



**North Pender Island Advisory Planning Commission
MINUTES**

Date: November 1, 2024
Location: Fireside Room, St. Peter’s Church

Members Present: Peter Pare, Chair
Mary Beth Rondeau, Vice-Chair
Gregory Nicholls, Member
Julia Nicholls, Member
Lisa Baile, Member

Staff Present: Brad Smith, Island Planner (electronic)
Carly Bilney, APC Secretary (electronic)
Guest: Patrica Callender, St Peter’s Anglican Church

There was 1 member of the public present.

1. Call to Order

Chair Pare called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

The following amendments to the agenda were proposed:

- Add Item 4 Patricia Callendar – Anglican Church
- Add Item 6.4 Greg Barbour’s Expression of Interest

By general consent, the agenda was approved as presented.

3. North Pender October 18, 2024 APC Minutes (for Adoption)

By general consent, the North Pender Advisory Planning Commission Minutes of October 18, 2024 were adopted.

4. Patricia Callendar – Anglican Church

Patricia Callendar, representing the Anglican Church on North Pender Island and also a board member of the Pender Island Housing Society, provided a brief background about Plum Tree Court and made the following comments:

- Units at Plum Tree Court must be offered at affordable rates, but they are no longer heavily subsidized
- There is desire to expand Plum Tree Court, but two applications to BC Housing have been denied
- Regulations are approved for six additional units, but money is needed to build them
- In response to a question about whether there is sufficient water for the additional units, Patricia was unable to definitively confirm

- Planner Smith agreed to follow up with Rodney Kirkwood, President of Pender Island Housing Society

Patricia provided the following comments about the Anglican Church property and its potential to create housing:

- Around 2018, the Parish, which is part of the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia based in Victoria, began to discuss adding affordable housing cottages to the 10-acre church property
- The Parish received funding to hire M'akola Housing Society to help and got close to submitting an application to BC Housing based on the Diocese leasing part of the land for an unspecified number of units (multi-units)
- The plan did not get as far as land rezoning by Trustees at the time; the Diocese backed out
- Community members had expressed concerns over density at the time
- The property has an extremely good water supply
- Public opinion has since changed because the need for housing is more acute
- There is potential at the Diocese head office to rekindle interest in the opportunity

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- The church property is a viable development site for housing
- There may be benefit to having the Parish parcel pre-zoned to allow for potential additional housing units, though proof of water will be key
- The Advisory Planning Commission could recommend that the Local Trust Committee consider zoning this property to allow housing
- Plum Tree Court has considered the church property for housing
- The Advisory Planning Commission is unanimous in strongly supporting affordable housing options on the island

Paul Brent and Justine Starke joined the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

5. Presentation by Capital Regional District (Justine Starke)

Justine Starke, manager of Southern Gulf Islands Service Delivery at the Capital Regional District (CRD), gave a presentation on the CRD's Rural Housing Program pilot project and provided the following comments:

- Senior government funding for purpose built housing often has criteria that cannot be met by the Gulf Islands
- The housing crisis is causing our island communities to struggle
- We want to encourage the existing settlement pattern without changing the way the islands look and feel
- The CRD recently approved its 2025 budget that includes \$1 million for the Rural Housing Program
- Through partnership with the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership, we aim to help property owners with the cost of adding a secondary suite
- We are looking to piggy back on the province's Secondary Suite Incentive Program with a fund that will be available to homeowners in 2025 and can be stacked with provincial funds (homeowners could receive up to \$80,000 as a forgivable loan to build a secondary unit)
- The aim is to enable islanders to provide housing for islanders
- Another idea is to provide pre-development grants to allow housing societies and others to do the work of developing concrete affordable housing plans and support

- Land use bylaws are very important and Local Trust Committees can enable accessory dwelling units
- Local Trust Committees across the Southern Gulf Islands should set a standardized floor area for cottages and secondary suites that is big enough for two bedrooms and is the same across the region; this would help companies create standardized products like prefab and modular housing for the islands
- There is need for a whole government approach
- Home owners are encouraged to fill out the housing survey available online: <https://getinvolved.crd.bc.ca/crd-rural-housing-program>; another survey will follow for renters

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- The Rural Housing Program provides grants structured as forgivable loans; the CRD is in the middle of designing the criteria and the survey will help determine that criteria
- It was suggested that the criteria for a forgivable loan should not include income or land value limits
- The CRD needs senior government partnerships as it only has enough funds for 12 incentives across the five islands
- The \$1 million in funding for the Rural Housing Program is split – half for incentives for accessory units and half for applications by non-profit multi-unit affordable housing units
- The Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnership only markets the islands for off-season tourism; their message in the summer focuses on sustainable tourism
- BC Housing is too complicated
- Any proponent of affordable housing should hire a professional planner to help guide them through the process
- Plum Tree Court exemplifies why we need a Rural Housing Program

Paul Brent, Southern Gulf Islands CRD Director, reported that the CRD recently passed a motion to lobby the Province to have a housing stream. He commented that, in dealing with the Province, everything with respect to housing tends to be a one size fits all, which creates massive issues and rarely leads to funding for the islands.

Justine Starke and Paul Brent left the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

6. Discussion of Referral NP-2024-36 – Review of draft recommendations document

Chair Pare explained that the Commission has prepared categories of recommendations in draft form and suggested each member work on specific areas to hone the recommendations, as follows:

- Chair Pare to research the role of Island Health in influencing housing including self composting toilets
- Lisa to research tiny homes and related bylaws including the Islands Trust’s Regional Planning Committee’s paper on tiny homes
- Mary Beth to research subsidized programs for secondary suites and cottages, and work on recommendations specific to the potential role of Magic Lake Estates in addressing housing needs
- Julia and Gregory to continue research on multi-unit housing like Plum Tree Court and the Church and impediments they face

Discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- Secondary suites or accessory dwelling units are needed to deliver the housing we need, but there has been minimal uptake and we should figure out why
- We should focus on examples of people who have offered to build housing units (e.g. Greg Barbour and the Church) as case studies and outline a model for delivery and identify barriers to building
- We should examine case studies that have been successful around the islands
- BC Housing is a long game that does not often meet success and we should prioritize market solutions
- One easy change in zoning bylaws would be to allow for worker housing at the fire hall, which currently has temporary use permits. Similar zoning changes for other commercial sites (Browning)
- The Driftwood Centre is zoned to develop worker housing, but has not yet done so

6.1 Review of October Community Information Meeting

Comments were made that Chair Pare’s presentation on behalf of the Advisory Planning Commission was well received at the Community Information Meeting.

6.2 Review of Survey Results to Date

Commission members agreed to encourage residents to complete the survey, which has so far received 371 responses.

6.3 Meetings with other groups (Plum Tree, MLE Homeowners, Housing NOW)

6.4 Greg Barbour – Expression of Interest

Commission members agreed to set up a meeting with representatives of Plum Tree Court and the Housing NOW Project, and consider an additional meeting after with Magic Lake Estates.

Planner Smith commented that the zoning for the fire hall’s temporary use permit could easily be amended to allow for accessory worker housing, and this might perhaps also be possible at the Driftwood Centre.

Comments were made that it is important to listen to housing proposals like those put forward by the Anglican Church and Greg Barbour (who expressed interest to the Commission separately via email in providing land for housing).

Mary Beth agreed to research the Driftwood Centre to understand why it has not yet created housing units. Chair Pare agreed to follow up with Greg Barbour.

7. Next Meeting

The next meetings were tentatively scheduled for Thursday, November 14 and Friday, December 13, 2024.

Planner Smith agreed to invite representatives of Plum Tree Court (Rodney Kirkwood and Karl Hamson), as well as Patricia Callendar to further discuss housing potential with the Anglican Church.

8. **Adjournment**

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Peter Pare, Chair

Certified Correct:

Carly Bilney, Recorder