

Petition to the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee Regarding Crystal Mountain Society Development Proposal

Submitted to the Galiano LTC on November 8, 2021 (174 Signatures)
(addresses, email and signatures redacted for posting)

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The preceding petition has been signed by 174 Galiano Island residents and landowners between October 19 and November 7, 2021

All signatories have read and discussed the attached Fact Sheet and have been provided access to five briefs dealing with critical topics concerning the Crystal Mountain Society's Development Plan near Spotlight Cove on Galiano Island, specifically with:

Brief 1: Procedural problems and errors

Brief 2: Duplicate Infrastructure on Upper ridge

Brief 3: Critical issues regarding water

Brief 4: Violation of Trust Policies on Forest Fragmentation and Clustered Development

Brief 5: Lack of Meaningful Indigenous Consultation

Petition to the Galiano Islands Local Trust Committee Regarding Crystal Mountain Society Development Proposal

We, the undersigned, request the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee reject the Crystal Mountain Development Proposal, because it is not in compliance with Islands Trust Directives and Galiano Official Community Plan, Policies and By-Laws.

We are particularly concerned that the Crystal Mountain Society Development Proposal is not compliant with policies and directives for water use in a critically vulnerable watershed, forest fragmentation, community facilities, commercial visitor retreats, consolidation of infrastructure, Indigenous reconciliation, and climate change.

This proposed development would be precedent setting and impact the whole of Galiano Island.

This petition was prepared by Galiano residents and landowners who are concerned about the Crystal Mountain application: Sheila Anderson, Serena Coutts, Jenna Falk, Akasha Forest, Suzanne Fournier, Dan Gaucher, Bob Grist, Diana Lilly, Brad Lockett, Pat Mayhill, Ian Mayhill, Tom Mommsen, Art Moses, Sandy Pottle, John Ronsley, Risa Smith

Petition against the Crystal Mountain Society rezoning proposal

Fact sheet

The proposed rezoning for Crystal Mountain Society's (CMS) scattered retreat complex at the North End would set many dangerous precedents for development on forest land throughout Galiano.

What the rezoning would do

The proposal would rezone land from F-1 (forestry only, no enclosed buildings) to a zone that allowed 17 sleeping cabins, 5 tent platforms and separate buildings for kitchens, bathhouses/laundry, storage, meditation hall, parking spaces and a caretaker residence, spread throughout the site. The goal is for a facility that would operate year-round.

Forest fragmentation & duplication of infrastructure

In exchange for this level of density and intensity of use on 25 percent of their land, CMS is proposing to transfer the other 75 percent to the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC). However, this exchange is badly compromised by a second swath of land CMS insists it must develop cutting through the land to be transferred to the ITC. As a result, the development would create two separate retreat areas, with duplicate infrastructure, with no possibility of moving from one area to the other, except by nearby public roads and an easement. The plan would badly fragment the forest and forest ecosystem.

Contrary to Galiano's Official Community Plan (OCP)

This disjointed development is completely outside what the community contemplated when we developed Galiano's OCP. Forest fragmentation is also explicitly prohibited by the OCP and by directives in the Islands Trust Policy Statement. Neither does the OCP envisage converting forest land into accommodation for visitors. The OCP requires residential development on forest land to be clustered: it does not allow the extensive sprawl described in the proposal. The proposed extensive use of fossil fuels is in contravention to the Climate Change Mandates of Islands Trust Policy Statement.

Putting groundwater at risk

The proposed rezoning could also jeopardize groundwater resources. The Islands Trust Freshwater Specialist calls the area "highly vulnerable", and "an area in need of critical attention". However, CMS water testing has been inadequate, the amount of water required to run a year-round retreat has been seriously underestimated, and no testing has been done on neighbouring wells.

Indigenous consultation inadequate

Consultation with indigenous people went no further than a routine 30-day opportunity to comment sent to area First Nations. However, significant indigenous interests are at stake: the proposed development is adjacent to Crown Land District Lot 87 which may be the basis of a treaty settlement. This calls for meaningful face-to-face discussions to discuss indigenous interests.

Improper zoning designation

Even though this proposal is clearly designed to accommodate visitors who will pay fees for their stay, Trust staff are not calling it visitor accommodation and fail to place it under commercial zoning like all other facilities for visitor accommodation on Galiano. Instead they are placing it under a section designed for uses with community benefits like seniors residential, community housing, and emergency health services.

Please sign the petition asking the Galiano Local Trust Committee to proceed no further with this plan.

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