

From: Donn K <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 10:03 AM
To: Lee Middleton; klangeris@islandstrust.bc.ca; Paul Brent; Steve Wright; David Critchley; Peter Luckham; Deb Morrison; Benjamin McConchie; Michael Kaile
Cc: Lori Foster
Subject: Governance of the Gulf Islands

Lee Middleton
Chair, of the Trust Council Select Committee Governance and
Management Review
Members of the Trust Council Select Committee Governance
and Management Review
Courtesy Copy Lori Foster

Islands Trust Governance and Management

Introduction:

While not generally known to the residents of the Trust area, Trust Council has simultaneously started a Governance and Management Review (henceforth the Governance Review) using outside consultants alongside the redraft of the Foundational Policy Statement. (Bylaw 183) The Terms of Reference for the Governance Review dated November 8th, 2020 stated it was important “Before any changes are made to the policy statement it is imperative that the Trust’s performance is reviewed to determine if there are ‘other’ improvements that need to be made before the Trust enacts policy based on what was heard during the policy statement review consultation.” (

page 8 of the Terms of Reference) It is now apparent that the public consultation process will proceed far in advance of the results of this Governance Review perhaps throwing into question the usefulness of the expenditure for their consultant's report. I would submit that no further action take place on the policy review until after receipt of this report and a public consultation on the recommendations for reorganization that this report generates.

A Brief Description of the Problems with the Existing Governance Structure

The key questions posed to the Consultants unfortunately ignore the nature of the existing organization. Briefly the Island communities are ruled by a quasi-provincial non resident independent planning bureaucracy nominally overseen by twenty six trustees that form the Trust Council, from the thirteen major Islands. But the thirteen major Islands of the Trust area constitute a region in name only. To suggest a disparate group of local politicians can exercise effective control over a permanent civil service strains credibility.

The Executive Committee of the Trust Council consisting of four trustees not only provides the executive political function of the Trust Council but individuals from the Executive sit as Chairs for all the individual Local Trust Committees. Four individuals then have majority control of four local trusts and one third of the votes of the remaining nine. Any faction gaining control of the Executive Committee leverages its power to direct the activities of the trust during any four year term of office.

Consequently, we have a lack of effective accountability of the local trustees to the residents that elect them, a non resident civil service operating relatively independently of the senior provincial government, free to pursue its own aggrandizement, and a regional executive that exercises legislative authority at the local level. We also have an unusual structure where the small Islands such as South Pender have as much authority in the Trust Council level as Islands with larger populations such as North Pender and Salt Spring.

Fundamentally the structure is designed to ensure a lack of accountability of the trustees to the Island communities they ostensibly serve. What other municipal government lacks effective control of its civil service while paying the wages to those who do not reside in its community?

What Should Be Done?

I would recommend the following changes to the Governance of the Islands Trust:

- a. Eliminating off-Island Trustees as Chairs for the LTC's. The current structure is simply a method of exercising control over the local populations reducing their ability to organize opposition to the policies of the Trust Council. Local Trustees should be serving the interests of the residents, making them accountable to the residents.
- b. To represent the interests of the Province of British Columbia, the Province should appoint voting members to the Trust Council. These could be Civil Servants from the

Ministry of Municipal Affairs or other Ministries or, should the Province believe it to be advantageous, from First Nations.

- c. The planning resources of the Trust should be reduced in size, with more reliance on outside consultants for special projects.
- d. The Staff of the Trust should be moved to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs where they would come under the control of the Minister and the Senior Deputy Ministers.
- e. So long as the Trust operates according to a rule of equality of Islands, regardless of population size, development and growth, it is necessary to enhance the autonomy of the Islands to prevent a dominant faction of Trust Council imposing its agenda on all.
- f. Foundational policy documents of Trust Council, such as Bylaw 183 should be put to a referendum of the entire population of the Islands.

D. Korbin