



Thetis Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: August 27, 2017
Location: Beban Park Recreation Centre
 Room 1, 2300 Bowen Rd, Nanaimo, BC

Members Present Susan Morrison, Chair
 Peter Luckham, Local Trustee
 Ken Hunter, Local Trustee

Staff Present Marnie Eggen, Island Planner
 Ann Kjerulf, Regional Planning Manager
 Vicky Bockman, Recorder

Others Present Approximately thirty-five (35) members of the public in attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Morrison called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. She welcomed the public, acknowledged that the meeting was being held in territory of the Coast Salish First Nations, and introduced Trustees, staff and recorder.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

3. COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING Ruxton Island Private Moorage Structures and Community Docks Review

3.1 Planner Presentation

Planner Eggen reported that the purpose of this Community Information Meeting is to explain the project, introduce preliminary options for regulating private moorage structures and allowing community docks on Ruxton Island, present a draft community survey, answer questions and gather information for the Local Trust Committee's (LTC) consideration.

She conducted a presentation that included the following information:

- The objective and scope of the project is focused on removing ambiguities in the Thetis Associated Islands Land Use Bylaw (LUB) regarding private moorage structures on Ruxton Island and reviewing LUB regulation to allow community docks on Ruxton Island;
- The purpose, background and potential timeline for the community survey that is being developed to solicit public input;

- A range of options that are outlined in the draft survey to regulate private moorage structures and community docks, with associated advantages and disadvantages;
- The anticipated timeline for the Review project; and
- Relevant documents developed during the Official Community Plan (OCP) and LUB review were noted to include “Community and Shared Docks: Case Studies from BC” and “Ruxton Island Community Dock Options Study”.

Trustees commented with the following key points noted:

- A Trustee expressed concern regarding the inadvertent creation of the “loophole” ambiguity in the bylaw regarding private moorage related structures and the potential length of time that might be required to resolve the issue, noting that an interim solution might be warranted.

He recognized the need for a safe way to access the island as well as the potential visual and security issues that docks may present; and indicated his desire to respect the intent of the bylaws that were created in a fair and open process.

- A Trustee expressed general support for private docks on waterfront properties in the Gulf Islands. He encouraged the public to complete the survey so that the input from the community can inform the LTC’s decision making process.

3.2 Public Input, Questions and Answers

Chair Morrison opened the floor for public input and comments were noted on the following issues:

Removing the ambiguities in the bylaw regarding private moorage structures

- Support was expressed that this be addressed separately in order to eliminate the possibility of additional unintended consequences while continuing the dialogue on the community docks project which might take significant time to complete.
- If public response in the survey is different than the position to fix the LUB “loophole” issue would it be fixed regardless?
 - A Trustee responded that the present language in the current LUB lacks certainty. He added that it is important for the community to have an opportunity to provide input to ensure that what is being created is still meeting the needs of the community, providing certainty and closing “loopholes”.

Community Docks

- How would a community dock be funded?
 - Possible funding sources would depend on the approach determined by the community and may include Regional District tax requisitions, community funding, Federal infrastructure grants, or through creation of a harbour society that might acquire funding.
- Would all property owners bear some financial responsibility even if there are some docks that are only advantageous to a few?

- A Trustee provided an example of a scenario which involves the creation of a Port Commission to manage the dock with a fixed per-parcel tax for that community dock.
- Differentiation between “community” and “communal” docks might be important in the discussion.
- Creation of a single community dock for the island could increase vehicular traffic and congestion.
- Restrictions on use of community docks would need to be defined.
- Location of these docks would be important in terms of safety and protected anchorage; and consideration should be given to the vulnerability of neighbours to the potential for increased crime.
- It is important that consideration be given to a clear definition of community docks that addresses issues such as use, how will residents then get to their property, who does or does not benefit, vehicle access, and a location that makes geographical sense.
- Community docks might not be useful to everyone given location and limited trails. Shared docks could present a compromise, be small scale and useable.
- Support was expressed for the need of community discussion regarding community docks.
- The increase in population on Ruxton Island with the related increase in mooring buoys would make a single dock problematic.
- Consideration should be given to the possibility of a few low impact, possibly seasonal communal-serving docks which might be on private property, helping to alleviate mooring buoys in anchoring areas, with zoning, location and number regulated.
- The development of community docks would solve problems for some, however, would create problems for others. The solution was suggested to be a combination of community docks, if necessary, and private docks. The viewpoint was expressed that those with waterfront property that can support a dock should not be denied the right to have access to provide for themselves through a small private dock which the Islands Trust can regulate through the Development Permit process.

Survey

- What is the deadline for input on the draft survey?
 - Staff explained the process that might include a change in the proposed launch date based on LTC consideration later in this meeting.
- The survey should include two sides to every question, including the pros, cons, and possible costs.
- The addition of a question regarding shared docks was requested.
- Support was expressed for the survey in the review process.
- Objection was raised to survey question Part B: Community Docks 1.a as being misleading given that the OCP provides clear direction that the Islands Trust should support rezoning applications for community docks.
- It was requested that a question be added to the survey relating to safe access.
- The survey should include questions regarding private docks which are a part of the solution to safe access.

- A suggestion was made to provide a place in the survey for the lot and plan number of the property in which the respondent has an interest to ensure validity of the survey.

Safe Access

- The public accesses identified as safe in the 1950's and 1960's may no longer be safe as not only have accesses changed over time but the population is aging. Elderly visitors should be considered.
- The study that was prepared to identify and access potential dock locations was recognized as a beginning point and should be considered in this process, possibly included with the survey.
- Community docks were considered a solution for safe access in a previous LTC meeting, however, they would require drop off of goods, return to mooring buoy and then returning logistics which are problematic.
- Safe access language might be interpreted to mean wheelchair accessible.
- Property owners know best where the safe accesses are.
- Portable equipment that can be utilized to put on a slippery shore to access property is available and information can be obtained on this.
- Safe access is a human right.

Other

- The map being used for reference in the project review of community docks presentation has errors.

By general consent the meeting was recessed at 2:32 pm and reconvened at 2:39 pm.

3.3 Local Trust Committee Consideration of Next Steps

Trustees expressed support for amending the draft survey to include additional questions to ensure community concerns are addressed. They proposed the survey amendments might be reviewed in an LTC meeting with an opportunity for open discussion.

A Trustee suggested that amendments might include questions on the topic of safety, an indication of support for shared docks and an articulation of the difference between development permit and rezoning options.

Staff noted that consideration of Development Permit Areas (DPA) in this review would involve an OCP change and advised that allowing private docks on Ruxton Island and development of a new DPA are identified as out of scope in the Project Charter at this time.

TH-2017-030

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the draft survey regarding the Ruxton Island Private Moorage & Community Docks Review add a part to ask residents and property owners if their safe access is presently being met under the current regulation, with a comment box.

CARRIED

Discussion followed on the possibility of including a place in the survey for recipients to provide their lot and plan number in order to confirm that duplicate responses have not been received and ensure validity of the survey.

TH-2017-031

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the draft survey regarding the Ruxton Island Private Moorage & Community Docks Review include a question for a recipient to add their lot and plan number.

Discussion followed and staff confirmed that a statement could be provided on the survey indicating that this information will not be made publically available.

The Chair then called the vote.

CARRIED

Trustees thanked everyone for participating in today's meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 2:59 pm.

Susan Morrison, Chair

Certified Correct:

Vicky Bockman, Recorder