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**Sent:** Sunday, March 27, 2022 9:44 PM

**To:** Dan Rogers <[drogers@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:drogers@islandstrust.bc.ca)>; Jane Wolverton <[jwolverton@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:jwolverton@islandstrust.bc.ca)>; Tahirih Rockafella <[trockafella@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:trockafella@islandstrust.bc.ca)>

**Cc:** Brad Smith <[bsmith@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:bsmith@islandstrust.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Crystal Mountain application

Dear Trustees and Mr. Smith,

I would like to set the record straight and respond to an email addressed to Mr. Smith dated November 21st, 2021 from the Crystal Mountain Rezone Committee. The email attempts to refute the validity of a petition signed by 174 Galiano residents and landowners opposing the Crystal Mountain Society's application to rezone its forestry lot.

Please see the attached document.

I also request that this statement be included as a correspondence on the Islands Trust Web Site.

Yours sincerely,

J. Ronsley

[REDACTED]  
Galiano

Dear Trustees,

I am writing to address concerns expressed to you earlier by the Crystal Mountain Rezoning Committee (CMRC) in an email written to the planner, Mr. Brad Smith dated November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The subject of the CMRC email is "Response to Petition Opposing CMS Rezoning." This appears to be the Crystal Mountain Society's rebuttal to a petition that was signed by 174 Galiano Island residents and landowners between October 19<sup>th</sup> and November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The petition opposes the Society's application to rezone its forestry lot.

Please be advised that I was unaware of the CMRC email to Mr. Smith at the time of my previous communications to you.

In the email to Mr. Smith, the CMRC picks out phrases from the Fact Sheet that was attached to the petition and refutes their validity. It does not address the fundamental objections against the proposal that the Fact Sheet and Petition bring to light.

One phrase from the Fact Sheet that the CMRC takes issue with is: “What the rezoning would do”. The CMRC states that this statement is misleading because it does not mention inclusion of the 10-acre residentially zoned property that “forms part of the equation” and “makes the CMS proposal unique.” Although the CMRC is technically correct, it misses the key point. The key point is that the density of development that is being proposed for the combined properties far exceeds what would be expected from two single residential developments, one on each property.

A second phrase from the Fact Sheet that the CMRC takes issue with is: “Forest Fragmentation and duplication of infrastructure.” In point of fact, the CMRC is simply wrong on this one. The proposal does imply forest fragmentation of the F1 lot and with respect to infrastructure development, at least two wells but probably more will be required plus rain water storage, new road access, parking for vehicles numbering in the dozens and a requirement for waste water management to service thirty-five retreat goers and other attendees or more simultaneously. In short, the CMRC sidesteps the potential negative impact of the proposal’s high density development zone in direct proximity to the area designated “Nature Protection.” The CMRC’s statement that the Crystal Mountain proposal does “an exceptional job of protecting 90% of the land” relies on the assumption that there is no impact from the development zone but this is unlikely to be the case.

The CMRC claims that the statement “Contrary to Galiano’s Official Community Plan (OCP)” from the Fact Sheet is untruthful. I disagree. The Crystal Mountain Society’s proposal runs counter to the Galiano OCP by its claim that it is a Community Facility which it is not, and because as a visitor accommodation facility it relies extensively on long distance air travel which is in contrast to the OCP’s emphasis on respect for the climate.

The Galiano OCP does not contemplate the use of forestry zoned land for visitor accommodation at all and it explicitly rejects densification of existing forest zoned lots as contrary to its objectives. Where accessory dwellings are considered, a minimum of fifty acres per property is required and each property can have one residential dwelling and one accessory building only. Adding the residentially zoned property “to the equation” is the CMRC’s attempt to get around the problem they have with the OCP not supporting visitor accommodation for its Forestry land. The Petition takes it a step further and suggests that the community believes that the Crystal Mountain Proposal is a bad deal, not worth the compromise to the OCP’s guidelines and principles as set out in the Forestry section.

The Forest Policies section of the OCP also emphasizes clustered development and avoidance of forest fragmentation.

Still on the subject of the Crystal Mountain Land proposal being out of line with the Galiano OCP, I am in receipt of an email from Ms Sheila Anderson in which she notes that the proposal does not comply with the OCP’s Transportation Object 4. Transportation Objective 4 is “to support the design of quiet safe neighbourhoods by encouraging slower vehicle speeds and by managing land use to limit traffic generation through such neighbourhoods.” We do not need to wait for the Crystal Mountain proposal

to be approved to see whether this will be a problem. It already is whenever there is a mass exodus to catch the ferry at the end of their retreats.

Overall, the CMRC lists provisions of the OCP that they believe are consistent with the Crystal Mountain Proposal but they are silent on the points of inconsistency. The mere fact that the LTC finds it necessary to amend the OCP to accommodate Crystal Mountain suggests that there are inconsistencies arising at the outset. The OCP itself is a compromise document that reflects a range of community interests that may or may not be in competition with one another. The notion that Crystal Mountain can unilaterally shift the balance that has been achieved simply to serve its own proposal is unconscionable.

The CMRC claims that the Crystal Mountain Proposal is a “climate win” on Galiano but it fails to mention the proposal’s extensive on site reliance on fossil fuels for heating, cooking, etc... and air travel as a key component of the society’s business model. Here again, the CMRC is selective as to what it chooses to emphasize while neglecting the full impact of the Crystal Mountain proposal.

The CMRC states that there is no risk to groundwater at all from the Crystal Mountain Proposal. It would like us to believe that the November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 report by Hy-Geo Consulting is sufficient information. The LTC does not concur and has requested more up to date information. There are a number of unanswered questions about water and reference is made to a letter to the LTC dated March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 from Art Moses and Tom Mommsen. To summarize, the risk to the aquifer which has already been designated as “vulnerable” from Crystal Mountain’s high density development proposal is unknown at best. On this subject again, the CMRC picks and chooses its “facts” to promote its view but without demonstrating true depth of knowledge of this complex subject with serious implications for all of Galiano.

The CMRC claims that concerns that the Crystal Mountain Society is a form of “wellness tourism” and “commercial” in nature are “misleading” and have been “discredited”. This is not the case. The CMRC states that CMS is a non-profit charity so it should not be viewed as “commercial.” It would have us believe that because Crystal Mountain is a “non-profit charity” it must have “no commercial purpose”. Yet it continues to have many features in common with commercial enterprises. It serves paying “retreat goers”. It has a pecuniary interest in multiple properties on the north end of Galiano. It generates revenue by selling “goods and services.” It pays out almost all of its generated revenue to “administration and management.” To whom does it pay?

The CMRC then takes its claim that Crystal Mountain “does not belong in the commercial accommodation category” a step further by comparing it to the Millard Learning Centre and St. Margaret’s Church. The CMRC does not mention a number of key differences. The Millard Learning Centre was never a Forest Zoned Lot. It was residentially zoned for thirteen houses and twelve cottages with all of the services required, then downzoned to 188 acres with 2 kilometres of undeveloped waterfront for use by schools and the local community to teach conservation and restoration of land. St Margaret’s church was also never a forest zoned property. The land for the church was a donation from the Robson family. It is a community facility freely open to the public, unlike Crystal Mountain. The

CMRC would have us believe that the Crystal Mountain Proposal is not really precedent-setting for Galiano. The opposite is true. If approved, the proposal will become a model for applications to rezone other forest properties on the island.

Most significantly, the CMRC appears intent on imposing its values on the whole of the Galiano community through its assertion that the CMS mandate to “facilitate guided meditation” is a “community service.” I do not know and nor do the members of the CMRC, if the residents and landowners of Galiano agree. The petition suggests otherwise. It would be an interesting question to put to the community at large but this has not to my knowledge ever been done and widespread support for the Crystal Mountain mandate on Galiano has not been demonstrated. It is a major omission for any community facility proposal.

In conclusion, the CMRC submission suggests that statements from the Fact Sheet which do not concur with an idealized view of the Crystal Mountain proposal are misleading or false. However, it does not address the fundamental problems that the Fact Sheet identifies. These problems remain the use of forestry zoned land for high human density activity, implications for groundwater and waste management, use of the property for visitor accommodation as opposed to a Community Facility under the OCP, noncompliance with OCP Forest land policies, and the ecological impact of forest fragmentation and new infrastructure. The CMRC does not want us to recognize that there are serious precedents that the Crystal Mountain proposal would set if approved. The petition stands on its merits and the CMRC has done little or nothing to show otherwise. Rather than being misled by the petition Fact Sheet as the CMRC would have us believe, the Galiano community has demonstrated a clear understanding of the Crystal Mountain land use proposal and rejects it.

Thank-you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

J. Ronsley

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Galiano