

From: AC Bloomenthal [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 31, 2021 1:53 PM
To: Islands2050
Subject: Trust Policy Statement
Attachments: Trust Policy.docx; ATT00001.txt

August, 2021

Re: Draft of Amended Islands Trust Policy Statement

At the very top of my wish list for the revised Trust Policy Statement is the inclusion of detailed provisions for the development of affordable and seniors' housing on Pender Island in particular and on other islands in the Trust area, if required. I have been connected to Pender for 45 years and have lived here full-time for the past 16 years. During that time I have become increasingly aware of the acute need for the development of policy in these areas, hopefully not merely focused on creating policy for the sake of creating policy, but designed to result in achieving the goal of creating desperately needed housing in these two areas.

With respect to seniors' housing, I have repeatedly observed my friends and neighbours become unable to continue to live in their homes and keep up with the care and maintenance of their properties as they advance in age. The inevitable result is that they are forced to sell and move away, separating themselves from those they care about and who care about them, because there are no suitable alternatives for them on Pender Island. For those seniors who are fortunate enough to own a house, money is probably not an issue. Suitable housing is the issue. In a nutshell, I would propose that suitably sized rental cottages, perhaps in the range of 800 to 1000 square feet, containing two bedrooms and two bathrooms, with a small, easily cared for garden, on a small lot would be ideal. Perhaps the development of pods of houses, each consisting of a group of 8 or 10 of such cottages would create a physically and socially ideal environment that would allow seniors to continue to enjoy their lives and the amenities that drew them here years earlier. Providing for the needs of this segment of our population in a sensible and compassionate way would enhance the quality of life of all residents by ensuring that the population of seniors, with their wisdom, experience and commitment to Pender Island, is retained.

As for affordable housing, it has been my observation that rentals are by and large unavailable and that where they can be found the rents are far too high for the budgets of many working people. The result appears to be that fewer younger people with energy and talent are able to settle here to raise their families and contribute to our community and economy. Consequently, many businesses are unable to find employees and many homeowners who require younger people or people with the appropriate skills to do work for them are unable to satisfy that need.

I believe that there are numerous parcels of land, relatively flat and easily navigable, adequately supplied with water, accessible to required amenities and possessing other necessary features to make them suitable for development. Perhaps some such parcels might be donated, others might be purchased by appropriate government agencies and where appropriate, some might be subdivided from existing parcels currently within the ALR and conveyed in fee simple or ground

leased. Actively advocating for the necessary financial support from the CRD or BC Housing or other government agencies would be a good start to acquiring the properties needed to proceed.

I suggest that appropriate zoning changes that would accommodate the development of seniors and affordable housing would be the next step toward satisfying the acute need in these areas. Perhaps modest amendments to building code requirements and the development of programs to facilitate prefabricated or other forms of more affordable construction will realistically be necessary in order to convert aspirations into realities. State of the art rain catchment systems would help to alleviate water concerns. I would hope that our trustees would commit to taking responsibility for ensuring that the necessary legislation required to realize these goals can be enacted and that contrary opinions of planners, should they exist, will not be permitted to dilute or obstruct the objective. In making this point I am mindful of a discussion I had with a trustee who advised me that affordable housing was not an option on Pender Island because the planners did not support the idea. Surely it is the job of trustees to determine policy and the job of the planners to take instructions and direct their expertise toward the implementation of trust policy.

Finally, I would like to refer to section 3 of the Islands Trust Act which provides: "The object of the trust is to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally...". It is immediately apparent that the phrase "preserve and protect" is not intended solely to protect "unique amenities and environment" for the singular purpose of protecting them but rather for the purpose of doing so "for the benefit of the residents...". I suggest that failing to satisfy the urgent needs of residents by providing seniors' and affordable housing is as significant a dereliction of the statutory obligation as permitting high-rise office towers to be built. Moreover, it is entirely possible to provide for the needs of seniors and those unable to afford market rents without detracting in any meaningful way from the obligation to preserve and protect the environment.

I sincerely hope that residents will be given the opportunity to express their opinions about this issue and that, if justified by the responses, comprehensive provisions will be included in the re-draft of the Trust Policy Statement designed to facilitate the accomplishment of this very important planning objective.

Respectfully,

Al Bloomenthal

[REDACTED]
Pender Island, B.C.
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