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### **Local Trust Committees Having Electronic Meetings and Public Hearings**

Lekwungen, METULIYE/Victoria, BC—Trust Area residents and property owners may be able to attend their next local trust committee meeting or public hearing from their homes. All they need is a phone or a computer with access to the internet.

Under the *Emergency Program Act*, the Province has repealed and replaced Ministerial Order MO83 with M139. The new order gives Islands Trust the ability to hold meetings electronically, without in-person public participation, and allows for bylaws to be read and public hearings to be held electronically.

Local governments and Islands Trust are required to hold public hearings for some development applications before making a decision.

“This new development will help us serve the public better,” shared Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “Public input is an essential part of land use decision-making, even when a public hearing is not required. When we have an electronic meeting or public hearing, we’ll encourage public participation. We want the public to understand what we are doing and why decisions are made. We’ll encourage written submissions in advance of meetings and hearings and invite the public to participate using their computers or phones.”

Local trust committees, Trust Council, Executive Committee, Council committees, and the Islands Trust Conservancy Board will be conducting meetings using Zoom, an electronic video and audio conferencing system, which can be accessed by anyone through the internet, or phone.

Ways the public can participate in meetings will be shared on the Islands Trust and Islands Trust Conservancy websites, through Islands Trust [subscriber notices](#) and newspaper advertising (when newspaper deadlines allow). Procedural changes will be communicated using the same methods.

For future meeting notifications, including electronic meeting login information and phone numbers, members of the public are encouraged to subscribe to updates by going to the Islands Trust [website](#).

Until further notice, to protect the health and safety of trustees, Islands Trust employees, and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, all local trust committee meetings will be held electronically and broadcast using Zoom.

The Islands Trust appreciates the public’s understanding and assistance during this time.

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The Islands Trust works to preserve and protect over 450 islands in the Salish Sea through land use planning, the Islands Trust Conservancy, and Trust Council programs and services. The Trust Area, located within Coast Salish territory, is the homeland of over 28,000 Coast Salish Peoples who have called this area home since time immemorial. Covering 5,200 square kilometres between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island, the Trust Area has 26,000 residents and 10,000 non-resident property owners. The region features many indigenous archaeological and culturally significant sites, and some of the world's most endangered ecosystems.

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