



## **Lasqueti Island Local Trust Committee Public Hearing Record**

**Date:** February 10 & 27, 2025  
**Time:** 11:30 am & 1 pm  
**Location:** Judith Fisher Centre  
#1 China Cloud Bay Road, Lasqueti Island, BC

**Members Present:** Tobi Elliott, Chair  
Timothy Peterson, Local Trustee  
Mikaila Lironi, Local Trustee

**Staff Present:** Renee Jamurat, Regional Planning Manager (electronic, February 10)  
Stephen Baugh, Island Planner (February 10)  
Marlis McCargar, Island Planner (February 27)  
Nadine Mourao, Legislative Clerk/Deputy Secretary (February 10, 27)  
Lisa Millard, Meeting Administrator/Recorder (February 10)  
Carly Bilney, Recorder (February 27)

**Others Present:** There were approximately 39 members of the public in attendance.

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Elliott called the meeting to order at 2:48 p.m.

### **2. INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

Chair Elliott welcomed the public and acknowledged that the meeting was held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

Chair Elliott read a statement outlining the content, purpose, and process of the Public Hearing regarding Proposed Bylaw No. 104 according to Section 465 of the *Local Government Act*. She advised that all persons who believe their interest is affected by the bylaws would be given the opportunity to speak and submit written comments, and that further submissions cannot be received by the Local Trust Committee after the close of the Public Hearing. She noted that all relevant documents are contained in the Public Hearing binder and on the Islands Trust website, which is available to the public.

### **3. REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

Island Planner Baugh reviewed the Public Hearing Notice procedures for posting of notices and publication of Public Hearing according to statutes, and noted that all notification requirements have been completed. He advised that the Public Hearing binder is available for review during this Hearing, pointed out the location of the binder, and noted that it is also available on the Islands Trust website.

He summarized the proposed changes to the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) that are being considered include permitting fibre optic cable telecommunication public service utility

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use in the location of proposed fibre optic cable from Vancouver Island, extending through False Bay, and terminating at the end of Boat Ramp Road.

He identified the agencies, non-agencies and First Nations referrals that were sent out for comment, and provided a brief overview of responses received, which are also posted on the Islands Trust website. There were fifteen public submissions received in response to the notice as of the morning of February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**4. PROPOSED BYLAW NO. 104 (Land Use Bylaw)**

Chair Elliott asked if any members of the public would like to speak to proposed Bylaw No. 104.

Robert Prenic stated *opposition* as follows:

- Disagrees with bringing fibre optics to the island;
- Lasqueti needs to be kept safe; and
- Community does not need interventions from off island that give power to unknown entities.

Tom Weinerth stated *opposition* as follows:

- Application is poorly conceived and the process has been rushed;
- The cable is only free until it arrives and then residents will have to pay for its use and pay taxes for last mile extension;
- It should be considered a commercial use which is not permitted within the Official Community Plan;
- GPS coordinates are being relied on instead of a professional survey; and
- There has been lack of communication with the community, the applicant is unable to answer questions, and there has been insufficient public consultation.

Dave Olsen stated *opposition* as follows:

- qathet Regional District has license of occupation for the ramp and their referral response opposes the placement of the cable;
- Only five of eighteen First Nations provided a referral response and were only given thirty days to respond instead of the ninety-day standard;
- Lasqueti Internet Access Society has not provided a response;
- Referral responses are sparse and not acceptable for public process;
- Salt Spring Island policy states utilities are a commercial use;
- It is unknown if anything will be done with the cable or who will clean it up if it needs to be removed; and
- It opens up opportunity for 5G to come to the island.

Marti Wendt stated *opposition* as follows:

- Has no confidence in CityWest as they have not answered questions put forth from the public; and
- Installation could damage the barge ramp.

Karl Darwin stated *opposition* as follows:

- It opens the door for 5G and the use of Mac (Apple);
- Mac and 5G are used for tracking people;

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- 5G downloads biometrics and sends them to unknown entities; and
- CityWest will put their router in your house and this opens opportunity for surveillance.

Shen Dao stated *opposition* as follows:

- Lack of trust in the application;
- The public body has not been given enough information to instill trust; and
- Islands Trust does not have any equitable agreement with CityWest.

Richard Smith stated *support* as follows:

- If there is a fear of surveillance one does not have to use the service;
- Lasqueti Internet Access Society is dependent on one individual to function; and
- Supports rezoning so another option is available if Lasqueti Internet Access Society is unable to provide ongoing service.

Richard Ayres stated *opposition* as follows:

- Thinks it is a mistake.

Anicca Chinniah stated *opposition* as follows:

- It has potential to change the island community;
- Residents don't live on Lasqueti for convenience, but to get away from it; and
- Bringing the convenience will attract more people.

Joseph Fall stated *support* as follows:

- Concerns about the feasibility of the project should be left to professionals;
- They have been assured there will be no additional costs for the rezoning decision;
- Majority of concerns expressed are about issues not related to the landing, but about issues that may occur in the future;
- Few residents have the ability to use Lasqueti Internet Access Society and, if it ceases to operate, the only option remaining will be 5G; and
- Residents are already using services provided by corporations.

Noel Taylor stated *opposition* as follows:

- Due process is important and the public hearing occurred too late;
- Not enough information has been provided;
- It is not economically viable; and
- The landing site is inappropriate.

Dave Eugster stated *opposition* as follows:

- Too many questions remain unanswered;
- Prefers less internet and came to the island to get away from technology; and
- Does not want people moving to the island to work out of their homes online and providing internet opens up that opportunity.

Pachiel Smith stated *support* as follows:

- This is an opportunity for residents; and

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- It provides some measure of local control.

Bev Finch stated *opposition* as follows:

- Belief that it opens the door to things that the community does not stand for.

Peter Johnston stated *support* as follows:

- Was part of a group that met to discuss wireless systems and broadband and at that time there was interest in delaying to look into working with fibre optic cable;
- Energy use for fibre optics is much lower;
- CityWest is owned by Strathcona Regional District and is not a large entity; and
- When broadband and wireless was installed more young people moved back to the island and better internet access might encourage more to return.

Kent Borgstrom stated *opposition* as follows:

- Concerned about a permit being issued without providing a survey;
- The question-and-answer session did not provide any concrete answers;
- There has been a lack of community consultation; and
- It seems like a way for utilities to enter the island.

Hilary Duinker stated *support* as follows:

- Fibre optic technology is better than other options.

Tudor Badar stated *opposition* as follows:

- The reason for bringing fibre optic is 5G which results in surveillance and health issues.

Aigul Kukulj stated *support* as follows:

- While the process has not been good, and the applicant is unprepared, they agree with the use of fibre optic as it is the best technology and provides the best connections.

Chair Elliot adjourned the Public Hearing at 3:34 p.m. and announced it will reconvene February 27, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. and will be held electronically.

**February 27, 2025**

Chair Elliott reconvened the Public Hearing on February 27, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. There were approximately 8 members of the public in attendance on Zoom. Several members of the public joined electronically from the Judith Fisher Centre.

Chair Elliott welcomed the public and acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations. She repeated the Opening Statement and the Review of Public Hearing Notice from February 10, 2025.

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Planner McCargar commented that all notification requirements have been completed. She reviewed the proposed bylaw and noted there have been 231 public submissions that have been received as of February 27, 2025.

Chair Elliott asked if any members of the public would like to speak to proposed Bylaw No. 104.

Nicholas Woodward stated *opposition* as follows:

- The proposal determines who governs Lasqueti's connectivity in the future;
- This should be rejected unless Lasqueti owns the fibre optic cable beyond the shoreline;
- This is not our sole opportunity for high-speed internet; and
- There has been inadequate community engagement.

Tom Weinerth stated *opposition* as follows:

- The process has been rushed, divisive and driven by an arbitrary deadline;
- Funding for the project will not be lost if the deadline is not met; and
- A CityWest spokesperson said completion of the project was fully funded.

Matthew Weinerth stated *opposition* as follows:

- Already has great internet connectivity; and
- Does not think changing the bylaw will improve connectivity.

Shawwna Karras stated *support* as follows:

- The cable will result in more dependable, better quality internet connectivity;
- Fibre optic cable will not have electromagnetic frequencies;
- If the proposal is approved, there will be another process for the community to decide next steps;
- Using fibre optic cable gives the community more opportunity to keep internet connectivity in local hands as the radio tower on Vancouver Island is not guaranteed into the future; and
- The cable can go to a designated site, such as the vicinity of the fire hall, to provide high quality internet to the school and health centre.

Marina Hansen stated *opposition*.

Shelley Garside stated *support* as follows:

- What happens after the cable arrives would involve a separate conversation; and
- This provides a positive opportunity to move forward for the higher good of the whole community.

Dave Olsen stated *opposition* as follows:

- It was not clear when this public hearing would continue; and
- The process is not legal.

Chair Elliott noted that 11 new submissions have been made to the Local Trust Committee since this morning.

Karl Darwin stated *opposition* as follows:

- Fibre optic cables transmit the potential for serious electromagnetic frequency abuse;
- Doing anything more with the cable will be expensive;

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- This is a commercial enterprise and the market here is too small; and
- 5G is necessary for the operation.

Trudi Smith stated *support* as follows:

- Previously expressed concern about the landing of the cable and rezoning the barge ramp, but understands that the rezoning can take place on the M9 zoned block;
- The cable is not projected to traverse a marine conservation zone; and
- We have limited health care availability on the island, and it is important to be able to use equipment, like heart monitors, that can save people's lives.

Anicca Chinniah stated *opposition* as follows:

- Our Elders created the marine conservation zone to protect our island and keep us off the grid;
- The internet immensely takes away from life;
- On Lasqueti, we have the opportunity to live off the internet; and
- This is one of the last places on earth where one can live a truly independent lifestyle.

Shawwna Karras stated *support* as follows:

- This rezoning is only specifically for fibre optic cable – no other utilities can come through this rezoning;
- We already have the internet; the rezoning will just make it better quality; and
- Using a computer is part of our way of life now.

Shelley Garside stated *support* as follows:

- The proposal was very structured and clear that this would be only for this particular cable landing and nothing more;
- Lasqueti is clear that it would like to stay sovereign; and
- It is important to stay connected for our livelihoods and our health.

Alison Cromie stated *opposition* as follows:

- Concerned about infrastructure and where it will lead;
- There is already an internet provider for Lasqueti;
- Connected Coast and CityWest oversee the application and we will not have complete control of the fibre optic cable; and
- The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission will base its new standard on universal service objectives.

Rob Prenic stated *opposition* as follows:

- Do not see how this will help anyone in the short or long-term;
- There are very few places on earth like this, and we have enough;
- This will cause our taxes to rise; and
- This will cause people to want to move here and change our lifestyle.

Tudor Badea stated *opposition* as follows:

- Eventually, costs will increase; and
- Electrical light signals with very high frequencies stop the human body from absorbing oxygen.

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Seaborne Lamb stated *opposition* as follows:

- This is unnecessary (we already have internet) and will cost us money.

Trudi Smith stated *support* as follows:

- It has taken people a long time to be able to work remotely on Lasqueti.

Nicholas Woodward stated *opposition* as follows:

- Concerned with applicant's inability to respond to questions;
- Unsure who would own the fibre optic cable that lands on the shore; and
- We need to organize ownership so we can have control before this rezoning application is approved.

Thierry David stated *opposition* as follows:

- This is the beginning of a much bigger problem that could wipe out the kind of lifestyle that currently exists on Lasqueti.

Shawna Karras stated *support* as follows:

- If the Lasqueti Internet Access Society (LIAS) fails in the future we would be left with big corporations; and
- LIAS could partner with CityWest.

Audrey Martin stated *opposition* as follows:

- Opening up the boat ramp corridor is setting a precedent for other utilities;
- People can get internet via satellite; and
- We moved here to get away from 5G and radiation.

Tom Weinerth stated *opposition* as follows:

- This is a major breach in the protection of the marine conservation zone; and
- This should not be done in a hurry; we need to take our time to do a thorough review.

Karl Darwin stated *opposition* as follows:

- Concerns related to 5G.

Dave Olsen stated *opposition* as follows:

- The application is incomplete;
- The applicant's responses were inaccurate; and
- The application does not comply with the Lasqueti Official Community Plan.

Imad Ahmed stated *opposition* as follows:

- 5G requires fibre optics; and
- The proposal goes against the history of what makes Lasqueti special, and why we moved here.

Robert Linschoten stated *support* as follows:

- Lasqueti is already completely enveloped by 5G from towers on Texada, Qualicum and elsewhere; and

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- If this does not proceed, the future options for the Lasqueti Internet Access Society are reduced.

Tudor Badea stated *opposition* as follows:

- 5G causes health concerns.

Rob Prenic stated *opposition* as follows:

- We do not need Zoom calls;
- 5G and electromagnetic frequencies cause health concerns; and
- CityWest is not acting in our interest.

Matthew Weinerth stated *opposition* as follows:

- The cable might be damaged by boats; and
- There are unanswered questions and issues with the proposal.

Anicca Chinniah stated *opposition* as follows:

- Procedural issues during the Q&A period at the previous meeting; and
- Unanswered questions.

Trustee Peterson commented that Connected Coast provided answers to a number of questions that were not answered at the Community Information Meeting, and these are available in the Public Hearing binder.

Kaya Fraser stated *support* as follows:

- Would like to have time for Lasqueti to have more discussion, and blocking the application at this point will preclude us from that chance.

Alison Cromie stated *opposition* as follows:

- Unsure that CityWest is capable to execute the project; and
- Technology is changing quickly and people have other options (e.g. satellites) so a contract with CityWest can be avoided.

Nicholas Woodward stated *opposition* as follows:

- The Trust mandate involves preserving Lasqueti's natural environmental;
- The application includes procedural problems, a lack of community engagement, and misinformation; and
- Our autonomy is at-risk without securing ownership.

Rob Prenic stated *opposition* as follows:

- The barge ramp might be damaged.

Dave Olsen stated *opposition* as follows:

- The Lasqueti Internet Access Society was not consulted before the Public Hearing process began and did not respond to the referral; and
- The landing beside the barge ramp has limited space and will be damaged.

Karl Darwin stated *opposition* as follows:

- The cable is exposed and can break.

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At 2:57 p.m. Chair Elliott noted four submissions were received by email since 1:00 p.m., and a referral response was received by the Lasqueti Internet Access Society at 1:15pm. Chair Elliott asked the public for any other comments or submissions. She called a second time for any comments or submissions on the proposed bylaws.

Kaya Fraser stated *support* as follows:

- A lot of people have benefited from the Lasqueti Internet Access Society (LIAS);
- The existence of LIAS is precarious and we should not block opportunity for something functional for Lasqueti in the future; and
- Landing the cable does not mean we are committing to anything.

Jake Bergen stated *opposition*.

Brennan Fricker stated *opposition* due to cost concerns.

Tom Weinerth stated *opposition* as follows:

- We should not rush forward with the application;
- Once the cable is landed, we will have no ability to stop it; and
- Installation will damage the barge ramp.

Chair Elliott commented that it is critical for the Local Trust Committee to hear and consider all new points and view, and encouraged community members not to speak repetitively. She again called for comments and submissions.

Dave Olsen stated *opposition* as follows:

- Issues with the Public Hearing process; and
- No community consultation.

Tom Weinerth stated *opposition* as follows:

- Issues with the Public Hearing process.

Karl Darwin stated *opposition* as follows:

- The process is rushed and the community is divided.

Alison Cromie stated *opposition* as follows:

- There is already an open application for the Lasqueti internet service provider's network and it is not a given that the Lasqueti Internet Access Society would get it.

Chair Elliott called a third and final time for comments or submissions.

Shen Dow stated *opposition* as follows:

- Not enough public engagement prior to the Public Hearing;
- Do not trust the process.

Anicca Chinniah stated *opposition* as follows:

- There are many residents on Lasqueti who do not have internet access, and having an online Public Hearing is not fair.

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Chair Elliott called a fourth and final time for comments or submissions.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Elliott noted that upon closure of the Public Hearing, any further questions or submissions should be forwarded to staff, as Trustees cannot hear or receive anything further on the application post-Public Hearing.

There being no further submissions, Chair Elliott declared the Public Hearing closed.

**By general consent** the meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

I CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A FAIR AND ACCURATE SUMMARY OF THE NATURE OF REPRESENTATIONS RESPECTING THE MEETING HELD:

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Lisa Millard, Meeting Administrator / Recorder on February 10, 2025.

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Carly Bilney, Recorder on February 27, 2025