

South Pender Local Trust Committee

OCP Review Update

The well-attended July 23 public hearing on revisions to South Pender's Official Community Plan provided members of the community an opportunity to discuss the proposed changes. The topic that sparked the most discussion at the hearing was the proposal to permit long-term rental of cottages (defined as an accessory single family dwelling with a floor area less than 603 square feet, for the purposes of the OCP). Some speakers questioned whether permitting long-term rentals might jeopardize the peace and quiet currently enjoyed by island residents, and whether it might risk increasing the density of the island's population beyond desirable levels. People speaking in favour noted the advantage of encouraging a diverse population and the role of affordable housing in making that possible. A couple of residents who are now property owners recalled that they were first able to move to South Pender through the happy circumstance of finding a relatively inexpensive place to rent. (Almost all other islands in the Trust permit long-term rentals of cottages, though South Pender is one of the few to permit short-term rentals of single-family dwellings.)

Creating and refining an Official Community Plan on a Gulf Island inevitably involves a fine balance reflecting the diverse and sometimes conflicting needs and wants of residents, Islands Trust policies that guide and constrain the activities of Local Trust Committees, and applicable provincial and federal law. In revising the OCP, as in all its other activities, the Local Trust Committee must keep in mind the Islands Trust responsibility, as expressed in the object of the *Islands Trust Act*, to "preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally". Any restriction placed by the Local Trust Committee needs to be clearly justified in terms of protecting community interests as articulated in the object of the Trust.

Most important of all, the LTC must conduct OCP review process transparently, providing ample opportunity for community consideration of and comment on any proposed changes. During the past several months, the LTC has posted each draft of the proposed revisions on the Islands Trust website in addition to inviting comment at its regular public meetings. Following a community information meeting in June and the public hearing in July, the LTC gave second and third reading to the proposed OCP (Bylaw No. 107) and passed a motion to forward it to the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development for approval.

The LTC's next task will be to amend South Pender's Land Use Bylaw (Bylaw No. 92) to implement the general direction provided by the OCP by enacting specific regulations regarding land use. (To view the proposed OCP on the Islands Trust website as well as proposed Land Use Bylaw amendments to implement OCP changes regarding long-term cottage rental and Rural Residential zoning provisions, go to the South Pender section, then click on "Committee Links" and "Planning Bylaws".) A community information meeting and public hearing on proposed changes to the Land Use Bylaw will be held at our regularly scheduled LTC meeting on October 4 (10 am at the firehall community room). If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to provide comments or suggestions regarding the Land Use Bylaw changes, please email your views to your local trustees by September 30.

Highspeed Update

Yes, Shaw highspeed is still coming, though progress towards its delivery has proved a little more glacial than anticipated. The current hold-up is the requirement for clearance by BC Hydro, which provides the poles that support Shaw's fibre-optic strand. Shaw has now been waiting for clearance

for some months, but it seems South Pender isn't high on Hydro's priority list. Once Hydro has given the go-ahead and Shaw has installed the strand, Shaw plans to contact all South Pender residents describing options for service (including internet and TV but not phone). Shaw still plans to have service available this year, but first Hydro has to do its bit.

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Dates to Note:

Sept. 1 -- Office hours for Islands Trust planner Andrea Pickard at the Islands Trust office at the Driftwood Centre. If you would like to arrange an alternative time to meet with Andrea that day, please call her at 250-405-5189.

Sept. 13-15 – Trust Council (comprising all Islands Trust trustees) meets on Salt Spring Island

Oct. 4– Local Trust Committee Meeting, South Pender Firehall Community Room, 10 AM.