

May 2/16

I would like to express my support of the Crystal Mountain proposal for a spiritual retreat centre. I understand that the concerns regarding the triggering of the PMFL and the feasibility of the affordable housing donation have been dealt with in the staff report and the present thinking is the possibility to designate the portion of the property which will contain the retreat infrastructure to the Health and Wellness section of the OCP. This is a non profit organization which seeks to provide an opportunity to anyone who wishes, to retreat and reconnect with nature and the world community for the benefit of all.

It seems that this proposal has caused considerable division in the community, because of a concern that there is a need to provide a concrete donation to Galiano Island. In lieu of a donation of land to the community, I think that the conservation covenant, which makes the ecological restoration of the land the responsibility of the Society, is a more reasonable solution to the concern for the welfare of our forests on Galiano. As with the Stupa, I believe that the public will not be restricted from access to these lands for the large percentage of the year, limited, perhaps, at times when retreats are taking place.

My view of Crystal Mountain's intent is that it is similar to that of the Galiano Conservancy Learning Centre. Both organizations seek to re build the link between people and the environment. The Learning Centre employs a more concrete approach, educating in a more formal fashion about our environment and how we can interact with it and protect it for mutual benefit. In my experience, Crystal Mountain also seeks to help participants connect with the greater world through scientific examination and meditation exercises which build compassion for all life. It seems to me that both Crystal Mountain and the Learning Centre are extraordinary organizations, which offer to us and the world beyond, an experience and glimpse of how we might be, how we might build a future for our planet.

I do not think we should fear change but should embrace this application as an opportunity for growth and potential for our Island. Each application is considered on its own merits. Crystal Mountain is not a developer. It is a association of people, many of whom are our neighbours and friends who have worked for the preservation of the island, volunteering their time and effort to make the world a better place. I wish to give them my support.

Elizabeth Latta  
Galiano Island

