

November 3, 2021

Attention:

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Dear Trustees and Planner Smith:

Re: Crystal Mountain Zoning Application

As owners of property on [REDACTED], we wish to express our **opposition** to the Crystal Mountain Society (CMS) rezoning proposal. We have a number of concerns and questions (Q1-10) pertaining to the application:

1. Rezoning of forestry land

We are very concerned that **rezoning of forestry land will set a precedent** that may trigger more applications on other forestry-zoned lots. It seems that the CMS application is an attempt to make the current non-compliant land use into a legal one. We understand that CMS bought the forestry-zoned lot in 1999 and has been trying to change the zoning since 2004.

Q1. If the CMS land is rezoned, what guarantees will there be to ensure compliance of the new bylaw, given the previous history of non-compliance?

Q2. If the CMS land is removed from the forestry designation, would it make it easier for the land to be rezoned again for further development in the future?

2. Ambiguous Designation of Crystal Mountain

We do not agree with the current designation of the Crystal Mountain Society's operation as a community facility. It is not a community centre, health clinic, church or publicly funded school. It is a separate entity where money is exchanged for a service and provided for people who are generally from outside the local community. We suggest that the CMS operation seems more related to a commercial or privately-funded enterprise, particularly as there is **no clear benefit** to the local community.

Q3. Without the community facility designation, does this zoning proposal become increasingly moot?

3. Density, Community Resources, Traffic

We understand that the plan has been changed from allowing 30 people at a retreat to 22. This still sounds like a large group of people. A typical single family home in a North Galiano neighbourhood might have on average 1 to 4 people living in it. A "family of 22" will have a far greater impact on the environment and community services. This type of **density** is not consistent with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Q4. Is consideration being given to the fact that the large number of people visiting the CMS property will require more **community resources** and services; i.e., wear and tear on Devina Drive, which already has maintenance issues due to its adjacency to a large marsh?

Q5. Whose taxes will cover this additional use of resources?

Q6. Will CMS contribute to the tax base?

Q7. Will any consideration be given to the effect of **increased traffic flow** on Devina Drive beside a unique wetland area? The greater use of Devina Drive to access the CMS facility could have a deleterious effect on this special **wildlife sanctuary**, home to migrating and breeding birds. It is also a quiet space enjoyed by many islanders for walks, bike rides and birdwatching.

4. Protection of Water Resources

Water resources need to be protected as they are already impacted by our dry island climate, an increase in summer drought and higher temperatures as well as an increase in homes being built at the north end. We do not yet know how our water supply will be affected by climate change over the next 50 years. A large operation like Crystal Mountain could have a negative impact on **our very precious and dwindling water resources**. The CMS design plans include flush toilets and showers for 22 guests. This calls for a constant and heavy demand on scarce water resources especially by out-of-town guests used to more generous city water availability.

We believe that more rigorous study on current available water resources is needed before any decision can be made on the CMS application. We understand that some well monitoring data was collected this fall. Firstly, unless this monitoring includes year-round data including the busy summer and dry season, we fail to see its validity. Secondly, no wells have been monitored on lower level properties. We do not know what the long-term effect of additional water usage on the ridge will be nor how climate change will affect the island's aquifers. **Climate change requires careful planning for the future needs of current residents and landowners.**

Q8. Is the applicant (CMS) required to submit a **climate change impact assessment** for this zoning change proposal?

Q9. Will the applicant be required to provide **further water monitoring data** including:

- data for high-use dry season periods?
- data on wells on lower level properties?

5. Environmental Impact

The CMS proposal will result in **forest fragmentation** and removal of parts of the forested areas. The building structures are spread out instead of being gathered in one place. This would seem to increase the footprint and have a greater environmental impact.

Q10. Does this proposal meet the intent of the current Galiano OCP as well as principles of the Islands Trust Policy Statement regarding forest fragmentation?

In Conclusion

Due to the above stated concerns, we are **not** in support of the Crystal Mountain Society application for rezoning. Please uphold the current bylaws which fit into the original Islands Trust vision and are there to protect our beautiful island.

Yours sincerely,

Lori Austin
Vic Austin
James McKeown
Ivy Mckeown

