

Pender Post December 2019
North Pender Trustee Corner
By Deb Morrison

A lot has happened this fall both at Trust Council and in our Local Trust Committee (LTC). To help understand this activity, I thought it might be helpful if I unpacked the different roles I, and other Trustees, play in these two spaces before sharing some of the specifics. The Islands Trust gets its authority to act from two places: The Islands Trust Act and the Local Government Act. At the Trust Council level, the 26 Trustees representing 13 island groupings come together to enact and revise directive policies that support the mandate laid out in the Islands Trust Act to:

“to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.” (<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/islands-trust-act/>).

As such the mandate at this level does not necessarily dictate that Trustees think about economic development, affordable housing, or other activities unless they impact the unique amenities and environment of the trust area - which they do at various points. In such cases, Trustees ask the Islands Trust staff and executive committee to advocate in particular ways with other levels of government that have specific roles to play in such concerns.

At the Local Trust Committee level the 3 Trustees (Ben, myself, and our chair from Salt Spring Laura) get our mandate both from the Islands Trust Act and from the Local Government Act. Through the Trust Council we ensure that directive policies agreed upon across the Trust Council are enacted in our local area to preserve and protect our island, the surrounding small islands we are responsible for and the Outlying Islands for which we also govern as an LTC. In conjunction with this work, we make land use decisions that should not breach any Trust level policies but can also extend beyond them. This may allow us to make decisions that include economic development, affordable housing, or other activities so long as they do not negatively affect the unique amenities and environment of the trust area.

As may become apparent now, this is a tricky balance. For example, how do we consider industrial activity? What about increased housing development that removes land for use as forests or meadows? This is what we are tasked with, trying to decide which activity to allow and which to restrict based on these two balanced mandates. In our era of global climate change, we as a rural community can best contribute to local sustainability and global green house gas reductions through the maintenance and replanting of trees (bigger the better), eel grass, and kelp beds and through the practicing of low-carbon agricultural practices. Other activities also help us reduce our own emissions, such as a low carbon transportation plan, or increasing infrastructure to telecommute. Supporting the use of locally grown food, use of local building materials, building small, and reduction of waste (particularly through composting) are also extremely beneficial. In the coming months we will be asking you all as community members to

step forward and contribute to our Bylaw Review process we initiated this past month to help us hold the balance in the rules that govern our land uses management. Please join us in this work and think not for yourselves as individuals but for us as a community in this amazing place we call home as we plan for our long term sustainable future.