

Lori Foster

To: Kim Farris
Subject: RE: Crystal Mountain rezoning application



From: Nancy McPhee [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2015 11:38 AM
To: Laura Busheikin; Sandy Pottle; George Harris; Robert Kojima; Kim Ferrus
Subject: Crystal Mountain rezoning application

I attended the Islands Trust meeting on Galiano Island, Monday Feb 2, 2015 and have comments for consideration by the Local Trust Committee regarding the Crystal Mountain application for rezoning to forest retreat zone

Crystal Mountain: A Society for Eastern and Western Studies is a non-profit society. It is

supported and run by volunteers and has owned property on Galiano since the early 1970's. It was always the wish of the society to provide a forest retreat space for people who desire a quiet place in the splendor of nature to rest, contemplate and meditate. I understand that the rezoning application is asking for just this – not a residential development, not a full time housing situation, just small cabins or 'huts', perhaps self-contained, appropriately sited through the woods to ensure privacy for retreatants and low impact on the land. Any centralized 'services' (kitchen and/or bath house) would lessen further impact on the land.

Retreats

, with spiritual instruction and contemplation, have been held on this land for over 20 years, in rustic conditions mindful of any footprint left on the land. Retreatants and volunteers have greatly contributed to the economy of Galiano through the purchase of groceries and other supplies. Retreatants from all over the world have returned to the island to vacation and some have bought property here.

I read through the OCP particularly the section on Forest land. The Forest Objectives 1 through 5 clearly state the guidelines for land use for land zoned Forest. Given the extensive ecological assessment completed by Keith Erikson for Crystal Mountain

's application

, it appears that these objectives are met in this rezoning application. My understanding is that there is no intention to 'harvest' trees for commercial purposes or 'manage' the forest. Restoration of previously logged land and respect for the multiple ecosystems present in this area is essential to any 'development' as a retreat area. This is evident in the rezoning application as Lot 9 would be left as it is

presently

– a stand of mature second growth cedar adjoining a wetland area, contiguous with the wetland that borders Devina Drive, despite the zoning which allows for a house and a cottage. I understand there is a strong desire of the CM society to restore and preserve land that was previously clear cut.

This is a unique application which steps outside the normal bounds of land use, or rezoning, in a forested area. I suggest it requires some 'out of the box' thinking to support a spiritual retreat centre in the forests of Galiano.

Of particular note for this application is the alignment with OCP Principle i): (in part) "The island provides opportunities for renewal of body, mind and spirit." and principle m): "This Plan supports the passive contemplation, spiritual connection and low impact recreational and educational access to the forest."

This application for rezoning has been active for many years. The resolution of 9 points from Trustee Pottle raises points worthy of consideration though it seems to be in reaction to CRD by-law concerns. It seems onerous to require compliance before the by-laws are drafted, given there are other forest lot rezoning applications which have had similar non-compliance conditions and have been granted rezoning.

I strongly urge the Local Trust Committee to put the 9 points to the side and treat this rezoning application as others have been. Granting rezoning to permit the Crystal Mountain retreat centre will only expedite the resolution of these issues.

I believe Crystal Mountain representatives have made it clearly evident that CM is eager to work with the LTC to resolve this situation quickly.

I hope that you will consider these comments as you proceed. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have and you can reach me via email [REDACTED] or at home [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Nancy McPhee