

**Lori Foster**

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**Subject:** FW: Crystal Mountain review, LTC February 2/2015



**From:** Heather Carmen Martin [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 03, 2015 11:49 AM

**To:** Laura Busheikin; Sandy Pottle; George Harris; Robert Kojima; Helen Foster; Janice Oakley; Kim Ferrus

**Subject:** Crystal Mountain review, LTC February 2/2015

I attended yesterday's LTC meeting on Galiano Island with interest, and while I commend all of you on the harmonious nature of the meeting, I want to address some concerns I had about the Crystal Mountain application and discussion. In particular, I was troubled by what felt to me like an adversarial position on the part of the trust towards the applicant. I am listing my concerns below:

- 1) No-one mentioned that this application has been before the Trust for 10 1/2 years; that after so many discussions, reports, studies, with numerous planners, the file was so thick and convoluted that they were asked to re-apply. There was no sympathy towards the length of time the applicants have had to wait, the frustrations that's caused and the likelihood that some of the decisions they made (going ahead without permits) had something to do with that.
- 2) The planner, the chair and Trustee Pottle kept talking about "the owner"—the fact that it's a non-profit retreat centre run by a board with charitable status should be front and centre, and part of the equation.
- 3) The "36" dwellings are not conventional dwellings, with driveways and all that goes along with most houses, and I would imagine few if any of those 36 are permanent residents. Most are indeed huts in the woods, for the benefit of a rotating series of retreatants. Surely forcing them all to "cluster" on or at the foot of a driveway by the road is unnecessary and defeats the purpose of a retreat centre.
- 4) The most adversarial aspect was the insistence that the non-profit, a Buddhist retreat centre, is clearly not able to hold its own covenant because its actions to date, figuring out ways of continuing to hold retreats during this nightmarish wait, has shown itself to be an outlaw and not capable of managing and caring for its own forest. Surely a low-impact, spiritual retreat centre, designed for silent contemplation by isolated dwellers in the woods, all communing with nature on a daily basis, is a great boon for the forest—another, very commendable way of preserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 5) I was told by a Conservancy board member who has been following all this keenly that the reason the board of Crystal Mountain can't hold their own covenant is because it's managed forest land, and if they're allowed to manage their own forest then that will set a terrible precedent and all hell will break loose in all the forest lots that are still in contention. My answer to that is, surely very few if any of the other lots will be non-profit, Buddhist retreat centres dedicated to peace and a harmonious relationship to the earth. And if so, more power to them!
- 6) If the danger of setting a precedent for all the other unresolved forestry lot cases IS in fact the main reason for not allowing this non-profit, spiritual retreat centre to hold its own covenant, then that is all the more reason to address, deal with and solve all those lingering forest issues. Waiting any longer is punitive to all concerned.

A concerned citizen, Heather C. Martin