

April 25, 2021

Islands Trust
Mayne Island Local Trust Committee
Narissa Chadwick

Re: Community Information Meeting for Mayne Island Housing Society Re-Zoning and Flexible Housing Project

Dear Local Trust Committee:

I am writing this letter in opposition of the proposed high density housing project at 375 Village Bay Road. Further to this I would like to express my support of the flexible housing initiative, that I believe is the obvious sustainable environmentally friendlier solution to housing issues expressed by the Local Trust Committee.

I live on [REDACTED] and will be adversely affected by the proposed development at 375 Village Bay Road. It is my understanding the LTC is considering the application to rezone the property known as the McHugh residence for the purposes of "affordable" housing and increased density.

If the rezoning/subdivision application is successful two additional lots will be created. Essentially the Housing Society receives a donation of land in exchange for the subdivision of the existing property into three 3-acre parcels. One parcel for the existing residence, one for the Housing Society for "affordable" housing and the third lot with free title to the existing owner.

I would like to begin by asking what the LTC's intent was when utilizing the word "donation" in the Bylaw 144 (OCP) Amenity Zoning Guidelines Section 2.10 in respect to development such as this?

A donation is the act by which the owner of a thing, voluntarily transfers the title and possession of the same, from himself to another person, **without** any consideration; a gift (<https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Donation>).

Based on the definition above I do not believe this could be considered a true donation of land. It is my understanding it will be the expense of the Housing Society to make application for rezoning for their housing project and the existing owner will profit with another lot to sell or further develop once approval is granted. Is this not a business exchange, compensation provided, essentially not a donation? The existing owner will receive a sizable compensation in the form of another 3-acre parcel, hardly a gift. Instead of one 10-acre property the existing owner would then hold title to two 3-acre parcels.

Why should Mr. McHugh (the existing owner) enjoy the status of calling this a "donation" when in reality it clearly is not, he will profit by hundreds of thousands of dollars from the success of this endeavour.

[REDACTED]

A true donation would not require a third lot to be created. I believe this does not meet the intent of a donation of an amenity by the OCP. I cannot understand why, when the known criteria of the application have not been met, this application is allowed to move forward. However, it has, thus I would like to provide some additional considerations for the LTC.

The Gulf Islands are sometimes referred to as the Mediterranean of Canada, they are all stunning, known for the picturesque beauty and stunning scenery. Mayne Island is no different a quiet rural community surrounded by natural beauty. Those who settle here do so for a slower pace and a lifestyle closer to nature. High density housing such as the Mayne Island Housing Society proposal does not form part of the character of Mayne Island. 10 residences crowded onto a 3-acre parcel is unprecedented without existing commercial zoning and unfitting to the rural character of Mayne Island. It is not in keeping with the surrounding rural acreages and farmland.

My neighbors and I are aware of the sensitive ecosystem that exists on our properties and within Lot 3. The proposed site lies on a watershed directly above a wetland which is reasonably assumed to supply the aquifer which feeds all or most of our wells. Decimating the land in order to build these homes will destroy or threaten this ecosystem, potentially destroying the quality of our well water and creating additional surface water that ultimately will end up on our properties.

Since the logging occurred behind us 20 plus years ago my property has experienced a higher amount of surface water from the properties above. My home has been spared any flooding, that is not the case for my neighbours below. By decimating the land and sensitive ecosystem to build a high-density complex more surface water will be created and we all know what flows downhill.

It seems contrary to the mandate of the Islands Trust to "Preserve and Protect" to allow a project of this magnitude to occur when we could work towards other means to provide rental availability and flexible housing initiatives that do not create a devastating footprint like the one proposed.

If the Trust can facilitate the flexible housing initiatives, why would the Trust not look to this solution instead? The idea of spreading the development over the island rather than a few acres makes environmental and financial sense. Consequently, this will create more rentals and provide solutions to a wider audience than just "affordable" housing. I contend the housing society intends to provide only 3 units that are considered affordable. A rather high price to pay for 3 so called affordable houses.

The island demographics are mostly seniors, as an Emergency Medical Responder I can tell you many of them would benefit from the ability to build an additional residence on their property to support a care giver. Flexible housing will leave a smaller footprint by scattering these homes throughout the island thereby preserving the character, sensitive ecosystems and groundwater of Mayne Island.

Given that the LTC's objective is "To preserve and protect the natural environment of the Mayne Island Trust Area, the quantity and quality of its surface and groundwater, and the diversity of its flora and fauna" I would expect the LTC not to allow the high-density development proposed by the Mayne Island Housing Society as it literally contradicts every aspect of this objective. I would like to see the LTC focus their efforts on a sustainable solution with flexible housing solutions for Mayne Island as a whole.



I believe given the information flexible housing is the obvious solution and the Housing Society's development is unnecessary, environmentally damaging, not in keeping with the character of Mayne Island and not supported by the affected neighbours. I encourage the LTC to move forward with the flexible housing initiative that will provide sustainable, environmentally friendlier solutions to housing on Mayne Island.

Sincerely,

Katherine Somerville

