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To: npltcwebmail@islandstrust.ca

Subject: Ball/Harris thoughts on LUB Review of Residential Floor Area

Dear Trustees Patrick, McConchie and Morrison.

We thank you for taking on this land-use bylaw review which will involve consideration of many difficult issues and many hours of work. As the discussion paper points out, there are so many layers to be peeled off and studied before the final decision can be made.

Legal Non-conforming

One thought off the top involves the term "legal non-conforming." It is really important that property owners understand that this does not make their homes illegal and will NOT make it impossible to get home insurance. The last time this subject came up, a fear campaign was mounted and false information was given out.

The points that Trustee Morrison made about impervious surfaces are important, especially on smaller lots. We cringe every time we see the paving trucks disembark at Otter Bay. Especially in the Buck Lake basin any efforts to keep surfaces pervious and to preserve the tree and plant cover will help prevent erosion by allowing rainwater to soak into the soil, thus slowing the runoff into the lake. The Riparian Area Regulations protect the first 30 metres above the lake edge but more limits on the paving of driveways would help. The horse may already be completely out of the barn on that one.

Smaller homes and affordable housing:

We suppose with this topic we are basically talking about the size of the homes still to be built in Magic Lake Estates. In order to have a healthy community, we need to have young people, many with families, who provide vibrancy and perform important roles such as fire fighting, construction, repair and maintenance, but how can these young people afford to buy or rent here if the only housing stock is larger homes, many of which are made even pricier with their waterfront locations? The mortgage on even a 2000 sq. ft. home is beyond the reach of most young people without considerable financial help from family. We don't know how land-use bylaws can encourage the building of humble-sized homes that will provide future reasonably-priced rentals or purchased homes. Perhaps, for homes 1200 sq. feet or smaller, the various levels of government can join forces and remove building permit fees and other financial or bureaucratic barriers which make it so complicated to build. It would be a lot easier to provide outright small-home grants as rewards for building small and green.

Preserving and Protecting

Further to the comment that Trustee McConchie made about the steps to take before any building or site preparation begins, a biologist friend has always believed that before any changes are made to a property, the owners should be required to have a "walk-about" with a qualified biologist who is familiar with all government regulations that apply to Pender. The biologist would explain the "preserve and protect" mandate, show the landowner what important trees, or habitat are on the property, and then provide guidance about where to site buildings in order to save important natural features. This is easier to do on larger properties, of course. In small lot subdivisions the options are often severely limited by setback requirements, sewer lines, slopes and huge rock formations.

Harmonizing Land-Use Regulations on North and South Pender

We agree with the suggestion that the land-use bylaws of North and South Pender be harmonized whenever possible. When South Pender first considered allowing STVRs, we foresaw the

complications, and even though we were North Pender residents, we attended and spoke up at a meeting on the subject, but the LTC of the day legalized STVRs and the confusion began
Co-Housing Thoughts.

Further to Amanda's comments about co-housing, the first issue is always water, but there are certain spots on North Pender which have extremely prolific wells. Before discussions about co-housing or small home villages begin, water should be proven. Five to ten years ago a small group of women talked about buying a large home and turning it into a co-housing "feminary." Four women would each have a bedroom and some private space but would share the kitchen/dining area, garden, etc. We looked at one large home that would have fit the bill except for the existence of stairs, which brings us to the last point about floor area and lot coverage. Obviously, two storey houses take up less space than bungalows, but for many seniors, stairs provide serious challenges.

Summary Wish List for Floor Area Changes in our Land-Use Bylaw:

So, we think the idea that a maximum floor area be set is a good one.

Requests for variances can be considered on a case by case basis.

After a property walk-about with a qualified local biologist, the property owners would have a discussion with Islands Trust/CRD about what they propose to build before they begin submitting building permits.

At this point, financial help might be offered to those who will be full-time residents, who propose to build small and green-

Good luck! Your efforts and those of the planning staff are appreciated.

Doreen Ball and Chuck Harri

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