

Well, it's a new year and we have big news; at least we think it's big news. It's official, Trust Council is coming to Saturna June 17, 18 & 19. And why is this good? Well for one thing, this brings in off island money and puts it into the pockets of islanders

Trust Council always meets on a Tuesday, usually beginning with lunch, goes all day Wednesday and wraps up around noon on Thursday. There are 26 Trustees and 24 of them will fill rental beds for 2 nights and some for 3 nights (Trustees who have to travel a long ways sometimes have to arrive on Monday in order to be here on time). Trust Council is also accompanied by at least half a dozen staff members who need beds as well. Good news for those of you who are in the rental accommodation business.

And you know what we do most (and best) at Trust Council? We eat! We begin on Tuesday with lunch followed by an afternoon coffee break (and coffee breaks always include goodies) and then dinner. Wednesday we begin (obscenely early if you ask me) with breakfast at 7:30 because our meeting begins at 8:15, then of course we need another coffee break and then lunch, an afternoon coffee break and then dinner...are you getting the picture :)That's three lunches, two dinners, two breakfasts and four coffee breaks and good news (we hope) for our talented Saturna chefs.

And, for those of you interested in, or horrified by, the Trust, this is your chance to see us in action, up close and personal. It's a chance to take part in the delegation portion of the agenda. If you would like to make a presentation, whether to showcase some aspect of local life or to offer your opinions on things the Trust could do better, talk to Paul or myself or check out the Trust website to learn how to get on the agenda. And if we think there is some aspect of Saturna life we want to show off, we just might be contacting you.

And that's about as far as we've gotten with our planning, we did some preliminary scouting for accommodations last year, just to make sure we could find enough beds and then we had to wait until the December Trust Council for the decision to be finalized. Now the work begins, where will people stay, who will cook what...fortunately a lot of this work is done by the amazing Marie Smith, the Trust's executive secretary who has been, among other things, arranging Trust Councils for many years. Of course Paul and I will have lots of information to offer her, but she will be making all the phone calls and deciding who sleeps where – thank goodness!

Keep your eyes on this column and we will keep you informed about what will be on the agenda so you can decide which scintillating session you will attend :)

In the meantime, we'd really like you to come out to our Local Trust Committee meeting on February 13th where we will be looking at **draft** – and please note I said **DRAFT** – bylaws for the new items on our work program with recommended amendments to the Saturna Island Official Community Plan regarding Density Limits and the Community Amenity Density Reserve, Short Term Vacation Rentals and Secondary Suites.

These are the things that are only about Saturna, where we actually have the power to bring about change. Trust Council is mostly about setting the budgets for the whole Trust area and doing advocacy work – like engaging with BC Ferries or tanker traffic or learning new and better ways to keep care of our shoreline. Trust Council can't make new bylaws for Saturna, only we can do that and that's, as Martha says, a good thing. So come out on the 13th at the Community Hall and be part of bringing about change or, be part of stopping that change from happening, that part is up to you – the important thing is that you are part of the process. See you there. Pam :)

Addendum to Island Trust Article

Our other trustee has some late-breaking news from the latest Financial Planning Committee meeting he attended, news that we both are quite pleased with.

After many months of hard work, pushing to keep pencils sharpened and against some stiff opposition, the Trust has the line on its budget and it appears there will be no increase in our Islands Trust property tax bill on Saturna for 2014. Of all Islands Trust areas, only Salt Spring would potentially see a (small) increase, which is specific to dealing with water quality. While the overall Trust budget is expected to go up a little, mainly to fund the 2014 elections, there is surplus available to fund that without an increase in taxes. Hooray!