

Subject: Re: APC recommendations for Housing and Short-Term Rentals
Date: September 5, 2022

To: "GScott@islandstrust.bc.ca" "AAllen@islandstrust.bc.ca"
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Dear Grant, Alex and Sue-Ellen:

Re: Hornby Island Advisory Planning Commission Recommendations by Wendy Burton and Joanne Ovistsland – Dated March 29, 2022

I have read the referenced recommendations and many of the associated documents put forward by your appointed advisors. I wish to record my opposition to the Island Trust proceeding with amendments to the Official Community Plan in line with the tabled recommendations. It is my opinion that the recommendations fall short in at least three fundamental ways:

- The economic and cultural well being of Hornby is heavily reliant on the summer tourists and the seasonal residents. Ignoring the economic/cultural health of the Island is simply bad governance.
- The availability of affordable rental accommodation is a difficult global issue and one which will not be resolved on Hornby through elimination of short term rentals.
- Meaningful, inclusive, and current public consultation on this broad sweeping set of changes is clearly required long before money is spent drafting legal language for change. There is no evidence that this has or will occur.

I have a legitimate interest in any changes to the Hornby Official Community Plan. I have been a frequent seasonal visitor to Hornby for at least fifty years, and a property owner and tax payer for the past 17 years. Our tax bill paid July 4th, 2022 was in excess of \$7,000 and included \$1,900 for schools, \$900 for Hornby fire protection, \$700 for Hornby Is Trust Area Levy, and \$500 for Provincial Rural tax. We do not currently rent out our home, but we most certainly may need to do so for short periods of time to make the property more “affordable” for us.

My comments are intended to be seen in a constructive light, as we all want a successful outcome for the Island.

Please consider my reasoning which follows below:

The Economic and Cultural Well-Being of the Hornby Community:

The Island Trust states that its “preserve and protect” mandate includes protection of the community and culture. Protecting the Hornby Community’s economic and cultural well-being is clearly dependent on the tourists and seasonal residents. Before any changes to the existing Community Plan occur, I would suggest an urgent need for a professional economic analysis of reducing visitor accommodation

availability (through 168 short term rentals) from 5 months to 3 months per year and ultimately total obliteration after in six years.

A professional could provide the Trustees with guidance on the impact of reducing and eliminating short term rental space on:

- Viability of the Coop and Ford Cove, Ringside Market retailers, Farmers' Market vendors, road-side stands, nurseries, etc
- Restaurants, bakeries, pizza places, fish market, fruit vendor, wineries, and food, drink services and wedding venues
- Seasonal Accommodation related jobs and revenue (STR owner rental revenue, gardeners, house cleaners, maintenance, security, property management, sporting adventures, etc.)
- Artists and studios
- Performing Arts – The Blues Festival, the Hornby Festival, the Hornby Arts Centre, etc
- Tax revenue lost at the national, provincial and local level (from short term rentals)

It confuses me that the Island Trust appears to be so out of sync in the face of proposed Coop Expansion, development of the Hornby Arts Centre, construction of the Farmland Trust Commercial Kitchen, opening of the Ford Cove restaurant, construction of townhomes and the new Thatch Pub, additional sea plane service, BC Parks acquisition of Tribune Bay camp ground and adjacent property, a new school and Natural History Centre, a new fire hall. Not to mention recent successes at the Beulah Creek Village.

While no one wants to see Hornby over run by tourism, it is the right thing to do by embracing tourism at the local level (short distance travel). This is entirely consistent with the strategies for reducing climate change. A vacation on Hornby by a family is vastly less carbon intensive than jetting off to Rome or Paris for a summer vacation! Hornby is a beautiful place, and we all have an environmental and civic duty to share it!

If anything should change would be my suggestion to allow short term rentals year round with no end date.

Affordable Rental Accommodation:

I see no connection between increasing affordable year round housing supply on Hornby and eliminating tourist accommodation. The Advisors admit to no guarantees of affordable housing and the risk of unintended consequences. It begs the question of why make broad sweeping changes to zoning if it may not work and has not been vetted by professional planners with the skills to analyze. It seems far more likely that a relaxation in zoning will just increase or legitimize the number of secondary homes putting even more pressure on water and septic resources.

With construction costs on Hornby well over \$600/square foot, rampant inflation, rising taxes, hydro costs about to go through the roof, and APC which recommends severely restricting income and jobs on Hornby, there seems to be little hope for increasing affordable rentals. Also, what earthly propose

would there been in creating affordable housing for the 30 young families described if they have no job with which to pay their “affordable” rent? Finally, enforcing exclusive use of a property and an undefined affordable rent is going to be very difficult and costly to enforce. The Island Trust has a track record of light handed enforcement by complaint which clearly will not work with the proposed changes.

Specific to our waterfront 0.37 acre property, I would view a change in zoning density as breach of trust between the Island Trust and the property owner. I have neither the intention nor the space to develop a secondary “affordable” home on this property. I would also object to a neighbour on a similar sized lot developing a second home. The APC seems to imply that water, septic and lot coverage issues suddenly disappear if affordable housing is possible.

I would strongly suggest that no change in zoning should be undertaken on the Islands “small lots”. Barring unforeseen circumstance, I would also state that I would have no intention to accommodate year round renters on my property, whether or not Short Term Rentals are allowed.

Meaningful Public Consultation:

In a matter of such broad sweeping change to the well being of Hornby and the proposed changes to land-owner zoning, not to mention a significant intent to invade and regulate how Islanders behave on their own property, there is no evidence of meaningful, broad and inclusive consultation with landowners and stakeholders.

Effective consultation should occur well before money is spent drafting wholesale changes. This should include permanent residents, all property owners, all businesses, all short term vacation operators, the Province Parks department, and visitors to the Island.

The write-ups don’t hold much promise of meaningful consultation. For example Public Engagement is defined as out of scope for a deliverable. A Community Workshop is scheduled for September but only electronically. When is it?

I note that other Trust Islands considering short term rentals have conducted on line surveys with meaningful content. Why is this not the first step for Hornby?

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Martin



Hornby Island