

From: Donald and Judy McLennan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2022 2:06 PM
To: SSIInfo
Cc: Maxine Leichter; Jean Wilkinson
Subject: Housing Action Suites - WPS Letter to Driftwood
Attachments: Letter to Driftwood re Housing Bylaws.pdf


Dear SSI Trustees,

On behalf of the Board of Directors for The SSI Water Preservation Society (WPS), I am sending the attached letter outlining our concerns regarding housing and water issues for your files.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, I remain

Yours truly,

Judy McLennan
Board Member & Treasurer
SSI Water Preservation Society

From: Donald and Judy McLennan [redacted] 
Subject: Letter to Driftwood re Housing Bylaws
Date: February 11, 2022 at 1:31 PM
To: Donald McLennan [redacted]
Cc: judy McLennan [redacted]



To the Editor, Gulf Islands Driftwood:

Our duly elected SSI Trustees recently decided to relax the enforcement of our Island's 'Housing Bylaws', and are considering further changes that contradict Salt Spring's Official Community Plan. They've made decisions without adequately defining the full nature of the problem related to a critical shortage of suitable and affordable housing. Without a well thought out analysis or long-term plan about how this problem will be resolved, a difficult situation arises and a much larger future problem looms.

Simply abandoning enforcement and changing zoning could easily result in a free-for-all that fails to deliver long-term affordable housing effectively, and creates serious issues related to water scarcity. This un-focused approach necessarily undermines the Islands Trust mandate to preserve and protect the natural environment and unique amenities of this special region.

Housing Bylaws were put in place to ensure a set of standards are met for building practices and safe living conditions and most will agree on the importance of this for all. We're very concerned that the shortage of safe living conditions and places to live creates an extremely difficult situation for many people who support this island's community. But a real and sustainable solution to this problem demands careful attention to specifics. For example, how many and what sort of spaces are needed for whom?

Politicians and planners should prioritize creating and allocating long-term housing that meets the needs of island workers and families while ensuring two things. First, that new housing made possible through amending or writing new bylaws is actually affordable and long-term. Second, that new housing units are developed only where adequate water resources are known to exist, or are put in place.

Some 10 years ago, former Trustee and architect George Grams championed Salt Spring Island Water Protection Alliance, SSIWPA, largely to determine which regions of Salt Spring contained sufficient quantities of water to supply housing needs, and the number of homes each area could adequately supply and service. This complex work continues today and we should ensure upcoming reports provide answers to this well-defined problem posed by Grams.

In the meantime, we urge responsible authorities to, collect the best available information, clearly define the specifics regarding the problem of the lack of long-term affordable housing, and make strategic and targeted changes based on the information gathered. This will result in far better solutions than simply hoping for an acceptable outcome using the current shot-gun approach.

Sincerely,
Jean Wilkinson, on behalf of the Board,
Of Salt Spring Island Water Preservation Society