

## Trustee Notebook *By David Graham*

I want to report on our Denman Local Trust Committee (DELTC) meeting, held April 4<sup>th</sup>, but first I want to share with you my experience attending the Bethany Ireland and friend's "Magic Evening of Entertainment", held Saturday April 15<sup>th</sup>. It has been a long time since I have felt such a "Cool Community Vibe" in the Big Hall! The evening reminded me of when our kids attended the elementary school. It was glorious seeing so many kids and their parents, as well as a few old timers, like me! I did leave around 10pm, well before DJ music and rambunctious dancing ensued. It really did feel like time had gone back 30 years, when we had 120 kids attending the Denman School. I hear the school has over 40 kids today, but imagine Denman with 120! Back then we had many young parents: creating Chocolate Bars for sale on BC Ferries, running a full blown Bakery, (remember those cream filled delicacies?), builders, potters, painters, musicians, so many busy people, all ages and all economies represented. That defines a resilient community for me. So what does my attending Bethany and Friend's evening and all this reminiscing have to do with this month's Denman Trust Notes anyway?

Here is how...at our last DELTC meeting we received the Denman Housing Review Report. This review has been needed for so many years. The consultant's work started October 8, 2022 at the Saturday market. You may have seen the posters and been asked by some students how you would like to receive a survey on housing. The next phase saw over 140 of you filling out the survey, answering the questions and providing the bulk of data used by the consultants to make their recommendations: and now we have the results.

Our first step in reviewing them involves appointing 8 volunteers who, hopefully, represent a sample of Denman's 1300 residents. They will form a "Housing Advisory Planning Commission" (HAPC). Once they have met and considered the many recommendations in the report, the DELTC, that's is Sam Borthwick, David Maude and myself will schedule a Community Meeting in the Hall and share views on what Policies and Regulations could use a fresh look. Considering some of these regulations date back more than 20 years, it is timely we consider changes. Housing, for working people who can't



afford to buy, or who can't find any rental accommodation, is a topic found on every municipal and regional district agenda these days. The unique situation found on the Islands of the Trust, is our overarching mandate to Preserve and Protect the natural environment.

The meeting schedule of the HAPC will be posted, otherwise please stay tuned for the date of this important Community Meeting, hopefully scheduled for some time in the Fall? Feel free to send Sam or me any emails or letters with your thoughts on the subject.

The other important work the DELTC did at our last meeting involved the Ticketing Notification Bylaw, or BEN. Bylaw enforcement is my least favorite subject, for obvious reasons. Once it gets to a Trust investigation stage, it means that neighbors have lost the option of settling disputes amicably. If there is a violation of a Denman Bylaw, achieving a positive result sometimes requires pressure. For years that pressure was the threat of legal action.

The BEN (I know the name doesn't match the description!) is used in Municipalities and Regional Districts, and was made available to any Island in the Trust that wanted it. Last time I was a Trustee, Louise Bell and I chose not to apply it on Denman. The last DELTC reversed that decision. This current membership of the DELTC acknowledged that in some situations it may be useful in achieving a positive result, but for most offenses we felt it was not appropriate. So, we decided to restrict the use of a Ticket to offenses involving "Short Term Vacation Rentals" and "Siting and Use Permits".

All other bylaw offenses are removed from the Schedules listing where a Ticket can be used by Bylaw Officers. The DELTC also asked Staff to prepare a report on our rather complicated "Guest Accommodation" regulations. Bed and Breakfast establishments, offering up to three bedrooms, each with 2 beds with breakfast and the option of providing an evening meal, is clearly spelled out in our Land Use Bylaw (LUB), but other forms of extra accommodation isn't so easy to understand. (Time to simplify perhaps?) Till next time.