

**Public Hearing Record  
Received for Information  
By Local Trust Committee**

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**Gabriola Island  
Local Trust Committee  
Public Hearing Record**

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**REGARDING GB-RZ-2020.1 (GABRIOLA HOUSING SOCIETY) PROPOSED BYLAW NOS. 306  
(OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN), 307 (LAND USE BYLAW) AND 308 (HOUSING AGREEMENT)**

**Date OF Public Hearing:** January 7, 2021  
**Time:** 10:00 am  
**Location:** Electronic Meeting

**Members Present:** Dan Rogers, Chair  
Kees Langereis, Local Trustee  
Scott Colbourne, Local Trustee

**Staff Present:** Heather Kauer, Regional Planning Manager  
Jaime Dubyna, Planner 2  
Nadine Mourao, Recorder

**Others Present:** There were approximately forty-two (42) members of the public and one member of the media in attendance.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 10:03 am, welcomed the public and introduced Trustees, Staff and Recorder. He acknowledged that the meeting was being held in the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

Chair Rogers advised that this Public Hearing was being held for application GB-RZ-2020.1 (Gabriola Housing Society).

Chair Rogers spoke of the Public Hearing being held electronically, noting that the COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines preventing in-person meetings may continue for an extended period of time and this approach provides an option to inform the public, consider the application and allows the Local Trust Committee to continue due process and careful consideration of the proposal.

Planner Dubyna read the Notice of Public Hearing.

**2. PROPOSED BYLAW NOS. 306, 307 AND 308**

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Ian Scott, a representative of the applicant, provided a presentation titled the 'Vision for Paisley Place' and noted the following:

- Affordable, comfortable, secure rental housing for Gabriolans of all ages who have low to modest incomes;
- Respected the natural settings and minimized forest impact;
- Principle impediment to providing affordable housing is ensuring sufficient funding;
- Centrally located close to transit, shops, schools and employment centres;
- Updated site plan showed modified clusters pulled further East, reconfigured parking, central commons building (funding dependant), fire department pull in with water storage standpipe to feed dry hydrants;
- Type 3 sewerage system to the South of development with ultraviolet treatment of waste water;
- Greywater treatment;
- Review of well data and hydrogeology monitoring analysis shows aquifer is sufficient and development extraction rate 0.18 L/s / 2.85 GPM (15,522 Litres per day) will have negligible impact on neighbouring properties, including the school;
- Water management plan included a plan for operational component of managing water resources: well water, rainwater and wastewater;
- Water licence technical review indicates proposed water extraction from well is sustainable;
- Landscaping will require additional water during establishment period in the first 2 to 3 years, minimal irrigation required following establishment;
- Definition of affordable housing included housing that costs 30% of household gross income;
- Gabriola Housing Assessment noted 150 people per week use the Gabriola Food Bank, many renters paying more than 30% of household gross income on rent and/or live in inadequate housing, strong need for affordable housing;
- Gabriola Housing Society (GHS), a non-profit, was donated the Paisley Place lots, determined that it is a feasible location for affordable housing development, in process of rezoning property, and applying to secure funding;
- Principle target funding includes BC Housing Community Housing Fund, unit requirements include deep subsidy on 5 units for persons on fixed incomes, social assistance, disability etc.; 12 Rent-geared-to-Income units based on 30% of gross income; 7 Affordable Market units;
- Housing Agreement defines priority to residents of Gabriola and Snuneymuxw First Nations; and
- May need public funding to reduce development costs in order to have the 30% gross income rent goal.

Planner Dubyna summarized the agency referrals and responses and noted:

- Application may be found in the Public Hearing Binder on the Islands Trust Gabriola website;

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- Bylaw No. 306 will amend the Official Community Plan (OCP) with new policy language to recognize the new 'Multi-dwelling Affordable Housing' (MAH1) designation to be applied to the subject properties;
- A new Environmental Protection Development Permit Area (DPA) is proposed, with justification and objectives in the OCP and guidelines in the Land Use Bylaw. The subject properties will also be included in the existing Multi-dwelling Affordable Housing Development Permit Area 8;
- The proposed bylaw would also amend the land use designation map in Schedule B of the OCP and delineate the area for the new DPA map in Schedule D-North;
- Bylaw No. 307 will amend the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and introduce new zoning regulations to be applied to the new 'Multi-dwelling Affordable Housing 1' (MAH1) zone to encompass the proposed development of 24 affordable housing units;
- Clerical error in Bylaw No. 307 Section 1.15 of Schedule A, definition for "two family dwelling units" was amended and has been corrected online, should read "two principal dwelling units";
- A comprehensive series of DPA guidelines have been drafted and would be applicable for new construction or redevelopment of the subject properties;
- Bylaw No. 308 will enter the Local Trust Committee into a housing agreement with the owner of the subject land, that includes terms and conditions regarding the occupancy, tenure and availability to specified classes of persons of dwelling units located on those lands pursuant to Section 29 of the *Islands Trust Act* and Section 483 of the *Local Government Act*;
  - Legally described as:
  - PID 028-580-095, Lot 1, Section 19, Gabriola Island, Nanaimo District, Plan EPP11544;
  - PID-028-580-109, Lot 2, Section 19, Gabriola Island, Nanaimo District, Plan EPP11544;
  - and
- Bylaw Nos. 306 and 307 Referrals were sent to three provincial agencies, three regional agencies, two non-agencies, and seven First Nations;
- Referral responses have been received from the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department (three options to ensure fire department access and reduce development height), Vancouver Island Health Authority (required permits, onsite sewerage disposal and regulations), Ministry of Transportation (interests were unaffected by bylaws), Cowichan Tribes (no comment), William Shulba, Islands Trust Senior Freshwater Specialist (consider consultant recommendations, best water management practices, backup water storage);
- Bylaw No. 308 does not require referrals; and
- 60 public submissions received at that time.

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Rogers asked if there were any submissions.

Kristina Baerg noted her support for the affordable housing development. As a community member living on disability, CPP and a modest employee pension, she has struggled to find stable, safe, and affordable housing on Gabriola.

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Carol Hemrich, a resident of Gabriola for ten years, supported the application by Gabriola Housing Society (GHS.) She noted that the Paisley Place properties are currently zoned institutional and lack the environmental protection of the Environment Protection DPA. When the properties were for sale by Emcon Services, she indicated that was the opportunity for the community to purchase the land for preservation, which it did not. She noted the great community need for affordable rental housing.

Phyllis Reeve, a resident of Gabriola since 1987 indicated her support for the housing project and proposed bylaw amendments. Affordable housing is central to the common good of Gabriola.

Angela Pounds, Social Worker and Mental Health Clinician supported the application, as it is a simple way to support community members. She noted that there is currently no purpose built affordable housing on Gabriola and there is an established need for safe, affordable housing. Hoped that proposal moves forward, there is need in the community.

Helen Shilladay, a resident of Gabriola, noted her support for examining bylaw changes on a non-emotional level and was concerned about bylaw changes allowing for future ownership of the units. Interested in affordable rental housing only in perpetuity and additional highly subsidized units. Bylaw changes reference the funder being involved in decision making, is uneasy with leaving future decisions to funders outside of our community, which may have their own agendas.

Bob Andrew, a resident of Gabriola, in general supported the bylaws as written and noted a need for a walking trail to the village core from the development, for rain water collection/cisterns, grey water and/or black water treatment and reuse. He stated concern with the funding driven project timeline as it constrains community input. Interested in using local community builders and architects that design liveable buildings. Concerned with apparent location of septic field, as it seems to be in a low lying swampy area.

Carey Marshall spoke of her concerns around adequate supports and infrastructures on Gabriola for those who need affordable housing and may have extraordinary needs. Her personal experience has been that community programs are overwhelmed or do not have capacity to support these extra needs.

Patrick Colvin, a current renter, shared his story of numerous insecure rentals on Gabriola and supported the need for stable, long term affordable rental housing. He noted the preference for local development funders, forest retention, power outage planning and use of renewable resources.

Don Furnell, a long term neighbouring resident, recommended due diligence and careful foresight and stated that expert's best guesses are not always right about hydrogeology. He noted that there is insufficient water data and unsure what neighbours would do if their well supply levels diminished. Suggested that Trustees approve the development in two phases with enough time between phases to evaluate the development and the local groundwater supply.

John Peirce disclosed that he is the spouse of the President of the GHS but did not speak as a representative. He noted there is inadequate housing for workers on Gabriola and over the

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years, the Chamber of Commerce has worked diligently to improve availability of decent rental housing. He supported the development, it balances housing needs of the community and environmental constraints. If not approved, the social fabric will be forever torn and less diverse as Gabriolans are forced to move off the island. There is a possible walking trail from the development to the new Village Trail and Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT) may get the trail license, this would keep foot traffic off of Lockinvar. He stated that the grey water system cuts water usage by 30% and cistern storage will cut the strain on the well in the summer.

**By general** consent the meeting was recessed at 11:30 am and reconvened at 11:36 am.

Jacinthe Eastick asked the Trustees to consider adding parameters for affordability, such as 30% of income into Bylaw No. 306. Noted the last review of the OCP included parameters for what is considered affordable.

Henry Reeve has lived on Gabriola off and on for 30 years, currently owns a rental property and noted that there are many qualified and responsible persons looking for rentals. Many minimum wage workers have had issues finding rental housing on island. He supported the project and bylaw changes to pave the way for secure rental housing now and into the future. Given that the current zoning is Industrial, Gabriolans are being given an opportunity to say what happens with a development on private land.

Amy Block and Paul Gellman, long term residents and involved with People for a Healthy Community on Gabriola Society (PHC) support the effort of GHS to ensure there is safe and affordable housing on Gabriola. They noted the desperate need for housing for persons at risk. This has been years in the making, credit to GHS, Trustees and Staff for being open to change, let's do it!

Deborah Ferens requested that Trustees consider the income criteria be set in the OCP and LUB, not in the Housing Agreement (HA) and MAH1 zone should only apply to the current application, Bylaw No. 306. She does not support replacing "low income families" with "low to moderate income families", removing maximum family income eligibility criteria, removal of "rent costs must not exceed 30% of family income". Bylaw No. 307 ensures that the multiple family residential uses are clearly intended for duplexes and triplexes and do not allow for other configurations, ensuring that home occupations are intended for this application only, DP-11 updated from "should" to "shall/must" or similar to reinforce obligation rather than recommend, and for the HA to consider legal council's recommendation for Clause "e)" that affordable market units leaves open to all units being affordable market units. Troubling that off island funder may determine key aspects of the development and delay 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of Bylaw No. 308 until legal review and public comment.

Lynn Bowerman has rented for 10 years. An affordable housing development would be huge and take stress off her shoulders. Many single parents have nowhere to go when separating and splitting finances. She supported the application and is grateful that GHS is helping to secure affordable housing.

Graham Bradley, President of the Chamber of Commerce supported the application and noted that local business owners have a chronic issue finding employees who have stable, secure housing on Gabriola. Council has voted overwhelmingly to support this application.

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Yolanda King supported the application for rezoning of Paisley Place to address serious need for secure housing with exception to the amendment of the OCP Bylaw No. 306, which changes to include moderate income families, this will limit the assistance in housing for those in greatest peril. Recommended other options to secure funding in order to provide multiple family housing for seniors, special needs, and low income families only. Consider an eco-village / tiny homes for higher density micro density housing with ecofriendly technology such as solar power, rain water collection and pump and haul services.

Nancy Hetherington-Peirce spoke as a member of the community and noted that the advantages of the Paisley Place development outweigh the disadvantages. Recommended that Trustees pass 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of Bylaw Nos. 306 and 307, so GHS may submit a strong application for government funding to build affordable housing in the next few years.

Andrew Deggan noted that as an island, Gabriola has limitations in ecology, population density, and capacity to sustain it. If we remove 50% of the forest on the Paisley Place lots, the lots are no longer an ecological system. The area where septic is to be located is swampy with poor drainage and he has contamination concerns. Recommended consideration of private land deforestation as a priority and change the residential bylaws. More wells in the area mean drop of well levels for neighbours. Did not support further development.

Helen Shilladay noted concerns that bylaw changes not related to this development only but also for future developments, as well as, a development that may turn into ownership is not rentals in perpetuity. Would like housing for low income, not moderate income families and additional deeper subsidy units.

Jacinte Eastick noted the many illegal dwellings on Gabriola and there is a need for more than 24 affordable housing units. Felt that the Paisley Place property is the wrong place at the wrong time and noted lowering of water table in the summer months and drying up of neighbouring wells. Consider mandatory rainwater collection system not just when development needs/wants it.

Deborah Ferens is interested in creative solutions for affordable housing and concerned about disappearing Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems. Recommended conservation of Lot 4 on Paisley Place to mitigate the loss of forest on the other development lots.

Neil McCreedy noted that the developments in the area have impacted the way of life of neighbours.

Sibyl Frei supported the project and noted that affordable housing is preserving island communities and including low income, moderate income and market housing to afford the development. Septic System will be built according to sewerage regulations, refined as project proceeds, and is a Type 3 Sewerage System that includes disinfection of water before it goes into septic field to ensure water quality for neighbours.

Yolanda King supported eligibility of renters be 18 years and older and long term residents of Gabriola.

Patrick Colvin did not support off island financial interests unless it is government funding.

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Alix Hodson supported maintaining the status quo and supported strengthening language in the bylaws to protect groundwater, forests and ecosystems. Recommended returning to 1974 standards of environmental protection, cease all development and preserve the island into the future.

Ian Scott noted that septic system will not be in high water table area, income cut off depends on family size and many larger families will be considered low income due to family size.

Jacinthe Eastick suggested a phased development to assess development effect on groundwater systems and keep island growth sustainable.

Chair Rogers noted that Trustees received emails during the course of the meeting and Trustees took a moment to read submissions.

Paul and Janet Kuzic supported enabling GHS to move forward with the project; as farmers there is a shortage of housing for farm workers. Local farms need local workers and local workers need local housing.

Patrick Olmstead asked whether anyone has assessed the group of old growth cedars and if First Nations have assessed the site?

Jacinthe Eastick requested limiting applicants to MAH1 zone to non-profit societies only.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Rogers asked three times if there were any further submissions.

Hearing none, Chair Rogers closed the Public Hearing.

**By general consent** the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm.

**I CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A FAIR AND ACCURATE SUMMARY OF THE NATURE OF REPRESENTATIONS RESPECTING THE MEETING HELD:**

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Nadine Mourao, Recorder