

From: Bob Andrew <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 8:08 PM
To: Derek Kilbourn <derek@soundernews.com>; Susan Yates <syates@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Tobi Elliott <telliott@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Peter Luckham <pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca>; northinfo <northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Open letter to the local Trust Committee

Dear Editor and Trustees,

Re "Islands Trust Staff to develop a Project Charter For the Official Community Plan (OCP)/ and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) review which focuses on housing as a priority" (July Trust report):

"Affordable housing, which is the issue here, has been in the news worldwide for years now. Canadian Federal, Provincial, Municipal and Regional district governments, all of whom have the resources to put towards this concern, have put huge efforts into determining the causes and creating the cures to the problem, with limited success. Locally the Islands Trust put forth an OCP change in 2011, "Multiple Dwelling Affordable Housing" which has done little to solve the problem. The potential Paisley Place development, which is a necessary step in the right direction is, in my view, not really "affordable" and is the sole outcome of that OCP change many years later. There has not been, and it is highly unlikely there ever will be, any private developers take up the task: Secondary suites?- too costly to build to become affordable plus they are just too alluring as STVRs (Short Term Vacation Rentals), not long term rentals. Tiny homes?- great, when the Regional district and the building code make them possible.

The Trust has had two citizens bodies the APC (Advisory Planning Commission) and the HAPC (Housing Advisory Planning Commission) and has hired private consultants to review and give advice on possible cures for the housing problems. Now we are about to enter into a full OCP review, the primary focus of which is on housing, again. Given all the work and input to date I think it is a mistake for the Trust to put more resources into this issue, serious as it is, in which the Trust can have very little influence. Again, if we look at our governance structure affordable housing falls solidly in the realm of the Federal, Provincial, Municipal and Regional Districts. The Islands Trust simply does not have the resources, at any level, to deal with this problem. As an aside, I don't understand why our Regional District has not stepped up the plate on this issue on Gabriola. The Capital Regional District is involved in affordable housing on Salt Spring- in a big way, in collaboration with other governments.

The Trust has every right and duty to be concerned about housing and it should be lobbying and working with all government levels to get on with the job but, in my view, in this OCP review the Trust should be focusing its energy and resources on that which is primary in their mandate- environmental protection. We have an APC and a HAPC but no EAP (Environmental Advisory Panel). We hear it daily, climate change is real. Spend more time on this. Use the tools you have. Take a political risk and get serious about it.

I think proper housing in proper places IS one piece of the puzzle of the problem of the climate crises. You have enough information to recognize this in the OCP and LUB so that when other government levels come through (do I hear COOP housing?) we will be ready. Just get on with it. No more studies. Then get on with your primary concern, protecting the environment.

Bob Andrew,
past Trustee,
past APC member,
member of the Building Committee of Gabriola Housing Society