



Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee

Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: Friday, April 28, 2023
Location: Salt Spring Island Multi Space
124 Rainbow Rd, Salt Spring Island, BC

Members Present: Timothy Peterson, Chair
Laura Patrick, Local Trustee
Jamie Harris, Local Trustee

Staff Present: Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager (RPM)
Louisa Garbo, Island Planner
Chris Buchan, Planner 2
Katherine Vogt, Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. He acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations, and welcomed Trustees and Staff.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

3. CLOSED MEETING

3.1. Motion to Close the Meeting

SS-2023-46

At 1:04 p.m., **It was MOVED and SECONDED**, that the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee close this meeting to the public subject to Community Charter Section 90 (1) (i) the receipt of advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose; and that staff be invited to remain.

CARRIED

By general consent, the meeting was re-opened to the public at 2:07 pm.

3.2. Rise and Report – None

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

4.1 Strategic Directions and Work Program Review

Planner Hutton presented by power-point a review of the four Trustee-prioritised categories elicited from the previous January 26, 2023 electronic Special Meeting Workshop, for further discussion and feedback: 'Improving Housing Affordability;' 'Agricultural Planning;' 'First Nations Relationship Building;' and 'Operational Improvements.'

A Trustee noted that BC Ferries alignment with community planning was a newly realized future opportunity that could be considered for future discussion; also, telecommunications issues; short term vacation rentals (STVR)s issues, and Fulford ferry terminal and neighbourhood congestion could be considered.

Regarding 'Improving Housing Affordability,' the following Trustees' responses were noted:

- Current housing zoning outcomes are inequitable, exclusionary, and inadequate.
- The environment has been given much more priority over the decades than housing.
- The possibility of allowing workforce ownership housing in the form of building strata projects to be managed by a housing authority; and which would involve rezoning or up-zoning Rural and Rural Uplands Zones across the board to allow a density of 1 home per acre or ½ acre.
- Salt Spring has an especially high rural workforce population given the 3 ferries, the hospital, the schools, the grocery stores, and other establishments.
- No worker can afford to buy a house on Salt Spring; they need the opportunity to purchase a home for their own security and the stability of the community.
- Workers need housing options from ownership to rentals.
- Worker housing options could be 75% ownership to 25% rentals.
- Who is collecting data on real estate purchases, building permits and other such housing and demographic data?
- Ganges is a critical identified growth area; but may be a much slower option than rezoning for workforce housing.
- Can other village sites on Salt Spring be identified to create a longer-term strategy of connected nodes of compact villages, rather than rural spread?

Planner Hutton referenced the Trust wide Housing Toolkit and Housing Action plan; and noted that the Salt Spring Solutions Housing Report was appreciated and being reviewed by planning staff.

Planner Hutton asked the Local Trust Committee (LTC) how they saw their role as coordinators, advocates, and decision-makers? The following Trustees' responding points were noted:

- The need for coordination between the LTC and the Capital Regional District and that CRD elections results affects the LTC.
- The Trust Policy Statement is only one input that does not include inputs from other external agencies; so, the LTC must act as coordinators.
- The local Official Community Plan (OCP) from 2008 has not been implemented, and the local Land Use Bylaw (LUB) is substantially from 1999.
- The meaning of advocacy is working cross-jurisdictionally for the greater good, which involves reaching out to Provincial decision makers.
- At the recent Housing Summit, it was acknowledged that social media necessitates very early Trust and LTC public engagement to prevent escalating public confusion and concern.
- How can the LTC deal with untrue, incorrect, or non-neutral Trust-level information that whips up climate anxiety for anti-development aims and implicates the LTC?
- How can the LTC deal with non-governmental organizations (NGO)s threatening legal action against LTC attempts to alleviate the housing crisis?
- All voices in the community should be listened to, no matter their perspective.
- Absolute community consensus is probably not achievable, but greater levels of consensus is worth striving for.

The meeting was recessed at 2:48 pm and reconvened at 2:52 pm.

Regarding 'Agricultural Planning,' the following Trustees' responses were noted:

- The possibility for a no net loss approach to free up Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land that is boxing in Ganges by trading it for non-ALR land that is currently being farmed.
- Ganges should preserve good working farmland; not all ALR parcels in Ganges need to be freed up for further development.
- Long-term local food production and security is important.
- Estates have been taking over farmland.
- Bowen Island is looking at new approaches to agricultural land that could be reviewed.
- The recent Agricultural Action Lab included much discussion regarding current ALR housing rules not meeting farm workers housing needs.
- The Salt Spring Area Farm Plan was not ever implemented due to the Covid Pandemic; but it engaged the community very well. Composting rules needs rewording in the bylaws.
- The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is much more aligned with flat land squarish property parcels such as in Chilliwack, than with Salt Spring Island, which has many split landscape zones that promote new owners to seek subdivision; yet historically, the entire farm property was utilised through

creative and functional applications on the many landscapes within it. It is beneficial for farms to stay complete.

- Some farms may be ideal to be broken up into smaller 10-acre farms; this could increase food production and provide for more housing.

Regarding 'Agricultural Planning', Planner Buchan noted the following:

- The public cannot apply to exclude their own land from the ALR, it must be done by the LTC singly or in batches.
- Local agriculture groups include the Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee for current ALR applications and the Agricultural Alliance.
- For mapping, there is the Canada Land Inventory; the BC Soil Information Finder Tool that classifies soil types, and ALR and Trust mapping.
- Soils are classified from 1 to 6, with soils 1 to 3 being the most desirable.
- ALR maps of Salt Spring reveal that a considerable amount of ALR land is not aligned with desirable growing soil.
- All of Ganges is classified as desirable type 3 soil, even though most of it is outside of the ALR.
- The ALC prefers large contiguous land parcels.
- Current OCP policy includes the allowance for rezoning of agricultural land to general employment uses if necessary for the community.

Regarding 'First Nations Relationship building,' the following Trustees' responses were noted:

- Trustees need Trust guidance on what is appropriate for First Nations engagement; and updated information regarding First Nations elections results; and education opportunities.
- Recent Thetis Island LTC boat tours with local First Nations elders were an excellent relationship-building exercise, which resulted in the LTC feeling at ease with contacting Band staff.
- The previous Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor is no longer available to offer advice, and the role has yet to be refilled.
- The LTC has a responsibility to the community to help them understand First Nations perspectives and engagement processes so that they are not left surprised.
- There are many First Nations members living on Salt Spring Island.
- The Weston Lake Watershed Area had been considered for a pilot project for shared governance.
- Funding was needed for First Nations engagement.

Planner Hutton provided a summary of the current First Nations referral process; and highlighted the importance of local government alignment with the principals of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA).

Planner Garbo noted that First Nations were particular about sharing culturally sensitive information with the public.

Planner Garbo asked Trustees to consider a June 2023 deadline grant opportunity from the Ministry of Housing, administered through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). This funding would allow planners to hire a consultant to analyze the data from the Integrated Cadastral Information Society (ICI Society) regarding sewer and wastewater capacity, to further the advancement of the OCP Project.

SS-2023-47

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee authorize staff to submit an application for 'Complete Communities' funding from the 2023/2024 'Complete Communities' funding program.

CARRIED

Regarding 'Operational Improvements', the following Trustees' responses were noted:

- The Project Charter does not provide sufficient detail for activities and deliverables.
- 'Perfect Terms of Reference' for the Area Plan of Central Saanich is an example of a higher level of detail local government planning document.
- Project definition clarity from the very beginning of a project is very important.
- LTC's are different from municipal governments because local Trustees are more deeply embedded in the entirety of their communities.
- There are existing, unjustifiable local bylaws about buoys in the harbor.
- Doughnut economics is about living within boundaries and responding to constraints creatively.
- Access to the executive boardroom for a meeting space would be helpful.
- There is work to do with regaining the community's trust in the Islands Trust.

The interjurisdictional web of the harbor was discussed, including that anchorage and mooring were legally distinct; and that the local LUB already does not permit live aboard in any zones.

5. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 4:27pm.

Timothy Peterson, Chair

Certified Correct:

Katherine Vogt, Recorder