

PROPOSED

Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy

Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy No. 1, effective ____XXX_____, 2024

Revision No. 1

Purpose

To establish policies and procedures for bylaw compliance and enforcement in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area in accordance with the adopted Trust Council Policies contained in Policy 5.5.1., and that are within the authority of the Local Trust Committee to enforce, and that will ensure policies and procedures are efficient, transparent, reasonable, and consistent with local community standards.

PART A

1.0 Application

This policy will apply to the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area and the enforcement of all applicable regulatory bylaws.

2.0 Definitions & Abbreviations

BEN – bylaw enforcement notice

LUB – Land Use Bylaw

LTC – Local Trust Committee

Minor structure – any structure that does not require a building permit, and that is not located in a development permit area or located within any other environmentally sensitive area

Respondent – a property owner whose property is subject to a bylaw enforcement complaint

Health & Safety concerns – fire, unsafe construction, hazards relating to steep slopes or cliffs

Approved septic system – one that has been registered with the Vancouver Island Health Authority

3.0 References

Gabriola Island Land Use Bylaw No. 177

Mudge Island Land Use Bylaw No. 228

Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw No. 263

4.0 Priorities

- 4.1** Enforcement on short-term vacation rentals is a priority and proactive enforcement is authorized.
- 4.2** Enforcement on non-compliant dwellings will be deferred unless there are contraventions in development permit areas, or other environmentally sensitive areas, or there are concerns about health and safety, or the lack of an approved septic system.

5.0 Inspection

- 5.1** Bylaw Enforcement Officers are authorized under the Land Use Bylaws to enter any lot at any reasonable time to determine if regulations are being observed.
- 5.2** At the start of any investigation, Bylaw Enforcement Officers will determine if entry is necessary to investigate the alleged contravention or if the investigation can be conducted from a public road or other lands.
- 5.3** Bylaw Enforcement Officers are encouraged to request mutually agreeable times to arrange site inspections.
- 5.4** If a Respondent has indicated that they will work towards compliance, and have agreed on a time to comply, a site inspection is only required to confirm compliance.
- 5.5** If a Respondent provides photographic evidence, a survey, or a professional report that confirms compliance, a site inspection is not required.

6.0 Enforcement Procedures

- 6.1** If a bylaw contravention is confirmed, there will be notice in writing, and Respondents will be given a minimum of 90 days to comply with the relevant LUB.
- 6.2** Bylaw Enforcement Officers can use their discretion to consider any reasonable time to comply request from Respondents but the term cannot be for more than one year.
- 6.3** If there are contraventions in environmentally sensitive areas, or development permit areas, or if there is a risk to health and safety, there will be a demand for the Respondent to cease the use or activity immediately.
- 6.4** If the Respondent wishes to consider a planning application that will bring the property into compliance, the Bylaw Enforcement Officer will advise planning staff and the Respondent will arrange a meeting to discuss the feasibility of such an application.
- 6.5** If there is no agreement on time to comply, a Respondent will be provided written notice that enforcement action will be escalated and this may include a request for legal action or the use of the BEN system.
- 6.6** Respondents will be given a Bylaw Warning Notice with a minimum of 45 days to comply before a Bylaw Violation Notice is issued, unless there are health and safety concerns, or contraventions in environmentally sensitive areas, that may require more immediate action.
- 6.7** Bylaw Violation Notices will not be issued more than once per week unless authorized by the Manager of Compliance and Enforcement.

7.0 Closing Files

- 7.1** If the identity of a complainant cannot be confirmed during the course of an investigation, or if a complainant used a false name, the file will be closed.
- 7.2** If the contravention is for a minor structure that has only received one written complaint from one person, the file can be closed.
- 7.3** If it is unreasonable for a Respondent to comply, whether due to specific circumstances or finances, Bylaw Enforcement Officers can use their discretion to close the file.
- 7.4** If a contravention has been identified that is subject to deferred enforcement by the LTC, the file can be closed unless there are contraventions that exist in environmentally sensitive areas or there are concerns about health and safety.
- 7.5** If a Respondent is financially unable to comply with the LUB, the Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement can use his discretion to close the file.
- 7.6** If it is determined during an investigation that the complaint was frivolous, repeat, or vexatious in nature, the Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement can use their discretion to close the file unless there is work on a development permit area, or work in an environmentally sensitive area, or there are health and safety concerns.
- 7.7** The LTC will be notified when any file is closed.

8.0 Frivolous, Repeat or Vexatious Complaints

- 8.1** Complaints that are made in bad faith or for retaliatory purposes may be considered vexatious.
- 8.2** Repeated complaints that form a part of a pattern of conduct by the complainant that amounts to an abuse of the complaint process may be considered frivolous or vexatious.
- 8.3** Frivolous, repeat or multiple complaints about the same issue or a matter that has been investigated with no offence found may be considered vexatious.
- 8.4** If a decision is made to not act upon a complaint that is considered frivolous, repeat, or vexatious, the complainant will be advised of the decision, the reason for it, and may be advised of the circumstances under which it may be reconsidered.

9.0 Communications

- 9.1** When a file is opened and an investigation commenced, Respondents will be advised of the Trust Council Policy that authorized the opening of the file and that an investigation has commenced.
- 9.2** Respondents will receive as much information about complaints against their properties as possible without revealing the identity of the complainant.
- 9.3** The Manager of Compliance and Enforcement will communicate with Trustees or the LTC if there are questions or concerns regarding individual files.
- 9.4** The Manager of Compliance and Enforcement will arrange public information and education sessions regarding bylaw enforcement when appropriate and time permitting. **Alternative:** the Manager of Compliance and Enforcement will be available during regular meeting town hall sessions to answer questions regarding bylaw enforcement.

10.0 Reporting

- 10.1** The LTC will receive regular reporting for open files where investigations have been completed, and the reporting will state whether or not enforcement or legal action of any kind is recommended.
- 10.2** The Manager of Compliance and Enforcement will report to the LTC any concerns, trends, or issues with enforcement that they believe the LTC needs to be aware of.
- 10.3** The Manager of Compliance and Enforcement will maintain the Gabriola Island Bylaw Enforcement Policy and will report to the LTC if amendments are recommended or required.

PART B

MUDGE ISLAND

1.1 All of the policies in Part A will apply to compliance and enforcement activities on Mudge Island and the Mudge Island Land Use Bylaw with the following exceptions:

- 1.1.1 Enforcement will proceed only if there are written complaints received from two persons residing on Mudge.
- 1.1.2 Enforcement on contraventions that are in environmentally sensitive areas, or concern issues of health and safety, or a lack of septic services, can proceed with one written complaint from any person.
- 1.1.3 For confirmed contraventions, a minimum of 180 days will be given as time to comply unless there are immediate concerns regarding health and safety or possible environmental damage.
- 1.1.4 Enforcement on garden beds and driveways as structures will be deferred until such time the LTC can complete a review of the LUB.

PART C

Bylaw Enforcement Notice Bylaw Screening Officer's Powers and Duties Policy

Appointment of Screening Officers

Pursuant to section 7.2 of the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw No. 263, 2011, (the Bylaw) the persons holding the following positions are appointed as screening officers:

- 1) Regional Planning Manager;
- 2) Manager of Compliance and Enforcement; and
- 3) Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Assistant.

Screening Officer Powers and Duties

The powers and duties of the screening officer are contained in section 7.3 of the Bylaw. It is the direction of the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) that these powers and duties are only exercised in respect to each of the above positions as follows:

- 1) Regional Planning Manager. In respect to Bylaw Violation Notices issued by the Manager of Compliance and Enforcement, only the Regional Planning Manager, acting as Screening Officer, may exercise all of the powers and duties in Section 7.3 of the Bylaw;
- 2) Manager of Compliance and Enforcement. In respect to Bylaw Violation Notices issued by Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers, only the Manager of Compliance and Enforcement, acting as Screening Officer, may exercise all of the powers and duties in Section 7.3 of the Bylaw;
- 3) Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Assistant. In respect to Bylaw Violation Notices issued by the Manager of Compliance and Enforcement, and Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Assistant, acting as Screening Officer, may exercise only those powers and duties in Section 7.3(1) and 7.3(2) of the Bylaw.

Authorized Reasons to Cancel Bylaw Violation Notices

The Screening Officer may cancel a Bylaw Violation Notice if satisfied that one or more of the following reasons exist:

1. Voluntary compliance has been achieved with the LUB.
2. The Bylaw Violation Notice was issued to the wrong person;
3. The Bylaw Violation Notice was not completed properly.
4. The issuance of the Bylaw Violation Notice did not adhere to established Trust Council or LTC policies.
5. It is unreasonable for the person to pay the penalty;
6. An exception specified in the bylaw or related enactment or LTC Standing Resolution exists;
7. A permit exists or has been obtained that authorises the alleged contravention;
8. There is poor likelihood of success at adjudication for the Local Trust Committee the following reasons:
 - a. The evidence is inadequate to show a contravention;
 - b. Incorrect information was relied on in issuing the Bylaw Violation Notice;
 - c. The disputant intends to challenge the bylaw with a legal argument that is ill suited to the adjudication process or the legal arguments are too complicated to be decided by an adjudicator.
9. It is not in the public interest to proceed to adjudication for one of the following reasons:
 - a. The bylaw has changed since the Bylaw Violation Notice was issued and now authorizes the contravention;
 - b. An LTC resolution has deferred enforcement on the specific contravention;
 - c. The LTC has closed the file.
 - d. The offence occurred because of a circumstance that made it unreasonable for the person to comply with the bylaw.