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Islands Trust Northern Office
 700 North Road
 Gabriola Island, BC
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 Attention: Sonja Zupanec

16 April 2023

**Subject: Gambier Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Targeted Review Project:
 Engagement Summary Report, dated 12 January 2023**

Dear Sonja,

The Gambier Island Conservancy has serious concerns regarding the Gambier Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Targeted Review Project 2022 and the resulting engagement report.

We appreciate the spirit in which the *Gambier Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Targeted Review Project: Engagement Summary Report* has been developed and applaud the efforts that have been made, however, we feel the process failed in significant ways. We feel the community was not properly engaged, some of the survey questions asked were unclear and misleading, and the report contains inaccuracies.

Moving forward, we would hope to see significant opportunities for additional community consultation, as well as a redo of how things have been requested, asked, and collected. We feel that some of the questions in the online survey were misleading and were designed with a presumed outcome.

As an example, here is question three:

“3. In the OCP, one of the current Advocacy Policies reads:

The Province should allow community forest and woodlot licensing on Crown Land designated as Forestry. In cases where this would create locally based economic opportunities for small scale sustainable forestry, including providing logs for local processing,

Would you like to see this policy remain? “

In our Conservancy response, we answered No to this question with justifying comments. We said that we would adamantly oppose any community forest or woodlot licensing on the island's Crown land, including lands currently designated as Wilderness Conservation as well as Forestry. The above

question, as well as feedback from the two public sessions resulted in the report specifying that Policy Tools to create better protection for the forest ecosystem could include the following:

“Continue to work with the province to review options that could allow community forest and woodlot licensing on Crown land designated as forestry in cases where this would create locally based economic opportunities for small scale sustainable forestry, including providing logs for local processing.

The trail network should be considered and protected in relation to any future logging activities.”

We believe that there is very little interest in any future logging activities on the island. In 2014, due to a lot of concern and feedback to the Ministry of Forests, the development of two woodlots on the northern part of the island were put on hold, and there is no plan at this time to activate the woodlots. At that time, the community and First Nations came strongly together to terminate the planned logging of the woodlots. That justifies our belief that there is very little appetite on the island for more logging. As such, we question the validity of the recommendation.

A number of questions were skewed towards the Southwest Peninsula (Gambier Harbour etc.) which has power, maintained roads, and public docks. Gambier is made up of diverse communities, with all communities on the east side of the island completely off grid with self-maintained roads and docks (the exception is Fircom public dock), and water access only. Survey questions need to be developed such that all communities on Gambier are considered. It would be important to understand where a survey respondent is located, to understand the varying concerns of the different communities on the Island.

We are also dismayed at an apparent reference to our organization as the ‘Gambier conservations Society’, with our mis-attributed endorsement of a shoreline DPA of 30 m as stated in Section 4, point 2: **“2. Introduction of Shoreline Development Permit Area (DPA)”**, which states:

“To provide additional protection to natural features close to shorelines the LTC may want to consider:

- 1. A Shoreline DPA with a 30-meter assessment area. This would require a Qualified Environmental Professional to evaluate a development area from 30 meters from the Present Natural Boundary or Property Line. This was supported by the Gambier conservations Society and the Gambier Island working group.”*

To be clear, we are assuming the reference to the ‘Gambier conservations Society’, was actually a reference to the Gambier Island Conservancy. If that assumption is correct, the Gambier Island Conservancy’s response to this question (Number 6) was No, we did not support the above statement. Here is an excerpt from our comments on this question:

“we feel that property owners are more likely to comply and preserve the natural vegetation within the current 15-metre setback requirement than a 30-metre setback. “

We provided our comments on time and in accordance with the requirements and yet, it appears that our comments have been misconstrued and ignored. We are very disappointed.

At this time, the Gambier Island Conservancy cannot endorse the Gambier Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Targeted Review Project: Engagement Summary Report. In our view, it is incomplete, has failed to adequately engage the community and was based on a flawed survey.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Scholefield, President

Cc:

Peter Luckman, Chair, Gambier Island Local Trust Committee
Kate-Louise Stamford, Islands Trust Trustee, Gambier Island Local Trust Committee
Joe Bernardo, Islands Trust Trustee, Gambier Island Local Trust Committee
Joyce Williams, Squamish Valley Councillor, Squamish Nation
Rachel Munger, Environmental Manager, Squamish Nation
Ruth Simons, President and Executive Director, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Society
Directors of the Gambier Island Conservancy

We recognize that Chá7elkwnech (Gambier Island) lies within the traditional territory of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation).