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Re: APC recommendations for Housing and Short-Term Rentals

Karen Young
Outer Island Bed and Breakfast
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Hornby Island

I am writing today to express my concerns over recent APC recommendations against STVR on Hornby Island. The APC recommendations would remove STVR's as a legal use from the Hornby Island Local Trust Area Regulatory Bylaws and replace it with the Temporary Use Permit, which cannot be extended beyond 6 years. If adopted, this would effectively end Short Term Rentals on Hornby Island within 6 years.

This year marks my 27th year in the tourism business on Hornby. In fact, I started my business when I was 27 years old and right out of business school. I had big ideas to offer small groups of people a personalized Hornby experience. I had just graduated from the BCIT Venture Program where I developed a business plan to offer soft-adventure packages to groups of 12 people at a time. I wanted visitors to experience and learn about the local community and its history, have personal connections to local artists (workshops), restaurants (cooking classes), cafes and shops and enjoy Hornby's beautiful outdoors (guided naturalis walks/talks, kayaking, biking tours etc) in a respectful, educational way. Unfortunately at that time I was unable to get that business model off the ground: Hornby's economy has always been driven by tourism which, at that point, meant two intense months (July/August) of business activity. Businesses would then close down from September-June due to burnout from the need to try to make a year's income in two short bread & butter months. There was also not enough infrastructure on the island to make it possible for businesses to stay open in the off-season - the local population was not enough to sustain them full time. I was unable to make my visitor packages work because local professionals were unavailable to me in the summer and closed in the winter. I operate a B&B which restricts me from providing any meal other than breakfast, so with restaurants and cafes closed in the off-season, I was unable to offer my guests much of anything beyond an overnight stay with breakfast and directing them to beaches and trails (restaurants, cafe's, studios and stores in the summer). I was unable to offer my guests the experience of intimately engaging in

the community, learning about the island's ecosystem and supporting local businesses year round.

Over the last 27 years Hornby has grown and developed in a way that I feel has brought several quality services to the island, much needed upgrades to old ones and we have seen more businesses be able to extend their season. Much of this shoulder and off-season growth can be attributed to, for example, Sea Breeze Lodge offering weddings outside of peak tourist season. The trickle-down effect to our economy of these weddings alone is significant:

- *Longer term employment opportunities for locals as servers, workers, contractors and suppliers

- *Other businesses have more patrons and are able to extend their season of operation

- *Year-round residents can enjoy more services that weren't previously available off-season.

Without visitors to the island this success model will fail. Due to the cost of ferries, the long lineups/waits at the terminals, very few travelers can justify a day-trip to the island, so Hornby visitors need places to stay. Seabreeze guest's often need overflow accommodations for their wedding guests/friends.

It has always been clear to me that Hornby would not thrive without tourism and I have always felt that the magic of this island has come from the community's ability to apply smart growth strategies that have helped to achieve goals for growth and development while maintaining the island's distinctive rural character.

With any success model comes challenges of course, and negative environmental impact on this island is one of them. I believe we all need to work together to protect our community and that, to me, means protecting our economy just as much as it means protecting our environment and fragile ecosystem. I believe that collectively this can be done and a healthy balance struck between the two. Hornby Island Short Term Vacation Rental Association (HISTRA) is doing an incredible job working towards finding that balance. A great deal of work has gone into educating its members and visitors around the philosophy of mindful tourism so that STVR can have a positive role in the future of sustainable tourism for Hornby Island.

I feel that discouraging or preventing STVR will be extremely detrimental to our community. I have been speaking here based solely on my personal experience and observations over my time on the island. I would now like to ask that you please take time to do the statistical research that will show the economic significance tourist accommodations have on our local economy before you consider the APC's recommendations to severely restrict/potentially eliminate STVR.

Regards,
Karen Young