



ADOPTED

Saturna Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: May 9, 2015
Location: Saturna Recreation & Cultural Centre
104 Harris Road, Saturna Island, BC

Members Present: George Grams, Chair
Paul Brent, Trustee
Lee Middleton, Trustee

Staff Present: Beverly Lowsley, Recorder

Public and Media Present: There were approximately 35 members of the public present

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Grams called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. After welcoming remarks and introductions he described the process of the irregular Islands Trust meeting to receive public input on the items listed on the agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A comment that was made that maps and reference materials relating to proposals being discussed should be available.

Chair Grams responded this irregular meeting was not attended by Islands Trust staff and that staff provide these materials.

Trustee Brent explained that at regular local trust committee meetings such information is provided. These meetings on the alternate month are a response to community requests for meetings to enable input and sharing of information in a less formal manner.

Additions to the agenda for consideration:

Add Item 5. a. Consideration of Format of Meetings
Add Item 5. b. Update on Trails Maps

By general consent, the agenda as amended was Approved.

Trustee Middleton acknowledged terminology used when framing these discussions as community input could be confused with the more formal Islands Trust Community Information Meeting format.

Following suggestions that formal seating in rows is not conducive to discussion it was agreed to move to the larger room with seating in a circle to facilitate more open discussion and face-to-face dialogue.

There was a 5 minute break to accomplish the move.

3. PUBLIC INPUT INTO SATURNA POINT HOLDINGS CAMPGROUND CONCEPT

Trustee Middleton noted that the idea of sharing a concept prior to going to the trouble and expense of a formal application allows an opportunity to discuss potential issues which may arise. These can then be addressed in the application rather than slowing the process by having to revise and resubmit.

Bob Fitzgerald reviewed his concept for development of a campground at Lyall Harbour as presented at the regular LTC meeting of April 23, 2015. His goal is to have a low impact camping area to cater to kayakers as well as to offer an alternative for individuals who come to Saturna and camp "off road". He shared this information to get feedback prior to submission of a formal application noting that exploration of water and septic needs are still in progress.

Discussion questions related to number and size of sites, vehicle access, campfires, size of the services building, and water management issues to control consumption. Various ideas were offered.

Pat Carney expressed support for expansion of the dock to attract boaters but has concern regarding a campground adjacent to a pub which has off sales in a residential area with no police enforcement available. She stressed the importance of having regulations which are monitored and enforced. These views are shared in correspondence by David and Jean McLean who have purchased the adjacent property.

Tom Johnstone recognized the need for camping facilities to offset unregulated camping and the dangers they pose, reiterating the importance of supervision.

Bill Sheffeld reviewed the history of transient accommodation suggesting to think about the concept of a "public house", also noting that the party people will want to go somewhere else. He expressed support of a campground as a Temporary Use Permit, and then determine if it is a problem.

John Hutchinson noted that the shower will be an important feature. He reviewed previous discussion of the noise issue and importance of having a contact if issues arise.

Al Razutis expressed support of the idea, recalling that when he came here 20 years ago his first impression was of the No Camping sign. He suggested a "Welcome to Saturna" sign instead, stressing advantages for diversity and commerce far outweigh the disadvantages which can be addressed.

John Money pointed out that the area is zoned for commercial use. The hike to Narvaez Bay is a long trek, noting that he has found evidence of unauthorized camping, including by the dam which is our water supply. There is definitely a need for alternative options.

Al Sewell in favour of the concept but commented on the potential financial strain of this development on one individual business.

Priscilla Ewbank expressed that this dialogue is exactly the purpose of such meetings. She views this as one island business contributing to the welfare of the community, while sharing challenges of small businesses working to achieve financial success. If a person lives right there it is a less expensive option than hiring a caretaker. She acknowledged concerns regarding regulation and monitoring.

Morgan Yates noted that he has submitted a letter to the trustees expressing his views and wondered how this would be shared.

The Trustees responded that they have read the letter and it has been forwarded to the Islands Trust office to be posted on the website.

Chair Grams noted that as Chair, this process bothers him as discussion of a proposal prior to it even being submitted circumvents the process of obtaining advice from the planner regarding whether it meets the requirements of the OCP and bylaws. The usual process is in place for good reason.

Theresa Higgins read a brief letter from Joan Combs then expressed support of this community discussion process, not to circumvent the process which is in place but to enrich the application development and decision process.

Chair Grams responded that this provides advice from everyone else but not the planner who knows the legalities involved.

Al deJoseph suggested that there is not a difference between boaters at the dock and campers in the area who will use similar services and conceivably make as much noise. He strongly supports the concept.

Judith Rees-Thomas compared this process to having a conversation in your living room with a group of neighbours. She also noted that the police can be here quickly if needed.

Anne Popperwell agreed with Pat Carney's concerns in reference to the potential noise factor suggested that a planting to screen the area would help reduce noise as well as providing a visual barrier.

John Gaines expressed support for the concept while recommending that the structures be large enough to have 2 toilets and 2 showers. The reality of the area which is rated as commercial and residential is that there will be more traffic and potential noise.

John Hutchinson suggested this process is a response by the community to enhance what the Islands Trust approach provides.

Janet Land wondered if the idea of having a mini trailer as a "park host" onsite would provide housing as well as supervision of the area.

Pat Carney commented that a Community Information Meeting is not to listen to the trustees and IT personnel but to give input for local community ideas. In relation to the boaters, she suggested that the Wharfinger has authority to monitor and enforce rules. In regard to having a "park house" supervisor that person has no authority. She has called the police at times and from her experience, their response time is longer than suggested and they may not arrive until the next day.

Sue Syverson countered that police prioritize calls and a large issue (drinking, fighting) goes up on the response list. She also gave an example of a group of locals who had a party on the wharf which did create noise. She objected to categorizing young people as drinkers and partiers.

Dawn Wood expressed thanks to Bob and Christine for their creative approach toward promoting their business and attracting visitors to the island. She also commented that these circle gatherings are a significant mechanism for expressing what is important to the community and which will not undermine or circumvent the formal process.

Chair Grams commented that they do have Community Information Meetings on Salt Spring but only after formal information has been presented at Islands Trust Regular meetings so people are fully informed prior to open discussion.

Al Sewell countered the idea that there are a number of past trustees as well as individuals present who have been members of Advisory Planning Commission who have the experience and legal knowledge from those experiences.

Beverley Neff suggested a campsite use policy stating expectations of what is offered, rules regarding quiet time, fires, and use of the facilities.

Bill Sheffield gave some of the history of our original paranoia regarding camping which was based on stories of issues on Galiano Island 40 years ago. He suggested that this local process may help to smooth the process once the official decision time arrives.

Chair Grams acknowledged that he still has reservations and understands the public statements of support.

Bettianne Hayward commented that previous comments have addressed her concerns. In the past she and her family camped in supervised campsites which were well run but when supervision was withdrawn the campsites had issues of drinking, drugs, and fights. She stressed the importance of these meetings and of individuals being heard.

Priscilla Zimmerman expressed thanks for this. As an architect she offered her view of the big picture, the idea of a low-impact development which is on the main street suggesting that concerns with water and noise could be mitigated.

Andree Fredette offered her support for this idea noting there are a number of blogs describing where and how to camp secretly off road and that this will offer an alternative for those who arrive on bikes or backpacking.

Bill Douglass warned of "vision creep" suggesting the wording for creating the new zone be identified as a "tent site" rather than a campground. The OCP has specific requirements for campsites and density requirements.

John Money, responding to concerns of policing and supervision, noted that Bob Fitzgerald lives on the island and is available by phone if issues arise.

Richard Blagborne expressed concern about lack of parking in the area and suggested the need for a vehicle traffic plan as not all people will be back-packers or cyclists. Marketing is also an important factor which will help control some of the issues identified.

4. PUBLIC INPUT INTO PERETZ APPLICATION

Alan Peretz reviewed the plan. The 9 acre property has 3 legal conforming homes set up as a company of three families. The goal is to have the 3 strata lots on the water side property reclassified as strata for estate planning as the original residents are aging and want to pass the properties on the future generations.

Al Razutis asked what is the problem as this was put forward in 2012.

Alan Peretz explained the issue of density relating to the part of the property on the other side of Boot Cove Road which was offered as an amenity was rejected. When asked about what would happen to the section across the road he stated that it would remain undeveloped.

Priscilla Ewbank remarked this situation was set up prior to Islands Trust and would impact the density regulations in the Official Community Plan which has been the focus of previous discussions.

John Hutchinson spoke in support of the proposal noting the lot boundaries are already there and doubts that there is another property on the island for which this would set a precedent. These circumstances are unique.

Tom Johnston stated that he can see no negative effects.

John Money expressed support of the application as a mechanism of estate planning which will be faced by a number of families on Saturna.

John Gaines spoke in favour of some form of legalization of the current use noting anything we can do to support long standing families on the island to remain for future generations is a good thing.

Al Sewell noted that he is opposed to ad hoc land use rezoning and recommended following the Land Use Bylaws and Official Community Plan (OCP), not one-off approvals. This would be fair to the whole community.

Janet Land reviewed her understanding of the situation which was in effect prior to the OCP. When the OCP came in their 3 houses were essentially 2 extra densities over the allowable density but they were grandfathered in. How do we justify those 2 extra densities? The planners report at the last meeting addressed some of these issues.

Anne Popperwell expressed as a neighbour that it is absurd this has gone on so long. Such a minimal change should not be so arduous and complicated.

Bill Sheffield confirmed that this situation predates the regional district plan. Houses come and go, buildings deteriorate but the land is forever and how it is carved up matters. He has sent a written proposal on this issue which will be on the Islands Trust website.

Alan Peretz noted that this is not carving up small pieces, that the proposed lots are larger than any others on Boot Cove Road and there is not a significant increase in the value of the land if allowed to be zoned as strata.

Morgan Yates suggested there is a great deal of common sense in the application as well as a fair amount of complexity. Hopefully this process will lead to an expedited solution that makes many more people happy without adverse effects.

Bill Douglass suggested that the Islands Trust should focus on the interests of the community, consider benefits to the island and not simply expedite the process. They should negotiate an acceptable amenity for the increased density.

Dawn Wood noted that previously there was a house on the lot across the road which has since been demolished and a possible amenity might be to construct another small rental house or allocate parking space.

Alan Peretz countered that the house was on an adjacent piece of property; there was never a house on the mentioned property. Also that in the 2012 application the space was offered as a community amenity which was not accepted.

Beverly Neff, from her experience as a Trustee during 2011 clarified that a suggested parking area which was not accepted involved 100 feet which was part of a lot nearer the corner of East Point and Boot Cove Road.

Sue Syverson noted that there are a number of homes on the island which were here before the OCP was developed. She is against penalizing people for how their properties were developed prior to the OCP.

Priscilla Ewbank stated there are principles of land use and development by which land use needs to be decided. This is a different proposal from 2012 which needs careful deliberation aside from the personal component of knowing the family. She also suggested we need a coherent community plan related to parking needs in the residential and commercial areas.

John Money noted that the OCP states clearly that we cannot make a decision which makes a non-conforming property yet this was done previously in this case. The density already exists so should go ahead.

Tom Johnstone agreed that this property became legal non-conforming densities from the time the bylaws were set. There is no increase in density now.

Al Sewell suggested that the two properties are divided by Boot Cove Road and should be considered a "hooked" property when considering density issues. He suggested a possible *not withstanding* clause be added to the land use bylaws to clarify such situations.

John Hutchinson noted that this application has identified a number of areas where the OCP may need to be revised and requested that the trustees get on with this application.

Bill Sheffeld related that he came to Saturna because there were no zoning or building regulations on this island. The OCP was created to counter the provincial plan to require minimum 10 acre lots on Saturna. Previous land owners gave up potential zoning density and development potential as part of this community plan development.

John Gaines agreed that planning is important but people are also important and they have a right to plan their family's future. This has been beaten around for a long time and this is a minor change. We should find some way to make this work.

Priscilla Zimmerman asked that this family be given approval. This is commonsense.

Dawn Wood was pleased that the piece of property on the other side of the road will not be built on.

Anne Popperwell noted that the OCP was developed prior to the acquisition of federal park land in which a large amount of property was taken out of available density allocation. Our community needs to grow and we need to be less precious about density.

5. PUBLIC INPUT INTO OCP AND BYLAW CHANGES - EVOLUTION OR REVISION?

Trustee Middleton suggested that some issues have arisen in which the OCP might be identified as a barrier to proceed. On the other hand, new issues such as solar panels and other new technologies are not addressed in the OCP and may need to be added.

Al Razutis commented that revisions to the OCP are long overdue, should not take overlong and should be set as a priority.

Bill Sheffeld warned that although there are areas in the OCP that need review and change, a full review and revision would require an inordinate amount of work and time.

Al Sewell suggested looking at the first 3 pages, the preamble, which is where the real problem lies.

Trustee Brent commented that if we are to move ahead we will have to contemplate some sort of revision to our OCP and bylaws or we will never be able to accomplish anything. The question is do we do a full scale OCP review or focus on specific areas such as solar power applications.

John Gaines commented that use of geothermal as well as solar and other green technologies may be hampered by over governance.

Morgan Yates suggested a modular approach to incorporate new technologies and perhaps areas around renewables. Also, there seems to be some opportunity arising for the area between the dock and the general store which might need to be considered.

Beverley Neff expressed reluctance to reopen the OCP but would like to have a group conversation about what we would like to see, for example, between the dock and the store.

Al Razutis looks forward to emerging technologies to enhance communication and dialogue as a mechanism for re-evaluation and redefinition of our governing bylaws.

Pat Carney suggested that the trustees compile a list of examples of what may be anticipated and what issues will be important, then have another round table meeting to discuss them. Vision before the planning.

Alan Peretz said that the idea suggested at the last meeting about developing a strategic plan be brought forward then the OCP needs to be a vehicle to enable such strategies to move forward.

John Money suggested small changes which could be incorporated to reduce our foot print on the planet. We already have the initiative to discuss these issues put forward by the provincial government directives to reduce our carbon footprint.

5. a. Format and Setup of Meeting

Trustee Brent stated that as these community meetings are effective for the Saturna community they should continue in between the regular meetings. This process will help applicants to put together proposals that are more likely to succeed without them or us spending excess dollars. What we call them is whatever everyone wants.

Carol Voyt related that this process is a community building exercise and in effect is an advantage. In the past we have felt the IslandsTrust and the planner have dictated to us what is needed rather than us identifying what we want and seeking their advice on how to achieve it.

Morgan Yates found value in hearing from other members in the community especially those who have long experience rather than relying solely on the Islands Trust planners.

Al Sewell commented that when decisions are made sometimes those who are opposed are left out. They should have their objections recognized and reasons given for the final decision.

Judith Rees-Thomas suggested we title these *Irregular Meetings*.

Beverley Neff agreed as the Community Information Meeting format is an official Islands Trust process.

Alan Peretz expressed some discomfort that at this type of meeting there may be people who go away with misinformation. He requests that if an actual application is under discussion the planner's presence would be important to provide clarification where needed.

Trustee Brent suggested that Mr. Peretz send any items which he views as potential misinformation or items of confusion to Planner Richardson so he can clarify them at the next regular meeting.

Trustee Middleton also suggested that if an actual application is up for discussion at one of our Irregular meetings, perhaps it should be policy to have the island planner present, either in person, or by telephone.

5. b. Update on Trails Maps

Trustee Middleton commented that Planner Richardson is still working on this and local trustees do not have information to report at this time. It will be addressed at the next regular meeting.

Morgan Yates noted that Planner Richardson was going to check on the authenticity of the map that he had and would provide a copy for this meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

By consensus the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am

George Grams, Chair

Certified Correct:

Beverly Lowsley, Recorder