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Islands Trust – Denman Island local trust committee

RE: opposition to 3 Ravens Land Share 4100 Pinecrest Road

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concerns and opposition over the housing application at 4100 Pinecrest Road

I have lived on Denman for over 20 years and much of that time was spent in unstable housing. I know the stress of not knowing where you will be living next week, or moving multiple times in a year, all the while holding down multiple jobs. I am an advocate for affordable housing; however, I feel strongly that this is not the right neighbourhood for this project.

First of all, it does not make any sense for an affordable housing project to be located at one of the farthest parts of the island with no services. It is not feasible for that many people to share a couple of vehicles or ride their bikes as stated in the application. The roads are in terrible condition for most of the year and are often not plowed. I have had employees that have tried to commute by bicycle up to my place on [REDACTED] and it was not a pleasant experience for them. We also get called every winter (and sometimes summer) to pull people out who are stuck who do not have 4x4's and try and drive Swan/Danes/Park.

My second concern is the fire danger. We have already had multiple close calls with fires up here. We live in an extremely dry pine forest. There is no water anywhere close to the proposed property, so what is the plan if there is a fire with that many dwellings located close together? Will residents be living in Rv's or unsafe structures? The reports that have come out about the dangers of living in Rv's or in structures with unsafe wiring are alarming, and many of us who have lived here for a while know victims who have died tragically from this. We had a fire start across the road from us and it was terrifying how quickly it moved through the treetops.

I am also concerned about water usage. Rainwater collection for year-round availability can be expensive to set up, and as we are getting less rain every year is not reliable. Then there is the challenge of dealing with the waste from composting toilets and proper disposal of it. If there is no septic system, what is the plan for ensuring that the amount of waste that will be created is not going to affect the water table that the rest of the residents up here depend on?

Many of the residents in this neighbourhood bought their properties with the specific knowledge that this was a rural area and knowing how many more houses were allowed to be built around them. They intentionally did not choose to buy property in a subdivision or in a densely populated area. The way the proposal is laid out, the new dwellings will be in immediate view of the neighbours while the landowners are sheltered at the back of the property, away from the houses. If the proponents want to live on a densely packed property, they should move the units around their house where there are already services, instead of facing the neighbors. I have spoken with at least 2 of our neighbours who feel like they will sell have to their property if this goes through. This would be a huge loss for the community. One of them employs multiple islanders so would have an even greater negative reach.

Again, I support housing projects, this is just the wrong location. I love the Snag's proposal...they have loads of water and no neighbors with their houses directly across from where the proposed houses would be placed. They are also much closer to downtown and there are bus services available.

With the new bylaws being passed that are allowing additional houses to be built (bylaw 248) with R2 zoning, this could dramatically increase population. There are other housing projects also being proposed. Where is the long-term planning on what the island can handle and remain a rural community? How do our volunteer fire departments, first responders and doctors handle growth? There are a lot of people here who do not want to see Denman become another Hornby and the problems they have with their population boom. I would like to see long range planning about how to deal with population growth and still be a healthy, happy community.

Are there any guarantees that this project will support any locals who need the help? The people I know looking for affordable housing would not be able to afford this project. How do we know that the property owners will not give these sites to off island people? Will this support locals who need it or attract more off islanders who can afford it? Whoever gets in will need a significant amount of money at their disposal so is this affordable housing?

Sincerely,

Lanna