



From: Henry Touwslager [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 5, 2024 5:57 PM
To: Alex Allen <aallen@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Grant Scott <gscott@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Timothy Peterson <tpeterson@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Sonja Zupanec <szupanec@islandstrust.bc.ca>; northinfo <northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Daniel Arbour <reachme@danielarbour.ca>
Subject: Re: Support for Vacation Rental Licensing & Concerns about Principal Residence Requirement

Dear Trustee Alex Allen, Trustee Grant Scott, and Hornby Island Local Trust Committee Chair Timothy Peterson:

I am writing with all due respect as I appreciate your effort as Island Trustees. I also recognize the difficulties and awkwardness that must come with your role.

That said, I would like to express my surprise and deep concern about a recent closed meeting held following the public Islands Trust meeting. It has been brought to my attention that discussions continued behind closed doors after the opportunity for public participation at the open meeting had concluded and a particular direction was taken with respect to Short Term Vacation Rentals.

This practice disrespects the time and energy invested by myself and many other citizens who prepared for, attended, and/or viewed the public meeting. We participate in good faith, expecting the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process and observing how our input is considered. Holding a closed meeting immediately following a public forum undermines this core principle of transparency.

Furthermore, convening a closed meeting after a public session raises questions about potential bias. The lack of public attendance and input suggests a desire to provide special consideration for certain parties or groups, and such an action does not inspire confidence in the professional approach of the trustees.

I urge you to clarify the following:

- The specific reasons justifying the closed meeting after the public session.
- The legal basis for holding this closed meeting.
- The topics discussed and any decisions made during the closed session.
- A list of those who attended the meeting and method of meeting (Zoom, phone, in person)

Transparency and open communication are essential for building trust with the public. Moving forward, I strongly recommend adhering to a process where all discussions and decisions are conducted openly, allowing for full public participation.

I would like to add that Zoom video participation is also highly desired at all the public meetings and ask that you consider such.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

- Henry Touwslager

cc: Area A Director Daniel Arbour and Islands Trust Staff

On Tue, Mar 19, 2024 at 9:36 PM Henry Touwslager [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Trustee Alex Allen, Trustee Grant Scott, Hornby Island Local Trust Committee Chair Timothy Peterson, Area A Director Daniel Arbour, and Islands Trust Staff:

I am writing as a concerned Hornby Island part-time resident, homeowner, and vacation rental operator to express my views on the proposed changes to the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) regarding vacation rentals.

I am a member of the Hornby Island Short-Term Rental Association (HISTRA) and support their initiatives and preferences.

I support the establishment of the licensing program for vacation rentals on Hornby Island. I believe licensing provides the most effective framework for ensuring responsible management, minimizing negative impacts, and protecting the unique character of our community. I understand the Comox Valley Regional District is taking proactive steps to develop a licensing program. Hopefully, this program can be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

I am opposed to the inclusion of a principal residence requirement for vacation rentals. This requirement would unfairly penalize many longstanding homeowners and families who deeply value their connection to Hornby Island. It would disrupt well-run, bylaw-

compliant vacation rentals that contribute to our local economy while causing undue hardship for owners. Vacation home owners contribute significantly and positively to the island and should have the same rights.

My short-term recommendations (and preferences) are below:

1. Define "Short Term Vacation Rental" as rentals of 30 days or less. This clarifies the situation for existing rental properties and protects other seasonal housing needs.
2. Outline clear criteria for which vacation rentals could continue to operate under a future licensing program. This should include factors like bylaw compliance, operational history, and property suitability.
3. Establish a registry for currently operating, bylaw-compliant vacation rentals. This registry will provide a baseline for transitioning to a formal licensing system.
4. Enable vacation rentals in the registry to continue operation until a full licensing program is implemented. This maintains the status quo for responsibly operated vacation rentals while respecting the development of the licensing process

In the long term, my recommendations (and preferences) are:

1. Establish and maintain a registry as noted above.
2. Retain the five-month rental season. Not only does this help vacation homeowners, but it also helps local businesses. It gives visitors a chance to vacation on their favorite island at a lower cost and with fewer crowds.

I'd like for you to consider these carefully and prioritize the development of a licensing program that benefits our community as a whole.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Henry Touwslager



--

- Henry Touwslager