

North Pender Island Local Trust Committee

Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: October 21, 2023
Location: Anglican Parish Hall
4703 Canal Road, RR#1, North Pender Island, BC

Members Present: David Maude, Chair
Deb Morrison, Local Trustee
Aaron Campbell, Local Trustee

Staff Present: Brad Smith, Island Planner
Narissa Chadwick, Island Planner
Emily Bryant, Recorder

Others Present: Approximately ten (10) members of the public were present

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Maude called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. He acknowledged that the meeting was held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

3.1 Current Islands Trust Housing Initiatives – Staff Presentation and Q and A

Island Planner Smith introduced Island Planner Chadwick, and explained that the discussion today will be the first step in the housing action plan for the community housing project. LTC have directed staff to make housing a major project, and they have been working towards budget approval from Trust Council.

Trustee Morrison Arrived at 1:06 p.m., apologizing as she thought the meeting was scheduled for the Community Hall.

Island Planner Chadwick began the presentation by explaining their work on a housing project as the Island Planner for Mayne Island. Island Planner Chadwick has also been working on housing projects on a regional scale, including projects on Denman and Mayne Island. These processes provide a starting point for the North Pender housing project.

- An Interim Strategic Plan for the whole Trust Area will be presented to Trust Council at their next meeting
- The key actions have been identified
- Currently gathering data for the suitable land analysis



- The plan is about increasing housing options, in recognition of the challenges on the islands
- Multiplexes are typically much more cost effective and a better way to go
- Community engagement led to an action plan
- Gabriola Island has been working on an Official Community Plan (OCP) review with a focus on housing
- Working with the Capital Regional District (CRD) to apply for federal funding
- The Island Housing Strategy focuses on helping low and middle income households continue living in the Trust Area

Island Planner Chadwick explained the Housing Toolkit and the process of creating it:

- A package of information, mapping tools, action plans, and strategy templates
- Designed to inform the development of an action plan, business case, and project charter
- Helpful in building relationships with Regional Districts
- Includes a discussion paper that provides an opportunity to get all the information together, to make sure we're all on the same page
- Community members have been doing their own research on housing
- We've been updating the needs assessment as we have been going along
- Compiled a list of potential OCP policies from other communities in order to look at all the possible options to consider
- Snapshot housing profiles created from census data
- Annotated bibliography provides a rundown of all of the sources
 - Those sources are available on the website
- Some work has already been done on North Pender Island
- There is a document on the Islands Trust website that provides a breakdown of the various responsibilities of various levels of government
- The baseline report is every island's policy relating to housing

Mayne Island has been in conversation about housing for years and held lots of Community Information Meetings to identify community needs. Denman Island decided to have a community housing Advisory Planning Committee (APC).

Speaker: wanted to know if there has been any input from the North Pender community and if that includes indigenous consultation.

Island Planner Chadwick replied that the toolkit is not a predetermined plan for North Pender Island. This is research and information made available for the community to decide on a plan going forward. The LTC can choose what they direct Islands Trust Staff to do. This is an opportunity for the community to express their needs to the Islands Trust.

The 2008 North Pender Island OCP review project generated so much useful information on North Pender Island. We have all of this data on freshwater, so we can look at where we have the water to support more density, or to identify where we shouldn't increase the density.

Mayne Island used mapping and freshwater data to identify:



- A pilot area for this concept of flex housing
- Maximum floor for all dwellings
- Which areas are the most vulnerable in terms of lack of ground water
- The Mayne Island LTC advised where not to build
- Looked at saltwater intrusion
- Challenges with pollution of ground water

The housing project on North Pender Island will help to develop this methodology further. Other mapping done at the Trust-wide level will be looking at subdivision potential. These maps can all be accessed on the Islands Trust website. Denman Island has a housing project with a sophisticated rainwater catchment system, which can be analysed. All of this information shows us where we are at and what possibilities are open to us to develop an action plan.

The Toolkit contains a template for an action plan. The Mayne Island LTC came up with a set of actions and adapted the language for their application to the federal government. Island Planner Chadwick explained the development of the Mayne Island Action Plan:

- Alternative housing and tiny homes
- Affordable rental ownership programs
- Building a good relationship with Habitat for Humanity

North Pender is about 9 months out from having an action plan. Mayne took 4 years, but it allows North Pender to develop their plan faster. The Major Project won't get started until April because staff are waiting on Trust Council for budget approval. Regardless, the North Pender LTC could be doing work on this in the meantime. For example, the LTC can work on allowing subdivision for donation of land or make the rezoning process easier.

Speaker: stated that we need to update the needs assessment in order to progress with this. For the Housing Accelerator Fund, there are 50 indicators in the needs assessment to qualify for funding. We would want to align ourselves with the format that we need to apply to housing accelerator plan.

Island Planner Chadwick agreed that North Pender has the advantage of building their plan so they can align with new requirements from government funding opportunities. The LTC acknowledged that it is important to be ready for whenever funding is available. It would be ideal to get this in place in less than a year.

Speaker: came here to discuss the rezoning application. It is the last thing we are talking about. We want to get these six units built. If we can't do that, then how can we do everything the project is out to do?

The LTC decided to move the Plum Tree Court application up in the agenda, before the break.

Island Planner Chadwick stated that Justine Starke from the CRD has been working on a rural housing initiative. If this funding comes through we will be able to move forward with this project and develop an incentive program for accessory units and provide more support for non-profits.



The next steps for North Pender include letters to First Nations and community involvement.

3.2 NP-RZ-2023.1 (Pender Islands Housing Society) - Preliminary Staff Report

Island Planner Smith gave a description of the rezoning application:

- The current zoning only allows for two unit dwellings, and they want to build multi unit dwellings up to six units
- The bylaw amendment would be consistent with the OCP, so the LTC do not have to have the public hearing process
- LTC will have to give notice before giving first reading of the amending bylaw if they want to proceed without a public hearing

Speaker: I don't think we need a zoning application at all. All we are doing is changing the configuration, not the use. The purpose of the lot is community housing run by a not-for-profit, and this is not going to change.

Island Planner Smith advised that if you are changing the use, which includes density or siting, you have to go through a rezoning process to change the bylaw. Island Planner Smith added that the Pender Islands Housing Society (PIHS) can apply to have the application fee refunded.

Speaker: The application for BC Housing meant that PIHS couldn't start application for rezoning because it would disqualify them for funding from BC Housing. If we can get it done without rezoning, let's do it.

Island Planner Smith advised that Provincial legislation requires us to go through the process.

Speaker: stated that the LTC is asking for proof of water. If PIHS went ahead with current zoning they will have to cut down trees and use more space, which they could do if they get the funding.

Speaker: advised that you can't get around the need to do the amendment. They have done a lot of work with BC Housing, and there are ways to work with them to move things along.

Island Planner Smith commented that BC Housing can be very understanding when it comes to applications, and can work with the rezoning process even if PIHS is not ready by November 17.

Speaker: is concerned that there is so little money available, which means that BC Housing won't even look at their application if there are any issues with the land. If we get the rezoning, we should get to the table. Have tried to stick with their zoning all along. They want to move on to bigger projects.

Island Planner Smith reiterated that the LTC can't change the wording in the bylaw without the due process. Staff have been moving this forward as fast as possible. There are no other pathways to circumvent due process.

The LTC expressed interest in the next steps to move this process one step forward.



Speaker: stated that these processes add immeasurable costs to the housing project.

NP-2023-93

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee directs staff to proceed with application NP-RZ-2023.1 (PIHS) and to prepare a draft bylaw.

CARRIED

LTC could make a resolution to not hold a Public Hearings to move this forward faster. To do that notice must be sent out prior to giving first reading. Once the referral end date is determined, the LTC can schedule a special meeting or schedule a Special Meeting after that to consider first reading. Staff would initiate notice as per statutory requirements.

The LTC went on break at 2:35 p.m. and resumed at 2:46 p.m.

3.3 Housing Project Discussion

Island Planner Chadwick acknowledged that a lot of work and research on housing matters may have already been done by the community, and invited the public to share any research that Islands Trust may not be aware of.

Speaker: would like to return to live on their property on North Pender so they asked their tenant to move out, but can't find a place for her tenant and tenant's son. The tenant is part of the community and doesn't want to move away from Pender Island. They are willing to invest in a tiny home or some other alternative housing to put on their property and continue to rent the house to someone with a family. Would need to invest a lot to get an RV to work on the property, but it's not a long term solution. The Bylaw would have to change to allow a secondary home on her property. Would take about a year to get the permits.

Island Planner Chadwick responded that the action needed here would be a rezoning. The flexible housing model would allow for a maximum combined floor area of the two buildings. One option to consider is a flexible housing rezoning. This example would be a site specific zoning. The RV would create more challenges. On North Pender, the lot would have to be a minimum of 3 acres to live in an accessory building.

The LTC discussed strategies to improve the process more broadly in the future:

- Flexible housing options could be prepared to work for Magic Lake
- Housing project allows for the LTC to look at all the options that makes sense for the area, but If you decided to do it carte blanche you would have a lot of thinking to do
- Secondary suites are currently allowed in Magic Lake, but they are underbuilt, and the change in language could allow for more than that
- Could decide to do this as a series of smaller projects and do all the different things in succession
 - This could take longer over all, but you would move some things along quicker
 - One option at a time, or all of the options together
 - Even if Trust Council didn't support this, you could still work on these little projects



Speaker: North Pender needs housing that is affordable now. People are living in cars. The *Residential Tenancy Act* makes it not appealing to be a landlord and makes people sell their houses or start Airbnbs.

Justine Starke at the CRD has been working on this stuff for years, including incentives for builders to put housing in. Islands Trust is working on the zoning to put these in.

Speaker: stated that, logistically we could put RV Pads up in 6 months.

Rob Fenton, the Alternate Director for the Southern Gulf Islands with the CRD has been putting effort into RV matters.

Speaker: stated that the whole island should look at secondary suites, not just Magic Lake. Much of the issues with housing were not included in the bylaw review project because they were going to do the housing project. The water in Magic Lake can serve 1200 lots that are there. If every lot built the secondary suites, they would need to do upgrades.

There is interest in swapping density into smaller clusters of housing and breaking up square footage. For example, people are aging in place, and they want someone to live there to help them. They don't want to subdivide, because they want to continue to own the land.

Tiny homes on wheels are essentially the same as a recreational vehicles with regards to building code, which means they would not be regulated. Manufactured homes have to be on a concrete pad and hooked up.

Speaker: stated that in their experience they had to have certified engineers to find information that can just be pulled off the shelf just to address water concerns.

Speaker: spoke to their past experience in a past housing needs. The pilot project was successful with provincial and federal government. The speaker emphasized that this is a real housing crisis and got a lot of traction with that.

When Mayne Island allowed for secondary suites a couple years ago, there wasn't any uptake. The LTC remarked that we need to look at how we can tailor the bylaws.

The flex housing bylaw. Maybe Pender could be the model for pads. We can work amongst each other.

Trustee Morrison: people often don't want to be a landlord. Is there a way to have a housing authority to work across the land? The housing authority would be the landlord.

Speaker: would like purpose built housing, then it remains rental housing even if the owner sells. Property is always going to be sold at some point.

Speaker: finds it difficult to make the numbers work on a non-subsidized home. The overhead costs are too high. The speaker suggested a model with distributed locations with the same rental manager.

The LTC emphasized the value of having these discussions because it is hard to make a decision on how to move forward with housing, unless you hear about the specifics or people who are struggling.



Speaker: added that people have no trouble finding short term rentals in the winters, but it is a struggle in the summer months.

Speaker: commented that if housing must be close to services, it should be close to the Driftwood for people with transportation issues. Housing should be close to transportation routes because it can be difficult to get around on the island. Approval for public funding for housing must be close to public housing.

Chair Maude spoke to a conversation with Adam Olsen about the need for a property management company, who would run the rental units. Lots of people don't want the hassle of renting. Island Planner Smith added that property managers do financial and reference checks, and can be quite thorough.

Speaker: stated that 10 years ago people rented little cottages for \$600-800 a month. A lot of them were sold off and rental stock had dipped significantly since then. The current situation does not provide security for tenants and those cottages are now worth a lot.

Speaker: asked if we can make an allowance for secondary housing? People are more willing to rent out a separate place on their property. They added that businesses are having trouble getting staff because we don't have housing for people to live in.

Speaker: stated that people were starting to have a hard time finding places to rent in the late 2000s due to commercial use of residential zones. They expressed concern about situations where tenants are kicked out of their housing, and then they have difficulties with storing their belongings on short notice. They also spoke to the Southern Gulf Islands Housing Strategy that Justine Starke has been working on, and related it to a discussion in 2008 about whether commercial development should be concentrated or distributed on Pender Island. The speaker urged the LTC to consider zoning for a coffee shop and store for 250 people, which has the advantage of being able to walk.

The PowerPoint presentation from the meeting today will be available online and more information can be found on the project page. Island Planner Chadwick added that the toolkit is going to the Regional Planning Committee to be finalized and it will be added to the website.

The LTC returned to the discussion regarding the process for moving forward with application NP-RZ-2023.1 without holding a Public Hearing.

NP-2023-94

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that, pursuant to *Local Government Act* s. 464(2), the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee resolves to not hold a public hearing for Bylaw No.234, and that staff give notice of First Reading in accordance with s.467 of the *Local Government Act*.

CARRIED

3.4 Discussion of the Schooner Way Trail



Islands Trust

ADOPTED

Island Planner Smith requested the LTC add a brief discussion about the proposed active transportation trail to the agenda.

The LTC considered the question of how the LTC can support the Southern Gulf Islands Active Transportation Plan. The LTC is not able to provide financial support. The next move would be to provide a letter that endorses and commits to coordinating with other levels of government on the trail.

LTC would need to decide if they have support for submitting a funding grant. Wants to promote active transportation. The North Pender Island OCP is supportive of active transportation.

NP-2023-95

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that North Pender Island Local Trust Committee has considered the request by the Pender Islands Parks and Recreation Commission and is in support of the 2023 BC Active Transportation Grant Application for the Schooner Way Trail.

CARRIED

4. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

David Maude, Chair

Certified Correct:

Emily Bryant, Recorder