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Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 5:52 PM
To: Jane Wolverton <jwolverton@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Tahirih Rockafella <trockafella@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Dan Rogers <drogers@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Brad Smith <bsmith@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Susan van Asselt comments regarding Crystal Mountain Rezoning application

September 8, 2020

Dear Chair Rogers, Trustees Wolverton and Rockafella, and Planner Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak during today's Town Hall. I am a resident of North Galiano Island, having resided here for 1 year. I moved with my husband from Rossland, BC, where we retired from our jobs as Therapist/College Instructor and High School Teacher. Since 2003, we have spent a lot of time on Galiano Island, attending silent meditation retreats at Crystal Mountain, under the direction of Lama Mark Webber. We have chosen to spend our retirement years studying and practicing Dharma, fostering greater compassion for the world. We support the rezoning application of Crystal Mountain, and wish to see it completed.

My comments today are regarding why silence, privacy/isolation, and access to a spacious/expansive view are important while being in retreat. There is extensive research studying meditation and how it works. What the Buddha discovered 2500 years ago, is now being corroborated by science!

In a nutshell, in life, we have a set of default thoughts, called a "default mode network (Farb, Segal, Mayberg, Bean, McKeon, Fatima & Anderson, 2007)." Often, these default thoughts can cause discomfort.

In order to bypass this default mode network, and to access more immediate, accurate processing of the experience, reducing the sense of suffering, we need to calm our central nervous system, and become more aware of our body sensations. We do this by becoming silent, having little or no interaction with people, and having access to wide open spaces. When

these 3 conditions are present and our central nervous system is calmed and slowed down, we can enter into something called “flow”. Wlodkowski & Ginsberg (2017) state that when *flow*, or “total absorption” and complete “merging with the activity and the environment” happens, there is “subjective significance” regarding the information and “vital engagement” with it, enhancing the transfer to long-term memory. Therefore, being in long-term retreats, in a rustic setting with little to no distraction, combined with silence, privacy/isolation and an expansive/spacious view supports changes in habit/thinking patterns, paving the way for a more compassionate view of life to emerge.

Thank you for your attention to the well-being of those living on Galiano Island.

Best wishes, Susan van Asselt

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