

**THE HORNBY ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING NOTES ON CLIMATE CHANGE
HELD AT 1:00 PM ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2009
AT THE HORNBY ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL
CENTRAL ROAD, HORNBY ISLAND, BC**

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Louise Bell	Chair
	Fred Hunt	Local Trustee
	Tony Law	Local Trustee
	Pamela Shaw	Meeting Facilitator, Islands Trust Contract Planner
	Barbara Baird	Recorder

There were 18 members of the public in attendance.

Contract Planner Shaw opened the meeting at 1:00 pm and welcomed the public.

The first hour of the meeting was an informal group discussion of ideas and concerns related to climate change, environmental protection and community action. Ideas brought forward during this section of the meeting included the following:

1. A suggestion was made to give consideration to ways to retain trees on private land and find policies or actions that would discourage deforestation on the island. It was pointed out that the Islands Trust has limited authority in this area, although municipal areas are allowed to control the cutting of trees. It was mentioned that government regulations control the cutting of trees fronting the shoreline on private property. It was also mentioned that the recommendation of the Fire Department on the island is that trees and shrubs be cut back from the area around houses to protect from fire, creating a conflict between two useful objectives.
2. It was recommended that the meeting keep a list of ideas that appear to be outside the mandate of the Islands Trust for future consideration. Contract Planner Shaw stated that the Official Community Plan can have policies that recommend actions as well as advocacy statements.
3. It was suggested that tax incentives be created to encourage people to redirect water from roadside ditches to wetland areas to help sustain the island water table.
4. It was suggested that ways be found to encourage newcomers to the island to buy cleared land if they intend to create a hobby farm, rather than buying and clearing forest land. Contract Planner Shaw pointed out that the Agricultural

Land Reserve system encourages the clearing and use of land zoned as Agricultural, even if it has become reforested.

5. It was recommended that community gardens be encouraged, and that a common facility for food storage be created. In relation to the food storage idea, it was mentioned that the Hornby Co-op has excess heating and cooling capacity, and might be willing to support a food storage facility for the community. It was also suggested that each more densely-populated area of the island have its own community garden, to reduce travel and to encourage the use of the garden.

At 2:00 pm, Contract Planner Shaw welcomed additional members of the public to the meeting and gave a short presentation on climate change as it relates to the Islands Trust area. She discussed the growth of interest in protecting the environment and how land use planning can address environmental concerns. She also recommended that the meeting table some subjects such as the merits of Bill 27, the subject of global warming in general, and inventory data for the island, as that has yet to be collected.

Bill 27 requires that the Hornby Island Official Community Plan be amended to include targets, policies and actions to address greenhouse gas emission reduction by next spring. The Islands Trust authority covers the Official Community Plan and addresses the following areas:

- zoning and density
- settlement
- parking
- regular and alternative transportation infrastructure
- screening and landscaping
- siting of buildings
- form and exterior design of buildings
- development permit process
- advocacy with branches of government and other organizations

Trustee Bell (attending from Denman Island) said she was delighted to have Contract Planner Shaw working in the northern Local Trust Areas, and that the Bill 27 program was working very well.

Trustee Hunt stated that Bill 27 has changed our priorities. He recommended that we think globally and act locally, and said that now is the time to take action.

Trustee Law said he was excited about the process with the bottom-up and top-down initiatives beginning to meet. He predicted that the process of dealing with Bill 27 will make islanders stronger advocates for global action.

To facilitate the discussion, Contract Planner Shaw distributed copies of the report “Background Information for Considering Possible Amendments to the Hornby Island Official Community Plan to Address the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions”, prepared by Trustee Law. The key policy and action areas identified in this report were used to frame the discussion, and are the headings listed below.

After a short initial discussion of greenhouse gas reduction targets, it was decided to proceed with the policy areas.

I. LAND USE

Trustee Law pointed out that the community is not starting with a blank slate. Hornby Island does not have much further development potential. Some areas of development potential have become parkland, while some additional community density has been added in the central island area.

Discussion followed in which it was pointed out that the island has considerable rural sprawl, which would be difficult to change as many islanders appreciate their private homes. However, Elder Housing and the proposed affordable housing development are existing models for clustered housing in the island core area.

It was proposed that there be a freeze on current building stock and that no new houses be constructed. An alternative suggestion was made to support building in certain areas such as the island core, and limit it outside that area.

Co-housing was suggested, as it is a more energy-efficient building design. It requires a group of individuals who are willing to develop a property in this manner.

Trustee Law suggested that the definition of Co-op could be expanded to include Co-housing in the Official Community Plan.

The subject of second suites was raised. It was proposed that a second dwelling unit might be allowed on a property, if it were specifically intended to house a senior or assisted-living individual.

It was pointed out that meaningful change may not be popular with all groups on the island, and that this problem would have to be accepted and addressed.

II. TRANSPORTATION

It was suggested that the speed limit on the island be reduced to 50 kilometres per hour. This would allow electric vehicles to legally use the roads with cars,

and make bicycling safer on the island roads. As well, this might reduce gas use on the island, though that was not settled as a fact.

Another suggestion was to make an advocacy request to the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia ("ICBC") to link yearly insurance rates to the mileage actually driven in the previous year, by means of a tamper-proof odometer.

A further advocacy suggestion was for BC Ferries to be more flexible on pricing for smaller cars, and to give a discount to undersized vehicles and/or the number of passengers in a vehicle.

It was pointed out that school buses travel to Courtenay and back every weekday at about half capacity. Could those seats be available to approved islanders?

It was suggested that car stops for people hitchhiking would offer shelter and legitimize hitchhiking on the island.

It was pointed out that the present bicycle trails are not suitable for all people. The roads would be safer if the island speed limit was lowered and bicycle lanes were constructed. In addition, the island could have a once-monthly Bike Only Day, to encourage bicycle use. It was mentioned that present road bicycle lanes near the Co-op are often blocked by parked vehicles and covered with gravel, which is dangerous for cyclists.

An island electric bus service was suggested, preferably with public funding. Limiting the number of ferry trips to the island was suggested, as was a passenger-only ferry to Comox that could also carry freight. A further suggestion was for a passenger ferry during the summer that would carry tourists with their bicycles and/or kayaks from island to island.

A suggestion was made for the Co-op to give credit or recognition to islanders who ride or walk most often to the store. Another suggestion was that someone start a small business doing grocery deliveries as a more efficient way of moving goods around the island. Finally, a suggestion was made to have free bicycles on the island that can be borrowed for use. It was pointed out that such a service used to exist with the free bicycles all painted green. Green bicycles are still to be found here and there in the woods and ditches of the island.

Trustee Law said that policies in the Official Community Plan were an important help in making advocacy statements to other organizations and government.

III. BUILDING DESIGN, SITING AND LANDSCAPING

It was suggested that the amount of site coverage stipulated in building policies should include gardens and lawns, land under human use, and exclude forested land.

Contract Planner Shaw described an Islands Trust program called the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (“NAPTEP”). This program offers a tax reduction to landowners who are willing to covenant parts of their property for its natural preservation.

It was mentioned that septic system regulations are more oriented toward business than toward environmental considerations. The *Waste Water Act* discourages alternative wastewater treatments.

It was suggested that all new buildings install rain catchment systems. The Hornby School was mentioned in particular as a building that should have a catchment system installed.

Rewards or recognition should be given to individuals who conserve forests or make other contributions to the environment, it was suggested.

Trustee Law stated that the Denman Island Conservancy gives recognition in this manner.

It was proposed that multiple kitchens be allowed in one building, to allow extended groups to share one dwelling. If the Official Community Plan had a policy regarding the carbon footprint of a building, this could be used to evaluate the merit of new proposals.

Trustee Law said the current policy in the Official Community Plan says that visitor accommodation units cannot be joined. This could be changed to allow vacation units to be joined, to make them more energy-efficient. As well, current infrastructure and community buildings could be reviewed for efficiency.

IV. ENERGY SOURCE AND SUPPLY

A discussion of wind generators took place and there was agreement that new policies should be added to the Official Community Plan that are supportive of wind generators.

Trustee Law stated that effective wind generators probably would need to be sited on the shore or on parkland. An advocacy policy could be added to the Official Community Plan to support development in such a location. He said that micro hydro was common on Lasqueti Island.

There was agreement that alternative energy technology is improving all the time, and that the prices are coming down for energy infrastructure.

A final point was made that everyone on the island needs to use less energy. The question was put as to how to capture that goal in a policy in the Official Community Plan.

V. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

It was suggested that food and agriculture is probably the number one source of greenhouse gas contribution from Hornby Islanders. Food from off-island is very energy-costly. A reliable local food supply is important to reducing emissions.

It was asked if Hornby could have a Farm Advisory Committee such as the one that Denman Island is setting up.

Trustee Law replied that a Farm Advisory Committee was a step we could take. He said we might also consider adding community gardens and food storage and storage facilities to the list of possible amenities.

It was mentioned that the new provincial rules on abattoirs has put a chill on small farming. Regulations on eggs have also changed, and it is no longer possible to sell local eggs in the Hornby Co-op. It was stated that small farms are the backbone of agriculture, not large farms.

Trustee Law replied that the top suggestion from the Provincial Committee on Climate Change is around changes to rules discouraging small farm production.

VI. NATURAL AREAS AND ECOSYSTEMS

It was pointed out that a lake that used to exist in Strachan Valley has been drained. This lake used to support trout and beavers. It was suggested that this lake was important for the summer supply of groundwater to the Sandpiper subdivision.

It was suggested that rather than trucking water onto the island in the summer as happens now, all new siting and use permits should require water catchment and treatment.

A further suggestion was made regarding the use of swales (earth mounded on the downhill side of a trench and used in permaculture) to enhance groundwater. It appears to be very effective.

Contract Planner Shaw thanked everyone for their participation and called the meeting to a close at 3:50 pm.

Recorder