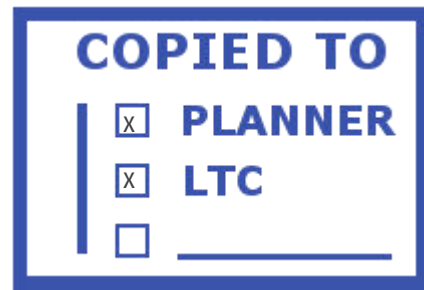


Deborah Goldman  
President  
Mayne Island Housing Society



I am writing with some consternation regarding objections filed with Islands Trust regarding the building proposal that we have worked on regarding my giving 3 of my 10 acres to the Mayne Island Housing Society for the purpose of building 10 rental units.

I am writing to explain where I am coming from. I hope my written thoughts that can serve to help you with the proposal, without delay.

I had been coming to Mayne as a visitor for 15 years as my best friends lived here. In those early days there were huge trees along Village Bay Road but these were clear cut by realtors, profiting. After 3 years of searching, I bought my 10 acre property and have lived here as a full time resident for 8 years. I know relatively few people on the island as my world has become smaller, limited by Parkinson's disease. It is hard to ambulate. I have struggled to rebuild my home on my property as it has been hard to get trades and help when I needed it.

About me: I am single, having been married and divorced, and have co-parented my two daughters, both nearly 40 years of age and who live in Toronto and Ottawa. They have busy lives with work and 5 children. I stopped dating with my Parkinson's diagnosis. I was a multi specialist doctor and an artist.

My early years included a stint living on James Island off of Sydney. My father worked for CIL who then had an explosives factory on this island. We lived there for 2 years as part of a close-knit community of 50 families where people lived in harmony, and modestly. We had a two room school house, each with 3 grades. The general store and post office each year would send hand painted Xmas cards to all the kids who submitted Dear Santa letters. We had a community Centre with a bowling alley in the basement. The entire community was built of barged in homes set among the trees. There were few cars on the island. Most families kept their cars over in Saanich. The explosives factory where my dad worked was at the other end of the island. We had fruit trees around our homes but no fences, and the deer population kept to the forested other end of the island. The community was small and we all knew and helped each other. Jenny was a woman whose husband had died in an accident. The company allowed her to stay in her house. She was my resident grandmother for whom I cut wood as a 12 year old in exchange for treats, usually books. For a kid, it was truly paradise and we ran free. I always said it made me into an islander and drew me back to the west coast.

Fast forward to my time on Mayne. I have spent the last 8 years rebuilding my home to my liking and enable accessibility. I live on one acre, deer fenced, with a ground floor apartment and a separate cottage.

As I get closer to dying, I have grappled with how and to whom I should leave my property. I have become obsessed with leaving it to serve the greatest good. I am fortunate that I have been lucky with investments in the technology sector.

My two daughters have no interest in my property and have left me to make my own decisions.

So, what to do with my property. I have invested too much of myself to have it simply sold. I considered donating it as an Arts Centre for the island. However, was unhappy when the Cotton's residence was demolished and gardens destroyed. I also recognize the difficulties that bequeathing property poses for the community.

I had tried a few years back to interest friends to buy an acreage that already had zoning approval for 10 residences. About a year ago I tried to interest the seniors and housing association to build on my property but they were looking at other options. During my time on Mayne I repeatedly came across a shortage of rental property for young individuals and their families, meaning it was hard to get trades or home help.

Several months ago, I restarted discussions with the MIHS. They came to realize my central location, privacy afforded, and native habitat was very workable to build rental housing that was sorely needed. I have been impressed with their planning and diligence in moving the project forward.

I am surprised with the objections raised by my neighbours regarding water, sewage and privacy. I beg to differ regarding with these issues. Expert opinion supports the MIHS proposal that there is enough space, water, septic provisions and privacy. Their plan will preserve the natural habitat and support the natural ecosystems. It is self-sustaining. I anticipate it will be a true community within a larger community.

I hope that fellow islanders will support this proposal seeing a real need as opposed to what I regard as petty self-interest. Despite being somewhat reclusive, I feel this is my community and this is a means to give back and make it better. It is my hope that the broader community of islanders will support the MIHS proposal.

Sean McHugh.

