



## Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, February 27, 2024

**Location:** Electronic Meeting (Zoom)

**Members Present:** Timothy Peterson, Chair  
Laura Patrick, Local Trustee

**Members Regrets:** Jamie Harris, Local Trustee

**Staff Present:** Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager (RPM)  
Rob Pingle, Legislative Clerk  
Sarah Shugar, Recorder

**Others Present:** Bree Eagle, Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee Chair  
Ken Byron, Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee  
Conrad Pilon, Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee  
Kevin Chipperfield, SSI Farmers Institute and Agricultural Alliance  
Sheila Dobie, SSI Farmland Trust and Agricultural Alliance  
Lorenz Eppinger, Island Natural Growers and Agricultural Alliance  
Marguerite Lee, SSI Farmers Institute and Agricultural Alliance  
Anne Macey, Island Natural Growers and Agricultural Alliance  
Deborah Miller, Transition Salt Spring and Agricultural Alliance  
Anna Pugh, SSI Chamber of Commerce and Agricultural Alliance  
One member of the public

These minutes follow the order of the agenda although the sequence may have varied. The electronic meeting was live streamed and recorded.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 5:13 p.m. He welcomed everyone to a Special meeting of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee and introduced himself, Trustee Patrick and staff. Chair Peterson humbly stated gratitude to live and work in Coast Salish First Nations territory.

### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The following item was presented for inclusion in the agenda:

4. Next Meeting Date

**By general consent**, the agenda was adopted as amended.

### 3. DISCUSSION OF AGRICULTURAL PRIORITIES

This meeting is an opportunity for the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) to have a discussion with the members of the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission (AAPC) and representatives of the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance on agriculture related issues. RPM Hutton reported the LTC is currently working on the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) update project and highlighted improving the housing situation, improving engagement with First Nations, acknowledging climate change and the Islands Trust Policy Statement changes. The LTC received \$150,000 Complete Communities Funding and staff is in the process of awarding a Complete Community Assessment Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide comprehensive data collection, analysis, and geospatial studies of the Local Trust Area.

In discussion the following items were noted:

- The Agricultural Alliance sent a letter to the LTC dated July 7, 2022 regarding composting regulations in Bylaw 355 and it included a recommendation that Bylaw 355 be revised to include “Composting of agricultural waste, where at least 50 per cent of the compost produced is used on-site, is a permitted use in all zones that permit agriculture”. The composting regulations in Bylaw 355 do not reflect what is actually happening. Concern was expressed that the letter was not acknowledged. RPM Hutton advised there is a need to identify agricultural scale composting;
- Clean water, air and healthy food are essential for life and need to be considered in decision-making. Agriculture must be considered in discussions regarding housing, climate change and water availability;
- There was a question regarding whether there has been uptake of farmworker housing within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) since the AAPC made recommendations to increase farmworker housing as part of the 2020 Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan Renewal. Trustee Patrick advised farmworker housing recommendations were incorporated into Bylaw 526;
- There was a question regarding the plan to protect farmland from the pressure of non-agricultural uses. RPM Hutton advised farming is a light industrial activity and the LUB needs to keep up with agricultural policy changes;
- Will the Islands Trust provide information to the agricultural sector regarding impacts of housing regulation changes on farmland and the pressures on agricultural land that puts agricultural values at risk;
- Trustee Patrick reported the Province is requiring a Housing Needs Assessment. The Regional Planning Committee has been working on ensuring that the formula for the Housing Needs Assessment will meet the needs of the island communities. Agricultural housing data should be included in the Housing Needs Assessment and the last Housing Needs Assessment was completed by the CRD and did not include agriculture housing as a separate item;
- Bylaw 526 brought several properties into compliance and the uptake is difficult to measure;
- Seasonal housing regulations for farmer worker housing is a challenge as the farming season is year-round;
- There was a comment that there is a need for industrial zones;
- Trustee Patrick reported Former UBC Sauder School of Business Dean Daniel Muzyka has spoken to how industrial zones are necessary for a healthy island community. Trustee Patrick expressed that the LTC needs to do a better job to preserve and protect industrial zoned areas to support the island community;

- There was a comment that it is easier to put commercial, industrial and recreational uses on farmland because it is flat and cautioned against using farmland for other uses. It was noted the Rainbow Road Indoor Pool is located on farmland and the new fire hall property was a dairy farm in the past;
- Low income, workforce housing and farmworker housing need to be accommodated while protecting farmland for food security;
- The 2007 SSI Area Farm Plan included a provision for compensation for any loss of ALR and it is important that land that is added into the ALR is good quality for farming;
- Trustee Patrick asked if there is a benefit to reconcile and do a no-net loss or increase update of farmland on SSI. Support was expressed that there is support in the agricultural community for an assessment of farmland on SSI;
- There is a small agricultural base for the population on SSI. Adding agricultural land should include consideration of access to water and soil fertility;
- The OCP should identify priority areas with greatest to least agricultural potential;
- There was a question regarding whether there is an estimated lifespan for an OCP. RPM Hutton advised there is no set timeline for OCP's although best practice is to include a 20-year timeline and some communities include an action plan to track OCP goals with 5-year reviews;
- Chair Peterson advised a 20-year OCP may not keep up to changes in technologies;
- Will the LTC keep the agricultural community informed through the OCP/LUB project. RMP Hutton advised the OCP/LUB project charter would include a formalized engagement and referral process with the Agricultural community.
- The Complete Communities Assessment report must be completed before the end of August 2024 and preliminary results may be available in May 2024;
- The Provincial government has announced an \$83 Million fund to help farmers dig water retention ponds.

#### 4. NEXT MEETING

**By general consent**, the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee agreed to schedule three meetings per year with the Agriculture Community representatives and schedule the next meeting in late May or early June 2024.

#### 5. ADJOURNMENT

**By general consent** the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

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Timothy Peterson, Chair

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

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Sarah Shugar, Recorder