

From: Robert Fenton [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:25 PM
To: Islands2050
Cc: Benjamin McConchie; debmorrison@islandstrust.bc.ca; Laura Patrick
Subject: Islands 2050 Policy Statement Amendment

I am writing to you on behalf of the Pender Housing Coalition concerning the above as I was not able to attend the recent April 12/22 meeting concerning this.

One of the Coalitions goals is to have Local Trust areas approve trailers ,recreational vehicles, and tiny homes (RTH) as approved habitation.

The Coalition wants the following Trust area zoning changes :

- 1) an individual ,who owns property ,can legally live in their RTH on their own property,
- 2) a property owner could rent out part of their property to a third party who wants to live in their RTH;
- 3)Zoning be changed to allow for the development of RTH Parks.

The above goals Of the Coalition are a reflection of what actually is happening on the ground, except for the development of RTH parks.

A large number of people are living this way ,for the basic reason that it is the only way they can find accommodation in order to live and work on the islands.

Unfortunately they realize that their tenure is uncertain because of Trust policies.Living with the uncertainty that Trust enforcement officers ,if they receive a complaint ,can force people from their home, is an extremely insecure way to live.

It does not have to be this way!!!With Covid still around this is causing unnecessary mental stress for people trying to work and survive!

Why are people living this way?

There are some basic reasons for this state of affairs. They are:

- 1) There is virtually no rental accommodation available;
- 2) The rental accommodation in many cases , that is available ,is unsafe ,unhealthy ,and extremely expensive;
- 3) The price of housing has increased dramatically in the last 2 years and there is very little supply ,even at the inflated prices;
- 4) People have discovered that living in a RTH can be quite satisfactory;
- 5) The cost of many RTHs is quite affordable.
- 6) The quality of life for people living in RTHs is agreeable;
- 7) There is the flexibility that if their job changes they can take their home and move it to another location where there is work;
- 8) They are building up some equity in their RTH and not spending all their money on rent.

There is no realistic expectation that traditional housing rental prices or ownership prices will drop in the near future .The reality is people will continue to turn to this form of accommodation irrespective of Local Trust rules and policies, unless there are mass Trust evictions.

Local Trusts could embark on a massive enforcement program to enforce all RTH owners to move from their island homes.

The result of this would ,it is suggested ,be the following:

1) there would be a significant legal backlash from owners of RTHs. There are some good legal precedents which suggests that the Local Trusts would have trouble enforcing its rules when there is no other local reasonable alternative for RTH owners;

2) Many local businesses would have to cease operating or shorten their hours of operation in a dramatic way, because a large number of local employees would no longer be available to work;

3) If the Local Trusts won the legal challenges there would, in all likelihood, be significant civil disobedience with people preventing tow trucks from towing RTHs away

Another significant factor that has to be kept in mind is that a review of existing trust policies for affordable housing indicates that no affordable housing will come from them. There are a number of statements that indicate support for affordable housing, but the reality of Trust rules, the competition for scarce affordable housing dollars, the exorbitant cost for building in the Trust areas, and the cost of land with low density, means that it is next to impossible to deliver any affordable housing in Local Trust areas.

The use of RTHs generally will not provide for low income affordable housing. The main reason for this is the price of land. The actual cost of suitable RTHs is very affordable. The land cost however means that this form of housing is suitable for lower to middle income earners but not for low cost affordable housing.

The other huge advantage of allowing for RTH housing is that it does not require government subsidy funds to bring it about. It occurs quickly.

If Trust policies concerning accommodation do not change, the result will be that in the near future there will be very few people in the lower income or middle income range of incomes living on the Trust Islands. The governing legislation does not give the Trusts a mandate to limit a significant part of the general population from living in these islands.

RTHs and the Environment

The Pender Housing Coalition acknowledges the Trusts' mandates to preserve and protect. These goals are supported by The Pender Housing Coalition. There is clearly pressure for more houses to be built in the Trusts area.

The Trust also has a concern that the size of new housing should be reduced because of the overall environmental impact of large homes.

People who want to live in RTHs agree to live in substantially smaller accommodations compared to a normal house.

The RTHs' environmental footprint is substantially smaller than a normal house. Further studies show they use substantially less water than a normal house. Many of the lights as well as all systems are simpler than houses, substantially less electricity is used.

The result is that the overall environmental impact is a bonus for this form of housing when the environment is considered as a critical factor.

Not supporting them, it is submitted, is not supporting the environment!

WHAT TO DO ?

The North Pender Local Trust Committee has agreed to look at its bylaws, in conjunction with the Pender Housing Coalition ,to determine which bylaws would have to change in order to allow for people to live in RTHs.

Laura Patrick ,the chair of the North Pender Local Trust Committee has also asked that the Pender Housing Coalition work with other groups on SaltSpring Island in this regard.

This work is just beginning and hopefully will bring solid recommendations for the local Trust committees to look at possible changes to allow for RTHs to be acceptable zoning uses.

It is submitted that it is absolutely vital and necessary for the Islands 2050 policy statements to support these realistic housing initiatives.

There also must be measurable and meaningful metrics to determine whether or not the Trust housing goals are being met or not.This is presently not the case and it is submitted it is not a proper way to govern and manage Trust goals and objectives.

There is a another area which the Coalition finds is strange that is not being dealt with in this policy review.

We are sure you are aware of the significant rental study that was completed last summer for the BC provincial government.

One of the findings for the lack of growth of sufficient rental housing was the actions ,or in actions of local governments.

It is clear that the Trust falls within this designation .We have heard that some trustees feel the trust is not part of this concern but clearly ,as it controls zoning ,it is a very important component of the development of rental housing.

It is submitted ,that to ignore this reality ,is unwise especially when as mentioned above ,there are clear solutions that fit within the Trust mandates.

Pressure will be clearly applied on the Attorney General, who is responsible for housing, to ensure that the Trusts play a meaningful role in dealing with the above noted housing scarcity.

In conclusion the Pender Housing Coalition wants to also advise that it has been working with the CRDs David Howe ,and his alternate Paul Brent in this regard.

Mr Howe supports the Coalitions initiatives and the Coalition will be working with him in bringing about RTH housing changes in areas under the CRDs jurisdiction.

The Coalition also plans to bring it's housing concerns to the BC Attorney General.

On behalf of the Pender Housing Coalition thank you for allowing the Coalition to submit it's concerns about the Island 2050 policy Statement Amendment Project.

I would appreciate it if this submission could be acknowledged as being received .

Regards

Pender Housing Coalition
per Robert Fenton

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Pender Island B.C.
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Sent from my iPhone Rob Fenton