

Trustee Notebook *By David Graham*

Trust Thoughts 2023

In case you were wondering, our first official Denman Island Local Trust Committee meeting is scheduled for February 7th starting at 12:30 pm, held in the Activity Centre Lounge. The late start allows our Chair David Maude, to travel from his home island, Mayne, to Denman. The meeting is scheduled to end at 4:00 pm.

In preparation for this meeting, I was reading the Project Charter for the Housing Study, which started last year. You may have met some of the students involved when they attended one of the busy Saturday Farmers markets. They provided lots of information, including on ways to communicate with them, regarding your take on housing and the issues many are facing.

I know, through conversations I had with some of you, before my official Trustee term started, that many believe another housing study was not something we needed, considering the many other studies that have examined the topic, here on Denman.

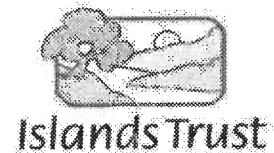
The purpose of this review is to consider updates to our Official Community Plan (OCP) and our Land Use Bylaw (LUB), specifically looking to increase housing options for affordable and attainable housing, while minimizing the impact to the natural environment but supporting equity, diversity and inclusivity. The budget for 2022/2023 is \$13,500 and \$8000 for 2023/2024.

Not considered will be housing options on lands within the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR), of which Denman has a very high percentage (almost 50% of our island is in this reserve) the question of housing in the ALR is covered by the ongoing review of the Denman Farm Plan.

I thought it might be interesting to look at what are some of the Guiding Principles and Policies in the Housing section of our OCP.

If you haven't read this weighty document, and I totally get why you might not! It's actually rather good! I like how it starts with the geologic details of the land, including the effect of the last ice age, touches on First Nation history, early settler activities including extensive logging and resource extraction etc. and then explains how an OCP is aspirational, leading to the regulatory rules etc. which are held in the Land Use Bylaw (LUB).

The first Guiding Objective states: "To encourage housing that accommodates the needs of a variety of



families and individuals, while protecting the natural environment, social fabric and rural character of the community".

Expanding on the "social fabric" idea, the Guiding Objective here states: "To identify and protect the elements integral to the social fabric of Denman Island; to foster the continuing development of a safe, self-sufficient, vibrant, diverse and harmonious human community".

I like both of these Objectives, they are certainly "aspirational", but I am not so sure we have achieved the necessary Laws by which these objectives can be realized.

There are a few specific Objectives which need to be considered: #3 states: "Sets overall residential density as the density in place at the time this OCP is adopted, while providing flexibility for a range of dwelling types". (Adoption occurred in 2008, I believe)

#4) states: "To support the establishment of affordable rental and special needs housing and opportunities for seniors to remain in the community, especially in their own or family's homes".

#11) States: "Overall density should generally not increase beyond what is allowed as of the adoption of this OCP (2008) except that an increase of 5% may be permitted to allow for special needs and affordable housing and secondary dwelling units with "temporary use permits" and site-specific zoning applications under Policy 29".

(Policy 29 brought those dwellings which were built as co-operative or land sharing developments. They would have been legal and conforming when started, but subsequently ended up non-conforming after changes to the LUB. Those changes were considered by the Denman Land Use Committee of the day as unfair, and this policy brought those historical, shared lands back in legal and conforming status.) So, there you have a snap shot of what is contained in our OCP. The housing review will be looking for your ideas as to what still seems relevant, and or, what Objectives or Policies would you like to see added.

I am hopeful that this consulting process provides you all with an avenue to feel comfortable expressing your thoughts. Sam and I, along with our chair, David Maude are tasked with making the decisions as to what we include, remove or stay the same. Your participation is critical.