



ADOPTED

Saturna Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: March 21, 2015
Location: Saturna Island Community Hall
105 East Point Road, Saturna Island, BC

Members Present: Paul Brent, Acting Chair
Lee Middleton, Trustee

Staff Present: Beverly Lowsley, Recorder

Public and Media Present: There were approximately 25 members of the public present

1. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Brent called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. He acknowledged that the meeting was being held in traditional territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

By general consent, Trustee Brent will act as Chair (A/Chair) for this meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The following addition to the agenda was presented for consideration as item:

3.2 Publication of Minutes

By general consent the agenda, as amended, was Approved.

3. PURPOSE OF MEETING

3.1. Work Program Discussion

Priscilla Ewbank questioned how the agenda is developed. It seemed that the purpose should be decided locally rather than at the Islands Trust office.

Trustee Middleton explained that staff draft the agenda based on what they see as business left over from the previous meeting. The purpose of this Community Information Meeting is to obtain local input in a more open manner.

A/Chair Brent clarified that the Work Program heading is just a way of saying "where do we go from here" which can be an open process.

Al Sewell, stated his belief that identification of priority issues should be community based, then trustees take those issues to the Islands Trust for consideration of how that can be facilitated.

Beverley Neff suggested that this should be an open conversation, talking about what comes up first rather than being constrained by the agenda.

Tom Johnstone noted that a balance between staff and elected politicians is always an issue.

John Money concurred that it is a challenge for trustees to take on control.

John Hutchinson expressed appreciation of town hall sessions at the beginning and end of regular meetings.

Acting Chair (A/Chair) Brent acknowledged the push and pull between community priorities and a change of trustees every 3 or 4 years.

Bill Douglass requested clarification if this as an informal meeting rather than a business meeting.

A/Chair Brent confirmed that this is an irregular meeting, for open discussion of issues of importance to the community.

Morgan Yates commended both trustees for agreeing to hold the irregular Town Hall meetings between the Regular Meetings. He expressed appreciation of both trustees sharing their strengths in representing our community.

Beverley Neff suggested a roundtable so each person could comment on why they are here.

Roundtable for Individuals to Identify Their Reason for Attending

Sandra Kreise - I am just here and interested because diversity is important.

Priscilla Ewbank expressed interest in land use issues and supports the Islands Trust mandate. Also, thankful to have previous minutes prior to this meeting.

Ron Hall, long-time resident, expressed interest in the Official Community Plan and issues relevant to the island.

Al Sewell noted that sometimes at these meetings individuals are attacked, not for their message but as the messenger. "I may not agree with the message but will defend the messenger."

Bill Schermbrucker was troubled during the election as there seemed to be a conflict in platforms especially relating to the proposed bylaws. He expressed hope our two strong individual trustees can reconcile these issues.

Both Trustees expressed that during elections, issues seem to emphasize differences. They agreed that they have more in common and are working together to be very conscious of the need to reach out for community input.

A/Chair Brent commended Trustee Middleton on how well he conducted himself representing his ideas at the first Trust Council Meeting.

Louise Peramaki described her involvement in development of the Official Community Plan (OCP) and suggested that if changes are considered, an equal number of people should be involved in that process. She also noted that information sheets do not always reflect true facts as they relate to Saturna so it is important to attend and hear for ourselves.

Judith Rees-Thomas is here because community input is important

Charles Reif, involved for many years and most recently on the Advisory Planning Commission (APC), felt a gap between input from "above" and views of people in the room who were not heard. He appreciates the round table seating so we can communicate more effectively with each other and work out what is needed and expressed hope for local input to have an impact.

Bill Douglass, also involved in development of the OCP, upholds the Islands Trust values and critical infrastructure - nature and environment - and the effects of industrial/commercial development can be tremendous. It is up to each individual to stand up and protect what we have here.

Dawn Wood also participated in the OCP. She noted importance to balance between development and maintenance of the peaceful nature of our environment. She is interested in whether the secondary suites issue will be brought forward and how it will evolve, for example what might be a reasonable number and where might they be.

A/Chair Brent responded that those are the issues being discussed.

Neysa Wiens was thankful to be here, values the community and the community value to help and support each other. Respect even when not in agreement.

John Money noted that the OCP is a living thing so is never completed. Suggested that trustees create a task force to review options regarding issues previously put forward such as housing, jobs, and appropriate development. He commended both Trustees for representing the community first while working within the Islands Trust.

Carol Vogt does not want to spend any money on unnecessary bylaws and is not convinced that a need has been demonstrated. First identify a problem then explore possible solutions for this island, not bylaws being forced on all islands by Islands Trust.

Morgan Yates shared his longstanding interest and experience in community development and his bias for a triple bottom line approach balancing economic, social, and environmental factors. Deeper baseline understanding of who we are as a community, identifying a community profile or asset mapping to understand the aspirations, individual concerns, skills, experiences, and network we bring so we can capture the economic, social, and environmental priorities.

Tom Johnstone, a past trustee, is interested to see if current trustees are willing to represent the community and what we want of the planners. These open meetings are valuable as sources of information, bringing a variety of views so the trustees can take them to staff.

Mike Davis, new to the community, is here to listen and learn.

Beverley Neff here to support listening to each other and to tap into the wisdom that we all have.

Theresa Higgins noted this is an important process that does work.

Margaret Paterson is happy that we can come together as a community. This is such a wonderful place to be.

John Hutchinson agreed this is a very special place. After years visiting, is now resident and able to participate. Attendance at these meetings is crucial to an understanding of the issues discussed.

Bettianne Hayward, as a novice to this process, commented that in this environment barriers drop and possibilities of receiving and giving information for a common purpose with infinite possibilities.

Bev Lowsley agreed Saturna is a wonderful place to live. Sometimes tensions come to the fore but in the great scheme of things most people want what is best for the community and want to balance the various needs while maintaining the ambiance of life in a small, rural community.

Baksheish Gil is glad to be here and wants to see the best for the community.

Renie Muir, to be part of Saturna and to do that, is to be at these meetings and be with others, to care.

3.2. Publication of Minutes

The process of approval of minutes involves various steps which can take up to 30 days. The local recorder has 7 days to submit draft minutes to the Islands Trust office. The steps at the Islands Trust office involve review by the secretary, to other staff member at the meeting then to the Chair of the Local Trust Committee. Minutes do not need to be approved prior to posting on the website. Staff tries to get them out more quickly when possible.

4. COMMUNITY INPUT AND IDEAS FOR INNOVATION

Trustee Middleton asked what is the baseline information we need to make decisions about the island. Percentage of residents to part-time residents. Proposed to ask the planner to develop a profile of the community from available baseline data (tax rolls, stats Canada, and other documents). After that basic information is available, he suggests development of a small research contract for someone to complete that work here on Saturna.

A/Chair Brent commented that existing data is not up to date. Take that information then meet to identify which areas where we need more information.

Al Sewell suggested start with local data mine of the current reality then refer to staff for further follow-up if needed.

John Hutchinson in effect this would be a 2015 census of Saturna Island. The aspect of local involvement is vital.

Tom Johnstone said identify primary issues then what questions need to be asked, what decisions do we want to make. There is never only one way to address an issue. Consider positives and negatives of each option, then community select the one with the least amount of negatives.

Priscilla Ewbank countered that before identifying specific issues we need a baseline of what is, not what we expect to see. Before putting out a survey she suggests a local group to review. As well, need an inventory of the land assets we have. Also, before developing an evaluation tool we should have a local roundtable to look at the questions we are asking.

A/Chair Brent responded the intent is not going in with a specific plan. Need more information. Addressed issues relating to aging population, the health of the community, non-resident properties on the island - these need more information as a basis for decision making.

Al Sewell countered that the aging population is an asset not a problem.

John Money - Surveys have been done by previous groups. Where will you go with this process? Concern regarding the time frame, how long it will take to collect this data and do something with it. Will this happen within term of office or other Trustees go in another direction?

Bill Douglass asserted we have old people because we are healthy. Need positive point of view.

Beverley Neff would like the data collection to be done by professionals so we know we can trust the results.

Tom Johnstone pointed out that data collection has to relate to your mandate, so first decide what data is needed within your mandate.

Neysa Wiens everyone has a bit of knowledge and wisdom which needs to be pooled so we all have factual information.

Morgan Yates described a layered approach to starting with baseline demographic information, then aspirations/ concerns of residents, both permanent and part time, then perhaps experience, skills and networking. If approached in a layered way it will become clear and we can check back with the community between layers.

A/Chair Brent commented that David Howe, CRD Director, was involved with a skills inventory on the Southern Gulf Islands. This was done within past 18 month and may be worth consulting but we do need something specific to Saturna.

John Money reminded the group that economic situation on the island has varied throughout the years (logging, shale plant). What resource do we now have to help stabilize the community? We need to identify terms of reference for the contractors who will do the study.

Priscilla Ewbank noted the value of baseline study is that the world evolves and situations change. We have different views of what is success and the picture of people who have come may not fit what we might identify. She supported a layered research approach, as did several others present.

Dawn Wood described an experience of hearing younger adults who have come to the island, noting their experience with "haters" within the community who don't like their group, identified as "the pirates".

Trustee Middleton pointed out that the "pirates" who live on boats, work at various jobs and leave to go sailing during the summer, reflecting their specific lifestyle choice.

Several individuals noted that "pirates" is their chosen identification and offered observations of their members being welcomed, working in various roles and contributing to the community. Feedback reflected their positive work ethic and the fact that even though they leave during the summer they do come back and continue to live on their boats.

Beverley Neff posed the question, how could we become a boater welcoming community. Saturna has two harbours an asset for boaters, good food and already the Lamb Barbeque is widely known within the boating community. She gave an example of their reception as a boater in the community of Lund.

Louise Peramaki suggested instead of secondary suites we need a good nursing home so seniors can age here. Also, younger people would be able to work and live on Saturna as well.

Bettianne Hayward commented on wonderful input here and concurs that the research needs to go ahead. Supports accurate information. She also noted an increasing number of children in the school over the past year. Some families stay for a short time, go away for a time, then return and settle here.

John Money commented we still have resources on this island. Suggests a small group to come together and develop terms of reference for the individual(s) who do the research.

Beverley Neff suggested that Joan Selbey who has had experience as a social planner. Important to have the community doing the research if possible.

A/Chair Brent noted that the CRD, other districts, and Islands Trust are working together more in the past few months than they have previously. They are focussing on harbours, attracting mariners to the South Gulf Islands.

5. INPUT - PRIORITIES FOR THE TERM

SA-2015- 010

It was Moved and Seconded

THAT the Saturna Island Local Trust Committee direct Staff to assemble an inventory of currently available census data pertinent to the Saturna Local Trust Area and bring that to the next meeting.

CARRIED

AI Sewell suggested that staff should provide a list of what is available and we can decide what we want.

Trustee Middleton pointed out the Saturna Mapping Inventory, available by the door, which lists available documents. The information requested above may come in a similar format.

Issue of the Trust Budget as a Whole and Why It Keeps Going Up

Once the budget is compiled it is difficult to remove items. At the local level, trust committees usually have up to 3 levels of priorities on the Work Plan. Both Local Trustees will be very conscious of requests for planning hours. There is a group of Local Trust Committees engaging the populace of their Trust Areas to explore renewed vision.

A/Chair Brent stated that last term experience of addressing three major items was too much too quickly. Better to select priority item and do it well. For next meeting request local ideas of vision for our community to be initiated locally, not by the staff.

AI Sewell, spoke on application for sub-division on his property: multiple steps of special meetings all taking staff time prior to being able to forward the application to the ALR. From his experience he suggested to approach the ALR first.

A/Chair Brent responded the Financial Planning Committee has requested their auditors to look at the process and how the land use planning process might be done elsewhere as alternative to Islands Trust process.

John Money commented on what he sees as bloated bureaucracy, fewer land use applications but a more complex, time consuming and costly process. The process could be simplified without negatively impacting the Preserve and Protect mandate of Islands Trust.

Tom Johnstone noted that staff does not increase bureaucracy, politicians approvals lead to increases. Staff may recommend but decisions rest with the politicians.

Priscilla Ewbank supported the Islands Trust mandate and issues arising because various government departments are no longer involved. Gave example of the eel grass study supported by Islands Trust. Disparate rolls are expected of Islands Trust with budget impacts. She also noted that she prefers this type of meeting with full input rather than task forces.

John Hutchinson recognized that staff bring back a 10% increase in budget per year, considering 26 jurisdictions all needing reports/studies. One way we can reduce that demand is for local communities taking on some of their own research.

Baksheish Gil noted the importance of thinking positively and value of sharing opinions. We all have differing perceptions which we need to check out before making judgements.

Al Sewell, in reference to the Saturna Island Secondary Suites FAQ's document, questioned the statement relating to "controlling affordability" as impinging on the Landlord Tenant Act.

A/Chair Brent responded that there are ways of structuring agreements in such a way to keep rental housing affordable. There are some restrictions but they are less than the restrictions on the Affordable Housing Agreement.

Trustee Middleton indicated the need to find out what is the goal, to make mortgages more affordable for young people or for more affordable housing? There has been much work done on Salt Spring Island regarding secondary suites, some of which may be relevant to Saturna as well.

The Local Trust Committee plans to review the Work Plan and consider whether some items could be removed from that list.

Bill Douglass spoke with regard to the Trails Map, which has already been done but was never adopted. If review is required prior to adoption that would add unnecessary cost. The official version is not currently available. Bill has agreed to check a locally available map to verify if it accurately reflects the original Trails Map.

There was further discussion relating to issues with trails through private property.

Morgan Yates suggested once the map is verified, it should first be recorded as received, prior to decisions on further review/action.

Beverley Neff asked for information on the Explore the Islands proposed trail from the ferry to the store. Land owners along that part of the road particularly should have that information.

Morgan Yates thanked the Trustees for this meeting and the opportunity to give input and have open dialogue.

6. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 11:37 am.

Paul Brent, Acting Chair

Certified Correct:

Beverly Lowsley, Recorder