

**Community Information Meeting
Received For Information
By Local Trust Committee**

**NOTES OF THE GALIANO ISLAND
LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING
HELD ON SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2014, AT 1:35 PM
AT THE LIONS PARK HALL,
GALIANO ISLAND, B.C.**

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Ken Hancock	Chair
	Louise Decario	Local Trustee
	Sandy Pottle	Local Trustee
	Kris Nichols	Island Planner
	Kim Farris	Planner 1
	David Millership	Recording Secretary

There were approximately forty-eight (48) members of the public present.

Chair Hancock called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and stated that a Community Information Meeting (CIM) gives the public an opportunity make comment and/or to ask questions.

Chair Hancock stated CIM rules and guidelines.

4. COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING

4.1 Short Term Vacation Rentals (STVRs)

Trustee Decario stated that today's CIM is due to Bylaw Enforcement (BE) wanting to enforce against six (6) properties on Galiano that have had STVR related complaints. She noted that Galiano's current bylaws do not address/permit STVRs and hence the Local Trust Committee (LTC) asked BE to put STVR enforcement in abeyance until such time as the LTC could see what the community would like to do regarding STVRs. She said that the LTC is asking the public for ideas on how to move forward.

Planner Farris provided information from the document *Helpful STVR Information* and outlined what an STVR is. She stated findings from the anonymous and non-scientific survey that had been responded to by the public via mail out and/or online survey provider, Survey Monkey. She noted that 244 people started the survey and 196 people finished it. The survey findings were presented on material panels at the beginning of today's meeting and the document, *Helpful STVR Information*, would be posted to the LTC web page after today's meeting.

Planner Nichols provided information from an STVR fact sheet and stated that such had also been part of the public mail out and online survey. He noted that the LTC is aware of approximately 30 currently active STVRs on Galiano. He outlined positives and negatives associated with STVRs and that STVRs are currently legal on South Pender, Saturna, and Hornby Islands. He said that Saturna Island currently permits STVRs of cottages as a home occupation and is in the process of considering STVRs to be permitted by use of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) instead.

Planner Nichols stated that Mayne Island permitted STVRs to be established via a TUP process.

Chair Hancock invited the Trustees to ask questions and the public to make comment.

George Harris (Galiano resident) indicated support for STVRs. He stated that he rents his house as an STVR in the summer in order to generate needed income. He commented that his renters are usually families, they are respectful of his home, and contribute to the local economy (i.e.: by shopping at the Saturday Market, going kayaking etc.).

Amanda Harris (Vancouver resident) showed support for STVRs with regulation(s). She has owned a home on Galiano for 26 years and rents it out seasonally. She stated that many of her renters have transitioned to become full-time Galiano residents. She would support STVR regulations that included an STVR business registry and/or licensing program; STVR owners paying more for recycling services; requiring STVRs to have water catchment systems and/or cisterns; and limiting the number of nights per year an STVR is permitted to be rented. She stated that STVR renters do contribute to the local economy but can also have a negative impact on the community (i.e.: water usage).

Chair Hancock responded that that there is no business licensing authority in places that are not a municipality, and stated that TUP's are used in rural areas instead.

Barbara Littlejohn (Galiano resident) indicated support for STVRs. She asked if regulation(s) would apply to STVRs that were in place prior to Bylaw No. 127. The income derived from her STVR is her only income. She pays taxes on her STVR income and is opposed to any extra fees that might be associated with STVR regulation(s). She does not rent her STVR full-time and thus her renters have less impact on the community than full-time renters do. She supports STVR businesses being dealt with on an individual basis rather than as a group and with blanket regulation(s).

There was some discussion regarding grandfather clauses.

Cathy Stephenson (address not stated) showed support for STVRs and rents her cottage as one. She said this is an important issue for the LTC to resolve and noted that the Chamber of Commerce did an informal survey regarding the types of accommodation(s) visitors used. The findings were that STVRs have a positive impact on Galiano's economy. She said that STVRs permit and accommodate the summer surge of visitors to the island and that with regards to water usage, houses and/or cottages should be habitable 365 days per year.

Conny Nordin (President, Galiano Island Chamber of Commerce / commercial business owner) stated that the Galiano Island Chamber of Commerce supports STVRs as a way to generate income. She noted that the Chamber is opposed to STVRs running weddings, having restaurants and/or accommodating a lot of guests at one time if they are not being taxed and zoned as a commercial business. She said it is important for the LTC to find a balance when considering options and decisions related to STVR regulation(s). She commented on the Chamber's informal survey of people who were leaving the island by ferry and found that those who spent the most money on their accommodation also spent the most money on local services and/or at local businesses. Families who visited were found to spend very little money locally and that visitors who didn't spend any money at all on their accommodation (i.e.: cousins of the property owner) were found not to spend any money locally. Ms. Nordin stated support for STVR regulation(s) being addressed with permanent, not temporary solutions, and requested more information regarding TUP's.

Planner Nichols responded that TUPs would allow the LTC to address STVR applications individually and with conditions. He stated that TUPs last for a period of three (3) years and can be renewed for another three (3) years before a new TUP application is required.

Conny Nordin (President, Galiano Island Chamber of Commerce / commercial business owner) supports the LTC making a permanent decision regarding STVRs and not permitting STVRs to be established via TUP process.

Bob Ford (Galiano resident) spoke in favour of STVRs as a home-based business and that he has a cottage. He commented that people should have to live on the property but be permitted to manage their STVR from their home.

Sandi Harting (Galiano resident) stated support for STVRs, that she has an STVR, and that her neighbour does too. Ms. Harting said she relies on her STVR for income, that she accommodates wedding parties, and that her STVR renters are sometimes noisy. She commented that she should be able to do what she wants and shouldn't be subject to STVR regulation(s).

Lindsay Williams (Galiano resident) indicated support for STVRs. She stated that one of her jobs is to manage STVR cottages and that this income has enabled her to live on Galiano for the past eight (8) years. She hires local services such as plumbers, electricians, fresh flower providers, and others which contribute to the island's economy. She noted that STVR renters support local festivals and are grateful to be able to share the island with those that live here permanently.

Jan Fenby (Galiano resident) supports STVR's. She offers cleaning services and generates a large portion of her income from cleaning STVRs. She noted that both STVR renters and full-time residents are sometimes noisy.

Christine Axmann (address not stated) spoke in favour of STVR's, and that she has owned a home on Galiano for 40 years, which she rents out because she needed to leave the island for employment reasons. She has many repeat renters and she thanked Conny Nordin for being so gracious.

Eric Medine (address not stated) stated support for STVRs. He stated that he owns a home at Montague and that he rents it out as an STVR. He encouraged the LTC to draft bylaws that are reflective of today's online and "easy to have an STVR" world. He stated that he believes STVRs are a net gain to Galiano's economy.

A member of the public (Galiano resident) stated support for STVRs. She stated that she has had some horrible experiences with long-term renters and would therefore prefer to rent her house as an STVR instead. She commented that she relies on her STVR for income and if they are not going to be permitted on Galiano she might have to leave the island.

Geoff Inverarity (Vancouver resident) supports STVRs. He stated that he rents his home on Galiano as an STVR and has done so for years. He has had no STVR related complaints from his neighbours and that his renters are grateful for the opportunity to visit Galiano. He commented that his STVR permits him flexibility and allows him to stay connected to the Galiano community. If his house were a long-term rental, he wouldn't be able to stay connected to the Galiano community.

Joanne Randle (Vancouver resident) supports STVRs. She stated that having an STVR is a lot of work, but it enables her to afford her house on Galiano. She commented that STVRs enable people who can't afford their own home on Galiano to still experience the island and she would like to, one day, be a permanent resident of Galiano.

There was some discussion regarding expenses associated with having an STVR (i.e.: income tax, commercial insurance etc.).

Doug Latta (Galiano resident) stated support for STVRs and asked how they can be regulated.

Planner Nichols responded that the LTC would have several options moving forward including: STVRs not being permitted at all; being permitted as an outright use; being permitted in certain zones; being permitted with conditions via TUPs; and STVRs being permitted as a home occupation use.

There was some discussion regarding: Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation and that such is a permitted use under home occupation; that many currently active STVRs on Galiano could probably be defined as B&B accommodation.

Planner Nichols stated that B&Bs require the owner to live on the property. He stated that cottages are not permitted to have cooking facilities without being considered a dwelling.

Ken Kucille (address not stated) stated that he rents his cottage and his insurance allows a maximum of four (4) people to stay at one time.

Barbara Littlejohn (Galiano resident) stated that regulation is scary, she is a community member operating a home-based business, contributes to the community, and full-time residents should be able to have an STVR.

Cathy Stephenson (address not stated) stated support for STVR regulation(s). She noted that there should be a limit on the number of guests permitted at one time, that STVRs should be considered a small businesses and should; therefore, not be competition to commercial business owners (i.e.: STVRs should not be allowed to accommodate wedding parties etc.).

Eric Medine (address not stated) indicated support for STVR regulation(s). He stated that there should be a limit on the number of guests permitted at one time. He supports STVRs being required to have water catchment systems and/or cisterns. He commented that STVR regulation(s) should not address noise issues as they are addressed in other bylaws.

A member of the public (Galiano resident) stated support for comments just made by Eric Medine.

George Harris (Galiano resident) asked how many STVR complaints Bylaw Enforcement (BE) has received.

Chair Hancock responded that it is difficult to give a concrete answer as the LTC is not given the specifics of BE but he believes the number of Galiano STVR related complaints peaked at 14 with six (6) being considered enforceable. He stated that the LTC only sees files that require litigation. He stated that there are two (2) Bylaw Enforcement Officers (BEOs) for 450 islands and those BEOs have to prioritize their enforcement.

There was some discussion regarding: rental versus home occupation and accessory use(s), there being many different kinds of rental scenarios. TUPs appealing to some people because they are site specific, involve neighbours, have a public open process, and can be dealt with individually.

Sue Smith (Galiano resident) stated support for STVRs with balanced regulation(s). She is a pensioner and needs the income her STVR provides. STVR renters contribute to the local economy and that she educates her renters regarding sense of community and respect for the environment. STVRs attract quality renters from all over the world and that she should not be limited to renting to lesser quality long-term renters.

A member of the public (Galiano resident) stated that 10% of Galiano's population is on Employment Insurance (EI), which is double the norm. She stated opposition to STVRs being established via the TUP process and that STVR renters contribute to the local economy.

Doug Latta (Galiano resident) stated that permitting STVRs could make it more difficult for young people to find and keep long-term accommodation.

Christine Axmann (address not stated) noted that STVR renters contribute to BC Ferries ridership numbers.

Cathy Stephenson (address not stated) said that STVRs do not hinder the long-term rental pool. She said that Galiano needs affordable housing but that is a separate issue. STVRs are a tourism issue.

Karen Harris (Galiano resident) noted that if she was forced to live on her property and was not permitted to rent her house as an STVR, she would have to evict her long-term cottage renters.

Carolyn Jerome (Galiano resident) stated that STVR owners do not have to pay commercial rates for telephones etc. and questioned what impact(s) STVRs would have on commercial operations such as Driftwood Village and Madrona Lodge, if permitted. She stated concern that STVRs run as a business might not have to be zoned commercial.

Chair Hancock responded and there was some discussion regarding: the LTC having no jurisdiction regarding property taxation; BC Assessment basing taxes on use; the potential for an STVR to be deemed commercial by BC Assessment and separately from the Islands Trust; and that there is a gray area between what is considered a small and/or home-based business versus what is considered a commercial business.

Sue Smith (Galiano resident) said that obtaining commercial zoning is difficult and expensive. STVRs offer the ability for owners to make a living without becoming a commercial business. She noted that owners are not permitted to build without being subject to water tests.

There was some discussion regarding water testing, septic maintenance, and commercial business responsibilities versus home-based business responsibilities.

Birthe Kucille (address not stated) supports STVRs and self-regulation.

Conny Nordin (President, Galiano Island Chamber of Commerce / commercial business owner) stated that she owns the Galiano Inn and was told that she pays the highest property tax per room in all of British Columbia. She said that commercial business owners pay a lot of money for services (i.e.: telephone, hydro, propane, internet etc.,) and that the Galiano Inn is subject to water testing every month.

Sandi Harting (Galiano resident) stated opposition to STVR regulation(s) that would limit the number of guests permitted at one time.

Barbara Littlejohn (Galiano resident) stated that some STVR owners don't have neighbours.

A member of the public (Galiano resident) showed support for regulation(s) that would prevent owners from putting a few trailers around their property and subsequently renting them out as STVRs. She commented that permitting STVRs would be good for Galiano's real estate market.

Amanda Harris (Vancouver resident) stated (on behalf of someone who couldn't attend today's meeting) concern that permitting STVRs could result in some permanent residents having no permanent neighbours.

Shelley Lawson (Galiano resident) stated that she is the manager of Driftwood Village and that she participated in the Galiano Island Chamber of Commerce process relating to STVRs. She asked what the next steps are regarding LTC STVR related process.

Chair Hancock responded that an Island Planner(s) will guide the LTC STVR related process and that the LTC will subsequently make decisions regarding Galiano's Land Use Bylaws (LUBs) and Official Community Plan (OCP) as well as any other STVR related issues that might need addressing.

Planner Nichols responded that he will submit a report to the LTC in April that will be based on information gathered at today's meeting as well as findings related to the STVR survey. He stated that the LTC would have several options moving forward, including: STVRs not being permitted at all; STVRs being permitted as an outright use; STVRs being permitted in certain zones; STVRs being permitted with conditions via TUPs; and STVRs being permitted as a home occupation use.

Trustee Decario asked Planner Nichols if there are any fees associated with TUPs.

Planner Nichols responded that the fee for a three (3) year TUP is \$1,100.00 and that the fee for a three (3) year renewal of that TUP is \$200.00.

Barbara Littlejohn (Galiano resident) stated concern with TUP fees.

Janet Aitken (address not stated) stated that she has an STVR on Galiano and asked in what way the TUP fees would benefit the owner/applicant.

Chair Hancock responded that monies collected from TUP fees would help pay for staff and public process.

Bob Ford (Galiano resident) stated concern with TUP fees. He said that TUPs put the LTC in a conflict of interest situation because TUP fees would help pay LTC salaries.

Birthe Kucille (address not stated) stated that she has an STVR and has been in business for 14 years, with no issues.

A member of the public (address not stated) asked what keeping the status quo regarding STVRs would mean.

Planner Nichols responded that it would mean STVRs would not be permitted on Galiano.

There was some discussion regarding home-based businesses and the LTC having other options besides STVRs being established via TUPs.

Christine Axmann (address not stated) asked the LTC if they could amend the definition of home occupation to permit STVR use.

Chair Hancock responded that it would be difficult for home occupation to include permission for STVR use because STVR use means that the owner is not living there.

Thomas Axmann (address not stated) asked if STVR regulation(s) would apply to STVRs that were in place prior to Galiano's 1994 bylaws.

Planner Nichols responded that he doesn't think STVRs have ever been legal on Galiano.

Libby McClelland (address not stated) stated that she is puzzled by the legal versus illegal discussion(s) surrounding STVRs because such have only arisen due to the fact that STVRs have not been explicitly addressed in Galiano's bylaws. She stated that long-term rentals aren't regulated and asked if STVRs are regulated because they generate money.

Chair Hancock responded that long-term rentals are subject to the *Residential Tenancy Act* (RTA). He stated that STVRs generally provide accommodations for less than 30 days and are commercial in nature (i.e.: advertising is often involved). He read aloud the definition of home occupation from the STVR fact sheet.

Libby McClelland (address not stated) suggested that the definition of home occupation be amended to permit STVR use for a specified amount of time (i.e.: four (4) months per year).

Cathy Stephenson (address not stated) stated that she does not see a benefit to possibly regulating STVR use to a specified amount of time per year. She stated that there should be good reason(s) for any regulation(s) that might be introduced.

Barbara Littlejohn (Galiano resident) stated support for self-regulation. It is the abusers that have created this issue and that they have subsequently caused problems for everyone else.

Birthe Kucille (address not stated) asked the LTC to defer addressing STVRs.

Trustee Pottle responded that the LTC has to address STVRs because Bylaw Enforcement wants to enforce against STVRs. She stated that Galiano is fortunate that BE agreed to put enforcement in abeyance.

There was some discussion regarding the internet having an effect on enforcement (i.e.: it is easy for BE to do a search for STVRs on Galiano).

Shelley Lawson (Galiano resident) stated support for the LTC making a permanent decision regarding STVRs. She stated that making a permanent decision would benefit Galiano's tourism economy and economy in general.

There was some discussion regarding process, timeline, and next steps.

Chair Hancock stated final call for comments from the public.

Bev Gautier (address not stated) stated support for STVRs. She has an STVR on Galiano, that having an STVR is a lot of work, and that guests expect you to be available 24/7. She said that Tourism BC has a strategy for the islands and that experiential travel is a growing sector. She believes STVRs are good for Galiano and that permitting them would help Galiano to grow.

Joanne Randle (Vancouver resident) said that if STVR renters don't visit Galiano then they would go somewhere else. She hires local people to help with her STVR when needed.

Shelley Lawson (Galiano resident) commented that she viewed the LTC timeline regarding STVR process and commented that it is difficult for her to advocate for STVRs during the busy summer months.

There being no further comments from the public, Chair Hancock closed the Community Information Meeting.

Trustee Decario noted that findings from the online survey and comments made by the public today show that the community would like STVRs to continue on Galiano. She stated that the community has also suggested that there should be some regulation(s) associated with STVRs on Galiano and that she is looking forward to hearing more public input regarding such. She noted that the LTC is looking to balance the needs of the community.

Chair Hancock declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:40 p.m.

RECORDER

DATE