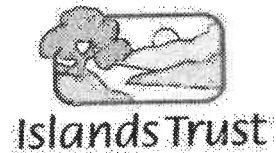


Trustee Notebook *By David Graham*



Welcome to 2024, I thought I would devote my “notes” page to sharing some of the changes to consider on housing, being brought to the Denman Community, through the Denman Local Trust Committee (DLTC), by the Housing Advisory Planning Commission (HAPC). Those suggested changes are neatly summarized in their “Guide to the Denman Island Housing Advisory Planning Commission’s Final Report”. This 15 page executive summary is a quicker read than the complete report which includes the background work supporting the suggested changes to our Official Community Plan and our Land Use Bylaw.

The HAPC has published a number of copies of the full report as well as the Guide. The library has 2 copies of each, the Guest House has a copy, please see Donna. The “Hub” has a copy. The HAPC Report and Guide is also on the Islands Trust Denman Web site, under the “Projects” heading.

Their first recommendation is to legalize all existing affordable housing. (In my 30 years residency on Denman I have personally known of many people who have been left with little choice but to inhabit “unlawful” dwellings, provided by land owners who, despite the risks, have made these homes and spaces available.)

Secondly, to allow Land owners the legal right to build new accessory dwellings, repurpose existing buildings as accessory dwelling units, or provide services to support movable housing types such as: tiny homes, yurts, trailers etc.

Thirdly, to expand the zones which currently allow home owners to add a suite within the existing foot print of their dwellings.

Another suggestion would create the option of defining a total square footage for dwellings, which could then be used for a single dwelling or a maximum number of dwellings, where the total of all dwelling square footages would not exceed the allowable total. This is currently being used on Mayne Island.

Looking at the suggested regulatory changes, the report suggests we remove the currently required “Temporary Use Permit” (TUP) for Secondary Dwelling Units and the elimination of the “Density Bank”. The bank of available densities, if kept as is, would be empty before a significant number of secondary dwellings were constructed, considering it only has 7 densities available today.

The alignment of Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) secondary dwelling options with our own Land Use Bylaw regulations was also suggested. The question as to

whether the community supports this alignment will be the subject of a Public Hearing, scheduled for some time this spring.

Any increase in housing needs to be considered while balancing its impact on the environment. Suggestions to minimize these impacts, by the HAPC, include the following;

- a) Requiring a maximum Combined Floor Area to minimize impacts of all housing
- b) Requiring rainwater catchment
- c) Encourage re/use of existing buildings, alternative forms of housing
- d) Encourage the use of natural building materials
- e) Allowing as many safe and affordable ways of dealing with human waste as possible

The HAPC wrestled with the challenge of ensuring any new housing would remain “affordable”. Current housing affordability on Denman is restricted to those who can afford a million dollar home. This makes it almost impossible, for first time buyers in particular, to purchase. For those who choose to rent, our small number of available legal rentals is problematic. (Compared with Hornby Island, the Comox Valley, BC and Canada, we have the least number of rentals per capita). The combination of these two factors contributes to our unusually high average age statistic (again, well above the BC Average). The question, therefore, of how to ensure additional dwellings and rentals are affordable, is one the DLTC will be wrestling with as we consider changes to our OCP and LUB.

There are a number of other suggestions regarding Bylaw Enforcement which will be considered.

The next step for the DLTC is to receive a report by our Island Trust Planner which will expand suggestions, so we can look at the what, where and how of any implications that they may trigger. Then the DLTC will be prepared to facilitate a thorough Community discussion. This Community Information meeting should occur early in 2024. There will be lots of notice for this meeting, but those who are keen, are encouraged to drop the DLTC (or Sam and I) a letter etc.

Finally, Sam Borthwick and I have booked the Back Hall, **Sunday, January 28th, 2pm - 5pm**, for an informal Open House. We will have copies of the “Guide” and full report, and make ourselves available to answer questions or gather your thoughts. Please consider dropping by, thank you.