



**Regina Robinson**

**From:** Suzanne Fournier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 07, 2016 12:07 AM  
**To:** George Harris; Sandy Pottle; Laura Busheikin; Kim Stockdill  
**Subject:** Crystal Mountain

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To the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee:

Chair Laura Bushiekin  
Trustee Sandy Pottle  
Trustee George Harris

We live in a very quiet, residential-only neighbourhood at the north end of Galiano: By choice we forego the convenience of living closer to events and shops at the south end. Although the north end can be very neighbourly and responsible, above all we respect and value each other's privacy.

Our only multi-person "development" for the past decade or more has been Crystal Mountain, which ran its retreats for a few weeks or months a year and often rented as STVRs several homes in the area to accommodate visitors. We respected their signs not to enter when a retreat was in progress, although their land lies along a ridge and a valley that were long known as hiking, birdwatching and dog walking trails.

They entered their property, sometimes in the summer with a considerable number of vehicles, from Porlier Pass Drive.

Now, we have reason to fear that all could change, very much for the worse in terms of impact on our neighbours' way of life. On one forest lot with no residential capacity, and a small 10-acre residential lot mostly on a steep slope and riparian area, Crystal Mountain wants to build as many as 30 small residences, attempting to house most guests on their own property. Traffic will undoubtedly increase, especially along Devina Drive which is a very low-traffic peaceful level road used by locals, including many disabled or elderly walkers.

The Islands Trust planners did Crystal Mountain no favours by predicting they would need parking for 70 cars, but it's clear there will be a huge increase in traffic, whether it's CM's predicted 20 cars or many more.

It's important to recognize that retreats for meditation or silent contemplation, as well as retreats which favour some degree of rusticity, have become increasingly popular today, and there is ever greater competition for the "retreat dollar."

Crystal Mountain obviously wants to increase and enhance its business, and ironically, it could become a booming success. They claim they are non-profit, but in fact, fees are charged and donations are virtually mandatory. Some local people exchange work for teachings, but many others, as on the Bowen Island Buddhism retreat, come in by small plane or large private boats. Galiano is within a competitive margin not only of Vancouver but also of the US Pacific Northwest.

Many major US and international corporations have introduced meditation, of various kinds, into their daily practice. It began in the California IT community, "but meditation is increasingly the rage on Wall

Street too," said Forbes magazine recently, citing an article in the Wall Street Journal. "Yes, there seems to be a bottom-line benefit to this "shutting up and sitting still" business," was the media conclusion two years ago. Buddhism, it increasingly appears, has become big business.

Unfortunately, that increased business would land right in the middle of a Galiano forest lot, one of the ones that we all fought to preserve, in a residential neighbourhood. Crystal Mountain's 50-acre forest lot has no residential rights without rezoning and no residential rights beyond 1 house to 50 acres without transfer of title according to Local Trust Committee practice. Yet Crystal Mountain proposes to chop its forest lot into three pieces, and put a covenant only--not title transfer--on either side of a fully-developed swathe with 30 small residences, a caretaker's permanent residence, a bathhouse, a dining room, kitchen and workshop.

Nowhere in our Land Use Bylaw does the word "hut" appear. The sample residence we were shown yesterday clearly contains a separate kitchen which we were told would not be used. Who will police that once 30 little homes are in place? Or will people really walk 100 yards at night to an outhouse or the nearest septic facility? And the so-called huts--actually the size of a typical tiny home--are 165 square feet, not just small 10 by 10 outbuildings. The impact of all those tiny homes in a small space, plus all the outbuildings, would be considerable. These are not people coming to visit north ends or even stay at one of the few legal B & Bs. Yet some of them will be on-island for a relatively long time, from four to six months, a greater part of the year than many weekenders. How could that not be called a residence? Yet the planner claims "this application is not deemed by staff to be an increase in residential capacity." Would the planner--or anyone on Galiano--feel differently if they had 30 tiny residences right next door? with people there up to half the year? Of course it's an increase in residential capacity.

The density could make this owner or the next quite prosperous, and the zoning goes with the land. What a prize, to buy the most intense density on the whole island. Crystal Mountain may not want to sell now, but people's plans change.

In many ways, Crystal Mountain is little different than say, Yellow Point on Vancouver Island, which charges considerable fees for rustic cabins, separate showers and a central dining room. The difference is Yellow Point is forced to meet specific health regulations, is zoned commercial and pays commercial taxes!

The impact on a residential neighbourhood will be huge. The Crystal Mountain representatives we know may be mostly local islanders, but they want to invite a significant influx of people to funnel into a tiny area of beautiful trees, steep slopes and marshland. There will be impacts on many concerned nearby neighbours from water use and sewage production, yet Crystal Mountain is still unable to tell us what their plans are for either.

The community benefits, like the Crystal Mountain proposal, are vague and intangible. For whose affordable housing will they fundraise, and how much over what period of time? Anyone could say that. They don't have a properly-zoned location for someone on a low income to live or commute, so where would this alleged money go?

In the informal meetings held so far, Crystal Mountain has emphasized everything is a "work in progress" and they can't provide detailed answers to most questions. Crystal Mountain has not been in compliance for 16 years with local bylaws, our OCP or trust area practices. Why then would the Trust consider accepting what are very intangible community benefits in exchange for a semi-commercial development in our residential area? We ask you to send this proposal back to the

drawing-board and listen to the north end neighbours who will be most heavily impacted by an ill-thought-out development not intended to benefit Galiano.

Thank you for your time,

Suzanne Fournier

