

From: Henry Touwslager [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 9:36 PM
To: Alex Allen; Grant Scott; Timothy Peterson; Sonja Zupanec; northinfo; Daniel Arbour
Subject: Support for Vacation Rental Licensing & Concerns about Principal Residence Requirement

Dear Trustee Alex Allen, Trustee Grant Scott, Hornby Island Local Trust Committee Chair Timothy Peterson, Area A Director Daniel Arbour, and Islands Trust Staff:

I am writing as a concerned Hornby Island part-time resident, homeowner, and vacation rental operator to express my views on the proposed changes to the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) regarding vacation rentals.

I am a member of the Hornby Island Short-Term Rental Association (HISTRA) and support their initiatives and preferences.

I support the establishment of the licensing program for vacation rentals on Hornby Island. I believe licensing provides the most effective framework for ensuring responsible management, minimizing negative impacts, and protecting the unique character of our community. I understand the Comox Valley Regional District is taking proactive steps to develop a licensing program. Hopefully, this program can be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

I am opposed to the inclusion of a principal residence requirement for vacation rentals. This requirement would unfairly penalize many longstanding homeowners and families who deeply value their connection to Hornby Island. It would disrupt well-run, bylaw-compliant vacation rentals that contribute to our local economy while causing undue hardship for owners. Vacation home owners contribute significantly and positively to the island and should have the same rights.

My short-term recommendations (and preferences) are below:

1. Define "Short Term Vacation Rental" as rentals of 30 days or less. This clarifies the situation for existing rental properties and protects other seasonal housing needs.
2. Outline clear criteria for which vacation rentals could continue to operate under a future licensing program. This should include factors like bylaw compliance, operational history, and property suitability.

3. Establish a registry for currently operating, bylaw-compliant vacation rentals. This registry will provide a baseline for transitioning to a formal licensing system.

4. Enable vacation rentals in the registry to continue operation until a full licensing program is implemented. This maintains the status quo for responsibly operated vacation rentals while respecting the development of the licensing process

In the long term, my recommendations (and preferences) are:

1. Establish and maintain a registry as noted above.
2. Retain the five-month rental season. Not only does this help vacation homeowners, but it also helps local businesses. It gives visitors a chance to vacation on their favorite island at a lower cost and with fewer crowds.

I'd like for you to consider these carefully and prioritize the development of a licensing program that benefits our community as a whole.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Henry Touwslager



Hornby Island, BC

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