

From: Erian Baxter [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 11:22 AM
To: Erian Baxter
Cc: northinfo; Timothy Peterson; Alex Allen; Sonja Zupanec; HISTRA Association; Kevin Dubois; Hannah Dubois; Quinn
Subject: Re: Hornby Island Housing, Tourism, STVR and economic concerns with BC Provincial issue

Sorry - just spotted an important typo - our car is an EV not an RV - big difference as far as the environment goes and we are very thankful for the EV chargers on the island too!

All the best once again,

Erian

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 6, 2023, at 2:25 AM, Erian Baxter [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Hornby Islands Trust

We're writing to express our concern over how the upcoming BC Provincial changes to Short Term Vacation Rentals in May of 2024 will severely affect the Short Term Vacation Rental modifications that you, as Hornby Island Trust, have planned for later in 2024.

It's our understanding that the Hornby Island Trust plans were reasonable and relied upon "grandfathering" to preserve the current regulation abiding Short Term Vacation Rentals on Hornby, while modifying the process for any new Short Term Vacation Rentals (STVR).

From meetings we've attended it seems the implications of the upcoming BC Provincial change will potentially be catastrophic to Hornby Island Tourism overall, let alone to many of those that rely on STVR to assist with their ability to live or vacation regularly on Hornby. It appears that the new BC Provincial changes will remove the protection provided by any previous bylaws or permitted uses that would have been protected under the "grandfathering" clause. We sincerely hope that the Hornby Island Trust revise their proposed changes to STVR bylaws with the new BC Provincial changes top of mind.

We're hoping our story of our varied connections to Hornby over the years will illustrate the value of maintaining STVR as an option on Hornby as we would not have kept our 37 year relationship with Hornby or our friends here if we couldn't have availed ourselves of STVR over many many of those years.

If you're not into stories, or getting to know us, then skip the following and just know, we are VERY concerned about how the BC Provincial changes will affect the Hornby Island Trust's planned changes to the Short Term Vacation Rentals regulations. We are also extremely concerned about how this will impact those that earn their livings through tourism, whether that be rentals or sales of artisan items or restaurant businesses, all will be gravely impacted if there are NO short term vacation rentals in Hornby's future as Hornby does NOT have enough other accommodations available to sustain the level of visitors to the island now experienced and relied upon by the various tourism businesses that have grown over the years. You don't need me to give you a list of those from us as I'm sure you can just look in the Hornby Island Tribune.

Ok, Now, here's the story part ... a little about us...and our many ways of coming and going and coming again to Hornby Island.

Our story...

We are Kevin Dubois and Erian Baxter, and our children, Gabriel, Hannah and Quinn. We currently have the honour of being in the old Savoie home at 70 Central Road, above Phipps Point, but we've experienced many versions of owning and short term renting on Hornby over our 37 years of coming here!

We've been coming to Hornby since 1986, the year we met (wow - we've been together so long now!!) We were lucky enough to be introduced to Hornby Island through the Pantages family (Tony Jr. or Hoagey if you know him well) that has been coming here forever it seemed then.

We first stayed at Seabreeze in a cabin for a blustery birthday getaway in December of 1986 (yes, we're both Sagittarians!) and walked a rainy, windy Helliwell Park path - and fell in love with Hornby (and with each other). We then had the good grace to come up with Tony P the next spring and stay in the old little home at the edge of High Salal, before it was fully High Salal. We slept on the old front porch overlooking Big Trib... we had no idea back then how fortunate we were!

We were both very connected to Vancouver for our work so only dreamed of maybe one day getting an "island getaway". Then we actually made that happen faster than we would have dreamed - because we sorted out living in a tiny home in Vancouver- a float home in Coal Harbour - so that gave us the grace to buy an island property- except we bought on Denman Island because we couldn't quite afford Hornby.

So, we had an awesome unfinished small home on 14 acres on Lacon road and we could race up anytime, as the Denman ferry ran late, and we could get to our Denman place late - not only on Fridays!!

Well, then the next day, after a sleep in on Denman, we'd get organized and take the ferry to Hornby and sleep in our VW van for the rest of our time away ... haha... we truly loved Hornby more than Denman and all our friends were here in Hornby too.

So, our Denman place soon got sold and Fast Eddie's half finished house on a 1/2 acre on Porpoise Crescent, Hornby Island, became ours. Then, the fixing up started! We now no longer had to sleep in our VW on Hornby as we had our very own Hornby fixer upper ... and we could welcome friends as guests too. Back in those days, even though interest rates were super crazy, the initial purchase price was less so we didn't have to even consider asking friends for any monetary

compensation for staying - maybe just help stack some firewood while you're there please - the good old days!

You probably remember them too!!

We loved our Hornby place, and our Float Home in Coal Harbour (which Erian had been on the board for over 6 years to secure the Float Home community so it still exists today as alternative housing options in Vancouver) and then, our daughter Hannah was coming along... so we made the difficult choice to sell our Hornby getaway home and our Float Home, and with family help, we then bought a home in Deep Cove, North Vancouver to raise our family as we were both fully connected to Vancouver for our work and family - and we're still there today as Erian's work is tightly connected to Deep Cove.

So, we now became Short Term Vacation Rentals people ... on Hornby... for the next 25 years...and our very first rental was our own old home on Porpoise. That taught us, quite quickly, the difference between owning and summer renting, as we actually ended up going to the beach every day with baby Hannah rather than having to build, fix or clean various things at home!!

So, we continued to summer rent... either our old place from the current owner, or from close friends, or through wind and waves or word of mouth...even from Frank and Pat Savoie one summer too. Possibly a foreshadowing to where we are now! All those experiences had their ups and downs however they meant we were here every summer since our early days and that's irreplaceable and priceless in our family memories!

Whenever we looked at buying again, we reminded ourselves about the freedom of "just renting" for our couple of weeks in the summer - and for those couple weeks we also ate out at many restaurants (including the Thatch back in those days), shopped the markets and studios, and explored all the various activities we could on the island - rather than shopping in the coop hardware department for "fix stuff broken at your house" like we did when we owned our own place in the old days and what we do now as we fix up our current place now!! (See next paragraph)

So, against our better judgment, we chose to buy again on Hornby a couple years ago, March of 2022. We are completely honoured to now own the old Savoie home above Phipps Point. It's a lovely "fixer upper" that we feel so pleased to call our own. It was also probably one of the most affordable houses on the market at that time.

However, if you factor our new Hornby home into the "no affordable housing on Hornby" conversation then it's an example of housing that SHOULD have been purchased by full time year round Hornbyites in desperate need of housing ... it's sort of a duplex and could have been a shared purchase for those struggling for secure housing on Hornby ... except, instead, it sat on the market for 6 months ... no one here on Hornby saw it's potential- yes - it needed work - lots of it - but it could have been a chance for secure housing for two families if they had vision and the where-with-all to go out on a limb to purchase it.

The example of our recent Hornby house purchase shows us that the lack of secure housing on Hornby is so much more complex than STRV properties taking over available housing opportunities on the island, and making it impossible for Hornby families to buy secure housing. It's truly a community based - government included solution that is needed to provide some sort of housing options - like the Isla plan - or a tiny home community but without all the waiting and setbacks and government red tape etc.

We understand that it's so complex and we appreciate the struggle Hornby Islands Trust must have trying to balance all options - we have experienced so many different options on Hornby and feel fortunate to have started, once again, our journey with a vacation/home here.

We'd like to shed light on the varied circumstances of quote unquote "vacation properties" or "second homes" owners on Hornby as we feel that they get misrepresented in many conversations that take place on the island, and in social media, in particular to how vacation homes rentals negatively affect secure housing.

Our situation is that Kevin was "accidentally retired" 7 years ago when a car hit him on his bicycle- on a bike route! So, we are a one income family with Erian

still working in Vancouver to support us all. Every family has an interesting story though so ours is just one of many. In our circumstance with our Hornby home - we need to share it in the summers with friends in order to afford for us to be here too on and off all year round - Kevin is here more than the rest of us, as he has more free time. Our affordability issues were challenging even before the increase in interest rates (don't get us started on those or you'll get a few more chapters!), as, with Kevin's accident, we are also still paying for our home in Vancouver from one income.

We understand that some Hornbyites view those with second homes as "flush with money" but that's not always the case - we are more "flush with love" for our Hornby home and "creative" as to how to make that work!! We suppose many others have their own versions of how they afford to have a second home here - or even their prime home that they rent out in the summers so to supplement their income in order to live full time on Hornby. (Yes, we know that occurs as well!)

We know the above info as we have jumped "all feet in" once again to the Hornby community as best we can and we've learned again the pressure facing those that live here year round - and the opportunities they take to subsidize their costs too. Opportunities that would disappear if the Hornby Islands Trust STVR changes go through with the Provincial changes layered on top, which means there would end up being NO STVR allowed in the long run.

You've heard enough from us - and hopefully you'll understand that we have a very broad perspective on housing alternatives in general and a deep concern for Hornby Island and its housing pressures in particular. We do NOT agree that disallowing STVR will contribute to solving Hornby's need for full time housing opportunities as in our case, and many others, it would not work for us to rent our home out full time as we come here at various times of the year - and that's why we have moved from being STVR people to now again, owners, so we can come up anytime throughout the year, and not just in the summer. We even upgraded our RV car so it can make it here and back - keeping the environment top of mind as well. (I'm currently writing you from our vintage living room with a fire going and my fingers crossed the power stays on long enough for me to get this letter to you on time!)

Thank you for reading this far...if you did you now know more about us than you would if you met at Phipps beach... if you skipped all the reading and prefer a chat you can call Erian at [REDACTED] anytime!

We LOVE being a part of our Hornby community once again - now as owners who provide STVR to people just like we were for 25 years - happily making family memories year after year ... on Hornby Island, with their families!

(funny story - our youngest, Quinn, thought the house we came to most often in the summer was ours, as he knew it's comfort each and every summer for so many years - he was surprised to hear it was our friend's home - not sure why he didn't put two and two together as to her also being there every year - however, it shows the value of consistency and the feeling of belonging in a child's experience and if the Hornby Islands Trust takes away the STVR opportunities then it will also be taking away those family memory making opportunities too for others.)

Again, thank you for all that you do, (I'm the volunteer type but definitely NOT at your level so you have our respect). We appreciate the complexity of the issues you must balance, especially when it comes to housing, and we hope you fully understand how the BC Provincial government has added a bit of a "trump" (no relation intended) card to your plans that will send your proposed plans a direction you likely didn't intend.

All the best to you and yours over the holiday season,

Erian Baxter and Kevin Dubois

[REDACTED]

(Virginie's place or Doris and Leo's place or Mary and Jack's place depending on who you knew the best - we preserved all the height measurements in the kitchen doorways so you're always welcome to come by for tea (Doris's favourite) or wine (Erian's favourite) and check your height against many of the Savoie's over the years!!