

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 1, 2021 3:09 PM
To: Islands2050
Subject: Islands Trust Policy Review 2050

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>>>> I participated in one of the focus groups in the last Official Community Plan review that resulted in our By Law 355. Here are some of my personal views on several of the problems we face now and probably will in the future. What ever your own opinions, please let your thoughts be known to our local governance by the end of this week.

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>>>> I. ENVIRONMENT

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> 1. Prohibit clear cuts

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>>>> As an area uniquely mandated for preservation and protection, we should seek Provincial support to prohibit clear cut logging in the Southern Gulf Islands in the short term. Subsequently, we must urge governments to prohibit clearcuts which have been shown to be significantly helpful in mitigating the damaging effects of climate change.

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>>>> II HOUSING

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>>>> 1. Pro active prohibition of STVR's

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>>>> We need to strengthen pro active enforcement of the By Law prohibiting Short Term Vacation Rentals as they are a major causative factor of our housing crisis. On and off island investors are purchasing one, two, three houses for the sole purpose of year round tourist rentals in residential neighbourhoods. They are highly profitable as even with occupancies of 10, even twenty tourists, the property is taxed as residential which is less than a third of commercially zoned properties pay in property taxes. Further, commercial tourist rates earn more than 3 times what a residential rental would yield. Not all STVR owners would opt to rent to locals but realistically they would then sell to folks who wish to live and work here. It is highly improbable that the houses would remain empty.

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>>>> 2. House size limitations

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>>>> In several of our focus groups, the concept of establishing a maximum house size was brought up. This has been done in other communities to curb the proliferation of mansions which are second, third or fourth vacation houses. Five and six bedroom mansions are very rarely homes for families with 10 children. We currently have "Air B n B's "advertising occupancies of over 20 tourists a night. (some are rented out as Site Venues for large weddings or corporate events with over 200 hundred guests for over \$ 2,000 a night. Professional staffs are brought in as servers, chefs, musicians, photographers, etc.. which raises issues of water, sewage, parking, etc.) Again, proactive enforcement of zoning bylaws is

essential. Mansions inflate property taxes which then have an inflationary ripple effect for homeowners throughout the islands. Non resident ownership erodes authentic community.

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>>>> Tradesmen would continue to be employed: instead of building one 12,000 square foot “vacation home”, they could build four 3,000 square foot houses for families who would live and work here. The biggest opposition years ago was from realtors. Hopefully, all sectors of our community can reevaluate this concept now as it effects all residents. The argument that these mansions provide income for islanders does not hold up when one weighs the value of property managers, security firms, and gardeners against the year round patronage of local retailers, restaurants, hair stylists that full time residents contribute. And, again, realtors would still be selling houses but at relatively more affordable prices.

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>>>> 3. Tourism planning appropriate to the Islands Trust Area

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>>>> Communities throughout the globe are beginning to limit tourism in order to protect the degradation of their natural environment and the quality of life for locals. While tourism can be a welcome contribution to the economy, it needs to be kept in balance with infrastructure capabilities and not negatively impact residents’ enjoyment of their home communities.

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>>>> 4. Diversification of housing

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>>>> Tiny homes can continue to be explored with the Provincial governments Building Code. While they would provide housing for some, they will not address the housing needs of families. We might explore the creation of duplexes and even apartment buildings. It does seem that farms should be able to have accommodations for their workers if that could be done in collaboration with the ALR and with sufficient safeguards to discourage zoning abuses. While we currently allow residential uses in commercial buildings, there are almost none in the Ganges core. Perhaps a property tax incentive could be explored to encourage this type of development.

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> 5. Lobbying Provincial Governments

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> The current Residential Tenancy Act is having an unintentional negative impact on renters. The Trust along with the CRD, and the islands MP

>>>> and MLA must urge all relevant levels of government to amend the Act which is one causative factor in the residential housing crisis. Some owners are opting to rent commercially to tourists for less than 30 days specifically so that they are not subject to the Act. It is imperative that the Residential Tenancy Act restore an equitable balance between the rights of landlords and the rights of tenants.

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>>>> III GROWTH

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>>>> 1. Densification is the proverbial “slippery slope”. Whether additional guest cottages on Salt Spring or lane way houses in Vancouver or subdivisions in Surrey, we see that a possible outcome of densification could be 50 sq ft mini apartments (or even 9 x 12 sleeping cubicles) in Tokyo.

>>>> Growth is not inevitable!. it is a choice. Future Trust Policies must address the optimum population carrying capacity of these fragile Southern Gulf Islands, carefully applying The Precautionary Principle.

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>>>> ps

I have been a permanent resident of Salt Spring Island for almost 50 years.
I learned of this Survey via the Salt Spring Exchange.

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