

Trustee Stamford explained the LTC must follow a legislative process and cannot simply select technical experts. The public is encouraged to use their expertise to provide comments on what would work and suggest changes to the guidelines. Technical feedback can be submitted as part of the public comments.

- Will Islands Trust share the sixteen points the Squamish Nation recommended?
 - It is already in the public record.
- A request was made for the mailing list to be shared so residents could connect with and meet their neighbours.
 - No. This cannot legally be done. Local Governments cannot disclose residents contact information.
- Concern was expressed that the proposed changes feel threatening and that residents need sufficient time to organize and meaningfully participate in the process.
 - Chair Patrick noted that the Gambier APC has worked on the project for over a year.

Trustee Stamford remarked that most changes to the Keats Foreshore Project occurred after First Reading and encouraged Gambier residents to provide their input before First Reading.

The Chair noted that all the comments will be public and comments will be accepted until the end of the year. The next LTC will receive a summary of the feedback and decide how to proceed. All meetings are recorded and available to the public.

The next Community Information Meeting will be held at the John Braithwaite Centre in North Vancouver on August 5, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

7. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Laura Patrick, Chair

Certified Correct:

Diane Corbett, Recorder