

**MINUTES OF THE GABRIOLA ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE  
COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
HELD AT 7:30 PM ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2009  
AT THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE  
476 SOUTH ROAD, GABRIOLA ISLAND, BC**

<b><u>PRESENT:</u></b>	Louise Bell	Chair
	Sheila Malcolmson	Local Trustee
	Deborah Ferens	Local Trustee
	Pamela Shaw	Contract Planner
	Patricia Maloney	Island Planner
	Stephen Orgill	Recorder

There were 29 members of the public in attendance.

**1. MEETING OPENING**

Local Trustee Malcolmson started the meeting at 7:30 pm, explaining the purpose of the meeting and introducing Island Planner Maloney and Contract Planner Shaw. She turned the floor over to Contract Planner Shaw.

**2. CLIMATE CHANGE/BILL 27 PROJECT**

Contract Planner Shaw thanked the Local Trust Committee for convening the meeting in order to accomplish the objectives of Bill 27. She said that at the September Trust Council meeting, all Local Trust Committees were asked to amend their work programs to prioritize Bill 27 Official Community Plan amendments and direct staff to report back to each Local Trust Committee with specific options on Official Community Plan climate change policies and targets appropriate for each Local Trust Area. This will require public consultation. She said the work would need to be completed well in advance of the May 31, 2010 provincial deadline, to allow sufficient time to coordinate changes to Official Community Plans and Land Use Bylaws. Contract Planner Shaw said climate change initiatives are the biggest issue facing local planning today, and went on to review the evolution of climate change inclusions to Official Community Plans. She said historically, land use planning did not include environmental issues. Contract Planner Shaw said on Gabriola Island there is already important work being carried out by many local community organizations.

### **3. GABRIOLA ISLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Contract Planner Shaw introduced two grade seven students from the Gabriola Island Elementary School, who had an announcement for those attending the meeting. Krissy Higgen and Finn K-Duff told the audience that a film would be played at the Roxy on Saturday and Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, titled “No Impact Man”. They briefly described the film as a story about a man who attempts to live without making a negative environmental impact. The students explained their school’s initiative to reduce waste by sorting and identifying the contents of all the waste containers within a period of time, and coming to the conclusion that the majority should have been recycled.

### **4. POWERPOINT PRESENTATION**

Contract Planner Shaw again explained the background of Bill 27 that was enacted by the BC government in May 2008. She explained that the bill requires local governments to incorporate measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into their Official Community Plans. She carried on her address using a PowerPoint presentation, outlining the points to be raised for discussion. She asked, “what do we need to do?”, and said that an Official Community Plan must include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases. She explained it is within the authority of the Local Trust Committee to create zoning that establishes density patterns, and from that flows parking requirements and alternative transportation infrastructure.

She said targets for reducing greenhouse gases could be set in various ways. Overarching targets can be expressed as a percentage reduction by a certain year. She referred to an example of Salt Spring Island setting a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2015, without defining how it will be achieved. Specific targets can be expressed by defining goals such as increasing cycling paths by specific measures by a specific date.

The presentation reviewed the topic areas that could be discussed at this meeting, and were summarized on a Fact Sheet for the convenience of those in attendance. Topics included Land Use, Transportation, Building Design, Energy Source and Supply, Food and Agriculture, and Natural Areas and Ecosystems. Contract Planner Shaw asked those in attendance whether it would be more convenient to organize into three smaller discussion groups or remain as a whole. It was decided by those present to continue as one discussion group.

## 5. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

### *Land Use*

The issue of land use density was discussed, and it was suggested that it is easier to service lots in higher density areas. Higher concentration of density also favors affordability, and clustered proximity to amenities and services would cut down transportation requirements. The point of energy consumption of our homes was raised, and the use of transportation to and from our homes being the major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. Larger homes require more energy to construct and maintain. The question of approving secondary accommodation on lots was also discussed as a means of increasing density.

Questions arose as to whether the island is being used productively considering the cost of land. It was suggested that people could be allowed to own, live and farm land cooperatively. The idea of a zero emission cooperative village was discussed further.

A suggestion was made to change the building code to permit the use of compostable toilets. It was felt that the change could make an impact.

A participant cited an inventory of the origins of greenhouse gas emissions. He said information from a previous study indicated that the Gabriola Island top four emissions rank as vehicle exhaust, electricity, ferry diesel fuel, and garbage. He said the idea of setting targets requires a valid baseline measurement.

### *Transportation*

Transportation on the island was discussed as that which is necessary and otherwise optional transportation. Many participants stated that proximity to island amenities determines what is necessary. It was said that the Islands Trust had taken the initiative to request the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to access the roads for suitability to neighbourhood zero emission transportation. The idea of utilizing electric vehicles was suggested to be included as an advocacy statement in the Official Community Plan.

Those who use bicycles favoured cycling lanes at the side of the road. There was further discussion about how the community could be connected with bicycle and walking trails. Examples of certain locations that could be connected were raised. Investment of developing these trails should address the “pinch points” on the roads. It was recommended that a tax levy should stimulate construction of the side-of-road bicycle lane.

Trustee Bell described the Salt Spring Island inclusion of a phantom bus route servicing the island into the Official Community Plan. Eventually, public transportation became a reality primarily following the proposed route.

Car stops and public transit were discussed. It was noted that the prospect of these initiatives falls under the jurisdiction of the Regional District of Nanaimo. A participant suggested a car sharing project that might utilize the BC Ferries parking lot. Another suggestion was made for passenger-only ferries similar to Gambier and Lasqueti Islands. A ride-share program on Hornby and Denman Islands was described. It was suggested to start a website to facilitate car pooling for people travelling in the same direction, mainly to and from the island.

### *Building Design, Siting and Landscaping*

Establishing design guidelines for energy-efficient building design and building siting was discussed. It was suggested that the footprint of a building should be measured from the inside to allow for thicker walls to insulate and encourage more energy-efficient building design. The participant described their cob design home that was under construction, and how recycled materials are used for wall insulation. It was noted that currently the Building Code doesn't offer any incentive to build beyond the Code. There should also be the option to site for passive solar orientation. Creating a "net zero" zoning bylaw was discussed further.

The question of what trees to plant as a replacement arose, and whether islanders should be planting for 25 years into the future or for immediate use. Several tree species were recommended by some participants, and there was a suggestion to ask the organizers of the Garden Tour to demonstrate the best practices.

### *Energy Source and Supply*

A participant said the zoning bylaws should recognize the local production of electricity. When solar technology becomes cheaper, everyone should be encouraged to generate electricity and store it on-site for their own consumption. The discussion continued about energy production. One participant said wind turbines are, in his opinion, not part of a naturalistic landscape and shouldn't be permitted on Gabriola Island. He said they create a commercial/factory landscape. Another participant said wind turbines are 30 times less efficient at producing electricity than hydroelectric dams in terms of their land use.

### *Food and Agriculture*

Community gardens and expanding farm land in the Agricultural Land Reserve were discussed. It was said that growing food locally creates an intense feeling of community at the same time. Trustee Ferens commented on protecting the

Agricultural Land Reserve, and asked what statements should be included in the Official Community Plan to guide the Local Trust Committee on processing related applications. Others expressed interest in locally-produced food, and suggested the Farmers' Market hours and days of operation could be extended to promote distribution of individual garden surpluses. The question was raised of how to encourage food producers such as "Good Earth" on the island.

#### *Natural Areas and Ecosystems*

The issue of saving trees and planting trees from a land planner's point of view was raised and discussed. After a suggestion was made for legislation to ensure protection of natural belts of private property, Trustee Malcolmson explained the Islands Trust Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program ("NAPTEP"), and noted that already one resident had placed a covenant on part of their property under the program.

Other agricultural methods such as an edible forest garden and a no-till method of working the land were discussed as alternative ways to improve productivity.

## **6. MEETING CONCLUSION**

Contract Planner Shaw thanked those present for coming to talk about an issue that is both important and critical to land use planning on Gabriola Island. The meeting concluded at 9:30 pm. Participants continued discussing in smaller groups for several minutes after the conclusion.

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Recorder