



# ADOPTED

## Saturna Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

**Date:** January 31, 2015  
**Location:** Saturna Island Community Hall  
105 East Point Road, Saturna Island, BC

**Members Present:** Paul Brent, Trustee  
Lee Middleton, Trustee

**Staff Present:** Beverly Lowsley, Recorder

**Regrets:** George Grams, Chair  
Gary Richardson, Island Planner

There were approximately 50 members of the public present.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

#### 1.1. Appointing an Acting Chair

**SA-2015-001**

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**

That the Saturna Island Local Trust Committee appoint Trustee Brent and Trustee Middleton as Acting Co-Chairs for the purpose of this meeting.

**CARRIED**

### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent, the agenda was approved.

### 3. INTRODUCTION OF LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE

A/Co-Chair Middleton introduced the purpose for the special meeting and noted that Chair Grams and Planner Richardson were not present; they would be attending the regular business meeting on February 19, 2015.

### 4. PURPOSE OF MEETING

#### 4.1. Mapping out a Process for Community Engagement

This was an informal session to get input relating to work priorities and ways for the community to comment on issues they saw as important. This was not a regular business meeting.

## 5. NEW STRUCTURE OF LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Currently, Town Hall sessions have been held at the end of a regular business meeting. An alternative process, used by some local trust areas, has been to have a general Town Hall meeting at the beginning of the meeting prior to the business agenda and again at the end of the meeting.

## 6. COMMUNITY INPUT AND IDEAS FOR INNOVATION

How best to get community input other than local trust committee meetings.

**Morgan Yates** suggested if or when a change to the Official Community Plan (OCP) is anticipated, a Canada Post mail-out be considered.

A/Co-Chair Brent explained that Islands Trust has to use the provincial mail-out program which costs more than regular post. If many changes are being considered this could be a significant expense for the local trust area budget.

**Morgan Yates** offered an alternative option to send a bundled mail-out every 3 months.

A/Co-Chair Brent listed local communication processes currently in use: the Islands Trust web site, Saturna Scribbler, Saturna Bulletin Board on Facebook and the Saturna Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (SIRRA) site.

**Priscilla Ewbank** suggested the Advisory Planning Commission (APC) meet more regularly and report back on their deliberations.

Comments from others who had served on the APC in the past noted that the APC meets at the request of the Local Trust Committee (LTC), they do not initiate action. Reporting of the APC discussions is informal and they are not authorized to send out information.

**John Hutchinson** expressed frustration with the Islands Trust rules and regulations regarding who gets to communicate with whom. He clarified, that he supports the APC but also recommended an alternate source of community input such as informal meetings to discuss issues then approach the LTC.

**Bill Sheffeld** described the history of APC's as individuals with specific expertise elected by the Community Club to give input to the trustees or, the APC could invite the community to general meetings, discuss issues then make recommendations.

A/Co-Chair Brent stated that the APC is a valuable resource for seeking information and making recommendations to the trustees, who are the locally elected decision-makers.

**Janet Land** noted input from a broad base of community should go directly to the LTC through Town Hall meetings. She suggests having community information discussions for broad input and feedback on the alternate month to the regular LTC meeting. No decisions would be made and no need for the planner or the chair to be present.

A/Co-Chair Middleton noted this is the essence of community engagement which focuses on issues greater than bureaucracy.

A/Co-Chair Brent agreed that this is worth doing.

**Al Sewell** suggested that for certain issues, a group of local residents (such as those at East Point) meet and discuss the issue, the pros and cons and numbers supporting each, then present a report to the LTC and the broader community.

**Priscilla Ewbank** commented that research information is import to help with decision making. At general meetings this is not always presented. She values the roll of the Islands Trust governance and invited individuals to read the Official Community Plan, educate themselves about the issues, and take part in the meetings.

A/Co-Chair Middleton noted that some local trust areas have local office hours as a legitimate opportunity for individuals who are not comfortable speaking in public meetings.

A/Co-Chair Brent noted that Planner Richardson has office hours on Saturna which are posted.

**Bill Douglass** questioned whether the APC is worth retaining on Saturna. He viewed it as a committee of unelected volunteers who may represent their own ideas, not always consistent with the broad view.

A/Co-Chair Brent noted the APC provided a good forum for discussion of "testy" community issues to provide divergent views. He favours maintaining the APC.

**Bill Sheffield** said "I want the APC to acquiesce to decisions that I don't necessarily like." Wants the LTC to give rationale for why specific decisions were taken.

A/Co-Chair Brent agreed that once a decision is made it is important to let people know they were heard and to address why the decision was made, whether or not it was in their favour.

**Priscilla Ewbank** expressed appreciation of hearing other's opinions in respectful dialogue and the importance of being heard.

A/Co-Chair Brent commented that there are a limited number of individuals who attend meetings and who speak. This represents approximately 10% of the community. The challenge for the LTC is getting input from the remaining community.

**Sandra Kriese** noted that it is unusual for her to attend these Island Trust meetings, describing past negative experiences as "them versus us" and adversarial stances which had evolved over past issues. She appreciated that this meeting was promoted as an invitation which implied an open meeting for sharing ideas.

**Katie Jones** agreed that the past negative experiences and hostility demonstrated over a number of island situations has put her off local politics.

A/Co-Chair Middleton commented that there has been a move within the island communities to reach out and get more grass roots involvement. There are many policies which are open to interpretation and hopefully we can harmoniously disagree on occasion.

**Sandra Kreise** followed with a suggestion of an open meeting to help individuals understand the mandate of the Islands Trust. Several others supported this idea as a positive learning opportunity.

**Larry Peck** suggested a survey so people who are not comfortable speaking out can still give input on issues.

**Al DeJoseph** spoke to the issue of surveys and the challenges of avoiding internal bias, multiple submissions by the same person and other factors that may invalidate the results.

**Theresa Higgins** commented that not speaking out at a meeting is often a reflection of her agreement with previous speakers so there is no need to reiterate what has already been said.

A/Co-Chair Middleton pointed out that each island has specific issues some of which can be addressed through the Islands Trust, others come under the Capital Regional District (CRD) and there can be effective liaison between local island groups and these other authorities.

**Paul Bruhn** gave an example of Member of Parliament, Elizabeth May's approach of explaining theory with examples of what happened in the past, what worked, what didn't, and how we can move ahead.

Supporting the previous comment, **Morgan Yates** suggested Linda Adams, Chief Administrative Officer of the Islands Trust might be a good resource for such a meeting.

**Janet Land** asked if there could be other ways of sharing information. In the past a summary publication following LTC meetings provided information from the meeting in layman's terms, what happened, and what didn't happen. Various modes of communication need to be used as not all people connect with what is currently available.

**Al Sewell** pointed out that it is the obligation of a citizen to know what is going on and be informed. The Islands Trust could take a role promoting this message.

**John Hutchinson** cautioned that the interaction page in social media can be a danger when someone having a bad day can post their negative perspectives in a very disrespectful ways. This influences others' willingness to engage.

**Bill Douglass** expressed negative opinions of the planner and criticized the quality of the survey which was set out during the past trust year.

A/Co-Chair Brent responded that there are numerous planners who write staff reports and make recommendations. The LTC relies on their input and expertise and does have the option to agree or not, and can make their expectations clear. He asked that people consider the positives as well as negatives and asked individuals to provide feedback in a respectful way.

A/Co-Chair Middleton commented that there may be work that can be done in relation to making our expectations clear and giving ample lead time for responses.

**Bill Sheffield** noted that the trustees are trained under the *Municipal Act* and have the added challenge of working with OCP's for various islands rather than for just one municipality. In regards to surveys, the job of the LTC is to determine if the questions of surveys are clear, succinct, and are not biased to get a pre-determined response.

## 7. INPUT - PRIORITIES FOR THE TERM

A/Co-Chair Middleton explained that at the February 19, 2015 regular business meeting a work plan will be tabled. Prior to that date, he invited community members to let the trustees know of specific priorities they would like to be addressed.

A/Co-Chair Brent reminded the public that emails to the trustees become part of the public record. If individuals do not wish their comments to be available in this way, they could speak directly to either of the trustees. He also pointed out that this is a four year term so there is time to proceed carefully, try out various things, and see how they work and proceed accordingly.

**Priscilla Ewbank** asked if the bylaws tabled from last term would be brought forward in this term.

A/Co-Chair Brent responded that any motions which are tabled can stay tabled if that is the wish of the community.

**Carol Voyt** asked if there is any way that draft minutes could be available sooner than following the next scheduled meeting at which they will be approved (at least 2 months)?

**Neysa Wiens** requested a newsletter summary of highlights of meetings to help communicate information.

**John Gaines** commented that the Preserve and Protect mandate of Islands Trust includes consideration of impact on communities. The facts of economic development and commerce are vital issues impacting viability of our communities. He requested that the trustees think about the community when considering Islands Trust business.

**Charles Reif** requested that every second month community meetings can explore local issues/problems which are not necessarily related to a bylaw. The process of today's meeting has been positive.

A/Co-Chair Middleton asked if there was broad support for an information session in the month opposite the regular LTC business meeting.

By a show of hands, there was overwhelming support for this suggestion.

**Bill Sheffield** noted that some issues relate to Capital Regional District (CRD). If the Southern Gulf Islands LTC members could approach the CRD Director as "APC to the CRD" they might get a more positive response to shared issues.

A/Co-Chair Brent reported that prior to the swearing in for this term, the new trustees met and have a more positive relationship with CRD starting off this year.

**Al Sewell** commented that over the past 30 years the local trustees have faced more constraints. He urged them to take back their authority.

**Al DeJoseph** asked whether some of the local business meetings could be moved to a weekend date as people who work cannot make weekday meetings.

The Co-Chairs agreed to have the community meetings on a Saturday but commented that such a scheduling change for regular business meetings would impact CRD overtime and would make travel from Salt Spring Island more complicated for Chair Grams.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**By general consent**, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

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**A/Co-Chair Brent**

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**A/Co-Chair Middleton**

Certified Correct:

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**Beverly Lowsley, Recorder**