

Affordable Housing Applications: An Update

As most Denmanites know, there are two rezoning applications for affordable housing moving through the Islands Trust process right now: Denman Green and Seniors' Housing. Here's a bit more info about where the process is at and how it is likely to proceed:

Each project has its own set of proposed bylaws, which would amend Denman's Land Use Bylaw and Official Community Plan. In recent months, each of these was given "first reading," which is a preliminary endorsement by the Local Trust Committee (LTC).

Right now, each set of bylaws is in the early stages of a formal consultation process.

As I write this (mid-February) the proposed bylaws have been referred (meaning sent out) to other government agencies, First Nations, and the Denman Island Advisory Planning Commission (APC), with an invitation to send back comments. (The APC is an appointed group of volunteers who make recommendations to the LTC about applications and other LTC business.)

The next decision-point will happen at an upcoming Local Trust Committee meeting, probably the one scheduled March 17. The LTC will discuss the referral responses and may alter the proposed bylaws. If the LTC thinks the bylaws (perhaps with some changes) are ready to take forward, they will move to the next phase of the rezoning process: a community information meeting (CIM).

At the CIM, Trust staff explain the proposed bylaw changes, and people can ask questions. This helps people make informed choices and formulate input based on what is actually being proposed.

After the CIM (sometimes immediately after, sometimes at a later, separate date), there will be a **public hearing**. This is a formal meeting where anyone and everyone can share their thoughts and recommendations on the rezoning proposal. People speak one at a time, following a speakers' list. We ask that there be no clapping or booing, to create an inclusive atmosphere. People can also hand in written submissions.

Each set of bylaws, one for each project, will have its own CIM and public hearing.

The LTC will consider next steps at its next meeting. The LTC bases decisions on what it considers best for the island (as a physical entity and as a community) in the long run, and on how the proposal fits with the community vision for the island as expressed in the Official Community Plan. It also considers input from First Nations and other agencies. The LTC may decide to give the draft bylaws third reading, which sets them down the path towards adoption. This is a "yes." It may decide to go no further, which is a "no." Or it

may send the draft bylaws back to the drawing board if it feels substantial changes are needed. This is a "probably, but..." In that case, there would be another CIM and public hearing down the road.

At any time during the rezoning process till the end of the public hearing, people are welcome to provide input by email, postal mail, and/or by speaking at an LTC meeting. You can also talk to a trustee in person or on the phone, but ultimately, public comments hold the most weight.

The CIM and public hearing will be advertised in local media and announced via the Trust's email subscription service (sign up at <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/connect/stay-informed/>).

A note on the current approach to these rezonings (this may change):

The proposed bylaws would create not just site-specific zoning for the two housing projects, but also a new zone that will have an independent life as a template for affordable rental multi-unit housing. This zone, called R4, can provide guidance for potential future applications. It should signal the community's intentions and preferences for this type of housing. Any potential future project would need to go through its own bylaw amendment process.

For each individual rezoning, the template is used as a basis, but not necessarily followed exactly. This is done through the creation of a site-specific zone for each rezoning—a version of R4.

To help understand the relationship between the R4 zone and the site-specific zoning, I'll offer a cooking metaphor: It's like having a basic recipe that you alter each time you cook, depending on who is coming to dinner or what ingredients are on hand. The base recipe means you can reliably cook the dish you desire and that people expect, and the ability to vary it allows you to make the best dish for the specific occasion.

Contact info:

- Information about the rezoning applications: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/denman/current-applications/>;
- Emails to the LTC or staff: northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca
- Local trustees: Laura Busheikin—lbushaikin@islandstrust.bc.ca/250-218-3216; David Critchley—dcritchley@islandstrust.bc.ca /250-218-3214
- Applicant websites: <http://www.denmanaffordablehousing.org/DCLTA/Welcome.html>;
<https://denmanhousing.wordpress.com/>