



Gambier Island Local Trust Committee

Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: August 5, 2026
Location: John Braithwaite Community Centre
145 West 1st Street
North Vancouver, BC

Members Present: Laura Patrick, Chair
Kate-Louise Stamford, Trustee

Regrets: Joe Bernardo, Trustee

Staff Present: Sonja Zupanec, Island Planner
Shalini Nakai, Planning Team Assistant
Diane Corbett, Recorder (Electronic)

Others Present: There were approximately 13 members of the public in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Patrick called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and announced that the meeting was being live streamed and recorded.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Patrick acknowledged that the lands and waters of the Gambier Local Trust Area have been home to Indigenous people since time immemorial. Their stewardship and connection to the lands and waters continues.

Chair Patrick introduced Trustee Stamford and staff, and advised that Trustee Bernardo had sent his regrets. She announced this meeting was the third Community Information Meeting on the proposed Gambier Shoreline Development Permit Area Guidelines. The same information and presentation were 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 presented an overview of the Gambier Island Draft Shoreline Development Permit Area Guidelines. 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 Gambier 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?

The public survey will be open until August 31, available on the Islands Trust website. Feedback via email can be sent to Trustees and/or staff.

6. QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Chair Patrick outlined expectations and the scope for this meeting. The Chair acknowledged that some members of the public may have questions or concerns regarding the draft Land Use Objectives Order associated with the implementation of the 2025 Squamish Nation British Columbia Land Use Planning Agreement. However, this matter is outside the jurisdiction of Islands Trust and is being considered under provincial legislation; anyone wanting more information or to provide feedback is urged to contact the Province directly.

Chair Patrick emphasized that the guidelines being proposed at this meeting were in draft form and were not in the form of a bylaw and the Local Trust Committee wants to engage with the public to hear comments and questions about the proposed guidelines to help inform the continued drafting of the guidelines.

Chair Patrick invited those in attendance to ask questions regarding the proposed guidelines.

- Speaker requested clarification regarding construction of a renovation or addition between the 15 meter and 30-meter area, and if staff would evaluate the new structure.
 - Yes. For the portion of the building within 30 meters of the natural boundary of the sea, there would be specific guidelines, listed in the draft, that would need to be addressed. This should be looked at before excavation occurs. If it is a cleared site that has already been subject to disturbance, the application would be more straightforward than if the applicant had to do significant tree removal or excavations to create a cleared level building area.
 - The setback from the building or structure to the natural boundary of the sea, lake or wetland is 15 metres for most of Gambier and does not change for this proposal. The Development Permit Area, however, applies to a 30-metres buffer or area of interest and considers all alterations to the land within that buffer.
 - The Planner provided an example, currently, a property owner can excavate and remove trees between the property lines, with limited recourse for neighbouring properties affected by the loss of privacy, shade or habitat. With the DPA in place, the 30-metre area would be protected to some extent, allowing development to occur in a more thoughtful and coordinated manner.
- A question was raised regarding the 75% substantial reconstruction threshold and whether renovations or upgrades to an existing building located between 15 and 30 metres from the natural boundary would be considered in the same manner as a dwelling within the 15-metre setback.
 - As the draft is currently written, renovations within the existing building footprint would not trigger the DPA. However, if the building footprint or floor area is increased, the DPA would apply. It was noted, if the DPA were adopted, a property owner could potentially avoid triggering the DPA by designing the project without increasing the floor area.
- Speaker raised question regarding structures supporting utilities, including legal non-conforming structures and whether the DPA would apply to utility work such as replacing existing water line within the 30-metre area. Clarification requested about what type of utilities would be included.
 - Staff explained that utilities are included among the exceptions that would be exempt from requiring a Development Permit. Existing septic infrastructure could be considered a utility for this purpose. However, a new septic system would be treated differently, as its siting would require careful consideration due to the potential for significant excavation and land alteration, depending on the type of system proposed. Under the current draft, existing septic infrastructure would be exempt from requiring another Development Permit for repairs, maintenance, or replacement in the same location.
- Speaker raised question regarding landscaped decks and walkways, the walkways constructed over steep or treacherous terrain to access a dock. In order to avoid a lot of excavation and disturbance, speaker built elevated decking

- Staff explained, under exemption 8, the construction of a trail or walkway would be exempt from requiring a Development Permit if the following conditions apply: no removal of native trees; a width less than one metre; personal, non-vehicular use; and construction using, soil, gravel, mulch or another pervious surface.
- Existing decks and walkways would not be affected by the proposed DPA. The exemption would apply to new construction if the specified conditions are met. Property owners are encouraged to consider anticipated changes to their properties and how those changes may or may not fit within the exemptions, as well as the level of scrutiny that may be applied to neighbouring properties to protect existing screening, vegetation and canopy cover. Why hasn't Islands Trust dealt with the issue of the difficulty and complexity of the application process and the cost? What is Islands Trust doing to streamline the process and reduce the cost, and make it easier for landowners?
 - Trustee comments included:
 - This is about a tool being introduced. How the organization as a whole manages the application process is being worked on
 - That goal could be identified as a value important to residents as part of the OCP review.,
 - There was discussion of an example of a Local Trust Committee decision within the current draft DPA for a standard 30-metre buffer across the island to simplify needed mapping, thus lowering the cost of the process for landowners.
- Referring to a recent situation on Thetis Island, speaker remarked that Islands Trust had apparently been stepping beyond its jurisdiction in making decisions below the highwater mark.
 - Staff advised that there are three levels of government within the water column and water surface: local, provincial, and federal governments. The Local Trust Committee has authority to provide regulations in cooperation with the Province and federal government, to enact provincial and federal legislation, and is authorized for zoning on the surface of the water,
 - The DPA for the foreshore is not an overreach. When Islands Trust receives a dock referral, staff review the applicable regulations and determine if the proposed use is authorized, then provide that information to the Province, which has the approval authority. Islands Trust and the Province work cooperatively, and there have been instances where the Province approved docks despite local zoning not permitting docks at that location
 - Referring to an inquiry about the handling of an item of correspondence of March 4, 2024, with several recommendations to the LTC and to which there was no reply, staff advised that correspondence to the Local Trust Committee is compiled, posted to the website, and submitted to the Local Trust Committee at a business meeting. Trustees decide what correspondence should receive an individual response and whether staff should take the time away from a project to individually respond to it; the LTC is under no obligation to respond to individual pieces of public correspondence. If there are technical questions, people can contact staff directly. If it is a direction that you want a Local Trust Committee to take, that

is feedback that they can consider. The LTC can direct staff to respond to it, answer it themselves, or receive it for information, and it has to be done at a business meeting.

- Has the Province completed, or is thinking about completing, a British Columbia-specific cost benefit and lifecycle environmental assessment demonstrating that requiring a transparent, fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP) decking provides a net benefit environmentally over sustainably harvested BC wood that we currently use for our docks? Specifically, how will the higher cost of dock ownership and the higher carbon and manufacturing impacts from FRP be? weighed against what scientific literature describes as limited ecological benefit from changing the dock composition. What do you think transparent graded docks are made out of (referring to No. 39 in the guidelines for construction or replacement of docks)? How do you create light transparency with docks?
 - The applicant is responsible for determining, with their qualified professionals, how the proposed dock and float design will allow light penetration and for providing information demonstrating how the objective will be met.
- How do you build a dock with flows to have transparency without using a graded dock material on top?
 - Allow natural light penetration to the submerged land underneath.
- The floats are filling up all the space underneath the dock. How does that work?
- A request was made to remove points 39, 41, and 42 as they were overly prescriptive and more appropriate for a building permit rather than a DPA guideline. It was noted that local condition on Gambier Island may require heavier dock and that the guidelines should be informed by local expertise and experience.
 - A Trustee requested that members of the public provide information on local dock requirements and conditions by email to assist staff in developing the guidelines. It was clarified that the document is a draft for consultation, and community input is being sought to help develop the guidelines.
- It was requested that any dock guidelines be informed by knowledgeable experts with local experience, noting that the proposed guidelines may be impractical for Gambier Island's winter conditions.
- Speaker raised question about how much community feedback would be needed to demonstrate the level of support or opposition to the proposed DPA and inform the LTC's next steps.
 - It was clarified that the document is draft and does not yet reflect the information received to date. The LTC will review the feedback through a business meeting, with each issue considered and discussed on its merits.
- Speaker raised a concern that many water access only residents on Gambier may not support the proposed DPA and whether the process could be stopped if the LTC directed staff not to proceed.
 - Staff explained that the LTC could decide whether or not to proceed, and these options would be outlined in each staff report.
- Speaker raised a concern that the draft does not adequately reflect the challenges faced by off-grid, water access only residents, it was requested that the Trustees give greater consideration to these local concerns.

- Trustees encouraged residents to identify what works and does not work for them and to provide feedback on how the foreshore can be protected while allowing continued use of properties.
- It was clarified that the proposal does not change the setback regulations but establishes an area of interest.
- Residents are encouraged to consider how the guidelines may affect their neighbours and to provide feedback on the draft. Public input will be received until the end of the year.
- A member of the public asked if they could have Islands Trust contact list and they are constituency that doesn't use social media.
 - Staff/Trustee explained that the contact list cannot legally be shared.
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- Speaker inquired about legacy status for existing docks and the replacement of permitted docks when they deteriorate. It was suggested that the guidelines consider practical replacement options and the circumstances of existing permitted docks, including yacht club docks, which were not addressed in the draft.
 - Staff clarified that Yacht clubs and public docks have specific zoning provisions addressing features such as ramps and floats, which take precedence over the DPA guidelines.

Chair Patrick concluded that the Local Trust Committee wants to hear from the public. Email: northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca. Survey is open until end of August, and comments until end of the year.

7. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Laura Patrick, Chair

Certified Correct:

Diane Corbett, Recorder