

From: George Leroux [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 16, 2021 2:27 PM
To: Benjamin McConchie; Deb Morrison
Cc: Laura Patrick; Peter Luckham; Islands2050
Subject: August 14th Community Meeting - Pender Islands

Hello Ben & Deb

Thank you for organizing the community meeting on Aug 14 to discuss the Islands Trust proposed Policy statement rewrite. I concur that it is good for folks to get out and talk to each other again, and I applaud you, along with your South island compatriots, for taking the time on Saturday to meet with the community. Well done.

I write to provide my comments on the meeting (it was great you set it up despite the Trust rules) and some perspective on the TPS process and content.

I have spent considerable time reading the draft TPS and considering the 51 directives. It seems to me that the draft TPS may be a solution looking in search of a problem. It is unclear how the existing TPS is deficient. What does seem clear that full implementation of this draft TPS would trigger substantial cost increases at the Trust.

In my opinion this draft has poor structure and is excessively verbose. The absence of a definitions section seems somewhat absurd. The draft does not clearly track changes against the existing TPS, likely due to the extent of the structural and content changes. Hence, it is not a revision or amendment, it is a rewrite.

It was good to hear residents express some of their concerns with the draft TPS – both process and content. I heard several important messages at the meeting:

- **Trust authority** - Several speakers, at the outset, suggested the Trust needed more “power”. This seemed to be around tree cutting primarily.
- **TPS rewrite** - The TPS “update” is far more than an update, it is a thorough rewrite. It is not clearly written.
- **Jurisdictional over-reach** - The 3 focus areas – climate change, indigenous reconciliation and affordable housing – are dealt with by other levels of government, and to the extent the Trust needs to address these areas the existing TPS will accommodate. The regional application of some policies is

removing authority and responsibility from LTCs. The inclusion of affordable housing was also apparently opposed by all 4 trustees present.

- **Organizational performance** - The governance review is underway, and the TPS rewrite should not be underway during the governance review. One of your responses was “Trust processes are wildly imperfect” but “there are things we need to get done now.”
- **Excessively Directive** - The TPS should be general principles: it is too directive. It needs to be manageable and practical. The use of the word “shall” needs to be pulled back, particularly in areas outside the Trust jurisdiction or areas where other levels of government have senior responsibility.
- **Overlooked residents** - The TPS has overlooked residents, and many of the policies presented in the TPS do not represent the needs of residents.
- **Abort the Rewrite** - The TPS rewrite should be stopped, terminated.
- **Consultation** - The interest generated by the draft TPS should be viewed by the Trust as an opportunity to have a fulsome community discussion of what “preserve and protect” really means to residents.

I have recently taken an interest in the Trust, in part due to the accessibility to meetings provided by web based recording (thanks Ben for pushing this). I hope this accessibility is sustained as it allows for much greater public involvement.

I have been observing and trying to understand how the organization functions. I have come to the preliminary conclusion that it does not function very well. It is my observation that the Trust is a largely unmanageable beast, whether from a staff or trustee perspective. The organization has tied its processes up in knots so as to take control of both the direction and nature of any change. Perhaps the governance review will identify the problems: it is unlikely to develop fulsome, actionable recommendations. I think of it as Phase 1 of what I hope will be a full organizational refresh.

It would seem reasonable to project that application of the proposed TPS will result in calls for increased “resources” to get all the new work done. This will mean more staff, not fewer. Or it could mean more consultants, with the costs off loaded to applicants. And costs for what – attributes that may already be dealt with by other levels of government. Likely, it will involve both – more

consultants for applications, and more staff with specialized expertise to review those consulting reports.

I know you want to hear about content. I have studied all 51 directives and provide the following comments:

1. I note the core purpose of the directives – to “limit the rate and scale of growth and development” in each LTC. Others would simplify this to say “frustrate all development” or “prevent new development, and restore areas previously developed.” This is worthy of a healthy community discussion.
2. I support meaningful engagement with first nations, and hope that this can be integrated rather than done by “specialists at HQ” who know what’s best for all the rest of us.
3. I support protection of ecosystems, and I support people being considered part of the ecosystems of our islands. Outside the park reserves, of which there will hopefully be more over time, private landowners are part of the landscape. The sense I get from the directives, taken in their totality, is that residents are in need of considerable control by more learned people from outside the region so that they do not poop in their own nest.
4. I cannot envision what specific actions or decision criteria LTCs will take when they “shall” consider climate change in decision making. What does this look like for an application to an LTC?
5. I cannot imagine how an LTC will make decisions using best available mapping, science, social science, local knowledge and indigenous ways of knowing. This appears to be a template for applications taking longer than the 9 years someone put to you on the 14th. What seems to have been totally overlooked in decision making is economics. In fact, I note with dismay that any reference to economics has been purged in this rewrite.
6. I cannot see how LTCs can “consider the current and anticipated impacts of sea level rise.” The anticipated action from this directive is likely to increase setbacks, and require additional professional reports and staff capable of reviewing those reports.
7. I am having considerable difficulty seeing how the drive for unfragmented, contiguous forest corridors through private land can be realistically achieved. It sounds like a move to restrict rights on larger land holdings which may not be achievable in more heavily subdivided areas. A little like

put all the trees in museum and charge folks to come see them. Only in this case the large landholders are the park rangers working under the stern oversight of Trust rules, and BC ferries charges people to come see them.

8. I am very concerned about freshwater. I note, however, that the directives around watersheds are all about natural ecosystems and precious little about water systems for residents. In agriculture large dugouts are widely used for storing winter runoff water for use during the summer yet it would seem these would be largely prohibited under the proposed rules. Rainwater catchment or the use of grey water systems is not mentioned as being supported.
9. I am not supportive of outright bans on things like docks, hard-shoring, and desalination plants. If you want to use local knowledge and best available science, why would you prohibit these activities?
10. I support agriculture as valuable and important in the Trust area. I am dismayed by the removal of agriculture and forestry as valuable activities in the Trust area.
11. It seems aspirational, and a recipe for conflict and contention over definitions, if all development has to be compact, energy efficient, sustainable, minimize greenhouse gases, and safeguard protected area networks, freshwater sustainability, the marine environment and indigenous heritage. I count 8 boxes to be filled in, and it is unclear who will define compact, efficiency, sustainability, minimization and safeguarding.
12. I cannot see how LTCs can identify means to reduce the climate vulnerability of communities, including nature-based solutions and actions that prioritize: protection of the carbon capture and storage capacity of natural areas; low-carbon housing, buildings, transportation, and agriculture; preservation, protection, and restoration of biodiversity; freshwater sustainability; soft shoreline and foreshore protections; and wildfire risk mitigation. How on earth can an LTC identify critical climate variables in all these areas? How many different interpretations of these areas will be the outcome of best available mapping, precautionary principle, science, social science and indigenous ways of knowing, no to mention economics?
13. I am unsure how the Trust can become an advocate for affordable housing. It seems reasonable that the Trust needs to address STVRs as they

have come to be a significant issues in single family residential neighbourhoods.

14. I cannot see how “appropriate” floor area and lot coverage are tied to minimizing greenhouse gas, cumulative effects, biodiversity loss, climate vulnerability and destruction of indigenous heritage. Clearly, the 5 criteria noted here may be important, but why are they called out specifically under floor area and lot coverage? This is one of many examples of a directive casting such a wide net as to be a prohibition depending on interpretation.

So, Ben & Deb, I have a lot of questions about how this proposed rewrite will actually be in operation. It will require all 13 LTCs to rewrite their OCPs, and do so within the directive framework set down. And, in my view, this framework will require a significant over-reach by the Trust, a significant increase in resources required by the Trust, and considerable conflict and contention at the LTC decision making level.

I’d like to urge you to:

- Set aside the TPS rewrite with no fixed date for putting it back on Trust Council’s table;
- Initiate community based discussion of “preserve and protect”;
- Engage residents to hear their views of what comprises unique amenities; and
- Understand the extent to which residents already value the integrity of the environment; and
- Fully understand the implications of implementing some of the proposed new policy intentions and directives.

Any time either of you would like to come for a walk around Raven Rock, let me know. I’d be happy to show you what we have done to make a small farm out of a gravel pit.

Cheers

George Leroux

