



Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

- Date:** Wednesday, September 13, 2023
- Location:** Beaver Point Hall
1361 Beaver Point Road, Salt Spring Island
- Members Present:** Timothy Peterson, Chair
Jamie Harris, Local Trustee
Laura Patrick, Local Trustee
- Staff Present:** Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager (RPM)
Rob Pingle, Legislative Clerk
Sarah Shugar, Recorder
- Others Present:** Approximately 12 members of the public

These minutes follow the order of the agenda although the sequence may have varied. The electronic meeting was live streamed, recorded, and made available for electronic public attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone to a meeting of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee and introduced himself, the Trustees and staff. Chair Peterson humbly stated gratitude to live and work in Coast Salish First Nations territory.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent, the agenda was adopted.

3. TOWN HALL AND QUESTIONS

Chair Peterson opened the town hall at 5:04 p.m.

Housing Action Program Task Force Member Bryce Chapman requested the LTC to approve Bylaw 530 as soon as possible and noted long time residents and business owners are leaving Salt Spring Island due to the lack of housing, other jurisdictions are looking for options to improve the affordable housing situation and the LTC needs to produce workforce and employee housing and support families. Mr. Chapman spoke to intergenerational living and mortgage helper scenarios as part of Bylaw 530 and that Bylaw 530 would have an estimated 10-15 percent uptake that may add 50 to 60 units to the housing stock. Mr. Chapman advised Bylaw 530 is a small first step to address the housing crisis and noted 97 percent of the community voted in favour of Bylaw 530 in a Housing Action Program survey.

A member of the public spoke to ongoing enforcement by Islands Trust bylaw enforcement for her business and rental units, that renting rooms is a necessary mortgage helper and asked why Bylaw Enforcement Manager Warren Dingman does not attend the LTC meetings. The member of the public reported her employees are being fined for cleaning Airbnb rentals and suggested an enquiry into the Islands Trust regarding bullying residents.

Trustee Harris reported Trust Council is looking into bylaw enforcement concerns and it is a process that takes time. Trustee Harris expressed support for Bylaw 530 to be approved and for proactive enforcement of illegal housing to be stopped.

Housing Action Program Task Force Member Maïkan Bordeleau expressed concern that the Housing Action Program Task Force was disbanded by the LTC and the work is incomplete, asked what is the vision for the Salt Spring Island community and expressed concern that Salt Spring Island could become a gated community model in the future. Mr. Bordeleau expressed support for Bylaw 530, and expressed concerns that non-First Nations people were lobbying First Nations to oppose Bylaw 530. Mr. Bordeleau spoke to First Nations history and political system and encouraged Islands Trust to work together with First Nations. Mr. Bordeleau requested the LTC to direct the CRD to stop enforcement of tiny homes, bylaw enforcement for health and safety reasons is a loophole, conventional housing also has health and safety issues and added that small space living is a human right.

Trustee Harris advised there are Coast Salish residents on Salt Spring Island that are in favour of Bylaw 530.

Trustee Patrick advised CRD Director Paul Brent has been actively working on tiny home policy.

A member of the public expressed concern that the term “Airbnb” is confusing as it is a brand, not a product and asked if there are statistics on Airbnb impacts to long term rental housing. The member of the public suggested the LTC make a statement to differentiate between legal and illegal bed and breakfast operations and provide a summary of what each government agency is responsible for on Salt Spring Island. The member of the public advised he looked into building an apartment block that would provide affordable housing in 1993 and regulations made it non-viable then. The member of the public encouraged the LTC to rezone properties within the Village of Ganges to be zoned for duplexes, add regulations for provision of rental housing and advised a 5-acre property adjacent to Brinkworthy Place that was previously zoned for mobile homes could potentially provide an ownership model of housing that is close to Ganges Village.

A member of the public expressed support for the LTC and staff to be respectful of residents, for a balance between resident and visitor accommodation and encouraged the LTC to look at the purpose of the law instead of the black letter of the law. The member of the public spoke to bylaw enforcement against her property, expressed concern that application fees are a barrier for property owners and advised that there is a bias against local First Nation residents not being recognized and consulted with. The member of the public added Salt Spring Island has a shortage of access to housing, there have been a number of pilot projects for affordable housing that have been negatively impacted by bylaw enforcement, suggested engaging the affordable housing pilot projects and added that the requirement to be on a public transit route is antiquated.

A member of the public expressed support for Bylaw 530 to increase affordable rental housing, to consider alternatives such as tiny homes and to reconsider the current definition of density. The member of the public spoke to short-term vacation rentals driving up market housing prices, being profitable for some people as a passive income source, and added that Salt Spring Island is exempt from the BC Speculation and Vacancy tax. The member of the public expressed support for finding market solutions to support affordable housing and noted other jurisdictions such as Vancouver have increased zoning and have failed to provide affordable housing.

Trustee Patrick reported the 2021 Statistics Canada census reported the following: 6281 dwellings on Salt Spring Island, 5195 dwellings occupied by residents and 2935 dwellings occupied by one person. The model of the single-family house is not working anymore.

A member of the public requested the LTC to put a moratorium on enforcement of illegal housing and reported a friend hides from bylaw enforcement because the friend lives in a bus. The member of the public expressed support for Bylaw 530 and asked the LTC what has stopped Bylaw 530, and specifically, what were the First Nations concerns regarding Bylaw 530.

RPM Hutton advised the LTC received referral responses from First Nations that expressed concern and there is a requirement for the LTC to address those concerns. Staff determined more time was necessary to present a report on options and it is best practice to receive the information prior to proceeding to a public hearing. RPM Hutton reported the Tsawout First Nation is the only First Nation to indicate direct opposition to Bylaw 530 and Lyackson First Nation indicated that they wish to have the right to comment in the future. Staff are working with First Nations regarding the referral responses and will provide a report on Bylaw 530 at the October 12, 2023 LTC meeting.

Chair Peterson reported there was a Globe and Mail article that reported Tsawout First Nation's opposition to Bylaw 530 and the LTC still needs to get clear on their specific concerns.

Trustee Harris reported his intention was to have Bylaw 530 receive first and second reading at the July 12, 2023 LTC meeting.

Trustee Patrick advised the intent is that the LTC is approving a bylaw that we can stand behind and will be approved by Executive Committee. We needed to address the concerns that people have. Trustee Patrick advised Mayne Island Local Trust Committee has addressed density by setting maximum floor area by lot size and it is up to property owners how they want to use the square footage.

Trustee Harris expressed support for added density in rural areas for workforce ownership housing projects that would be regulated by a Housing Authority such as housing projects in Whistler, BC. Trustee Harris advised he ran on a campaign with Donny Marcotte and added that Islands Trust was approached 20 years ago to provide affordable housing. Trustee Harris advised the LTC does not need to reinvent the wheel as there are workforce ownership housing models and Bylaw 530 is a start to address the situation.

Trustee Patrick spoke to controlling the high end of market housing and protecting the lower end market housing to provide for the community and spoke to her vision for a healthy, diverse community. The system and regulations are behind and it is frustrating.

A member of the public asked at what point the LTC decides concerns regarding Bylaw 530 have been addressed.

Trustee Patrick advised the LTC added a two-year review in Bylaw 530 to provide assurance that there is a mechanism to monitor how many housing units are added.

A member of the public asked if re-election is a concern and suggested the LTC acknowledge the people who oppose Bylaw 530 and do everything to keep Salt Spring Island the same, and proceed with Bylaw 530. The member of the public advised he and his partner live in separate tiny homes and would like to live together, families and workers cannot find housing, people cannot wait for housing and are leaving the island. The member of the public thanked the LTC and staff for giving their time to an evening meeting to engage with residents and requested the LTC to make a decision to approve Bylaw 530 at the next meeting.

Trustee Patrick spoke to engagement process in decision-making.

Trustee Harris advised Trustees engaged with the community during the election and once Trustees are elected, it is time to make decisions.

Trustee Harris left the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Trustee Patrick reported staff worked diligently to submit the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund application.

Chair Peterson thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Timothy Peterson, Chair

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Sarah Shugar, Recorder