

From: Maxine Leichter <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, July 24, 2022 3:18 PM
To: SSInfo
Subject: letter regarding bylaw 530
Attachments: DW Viewpoint on Bylaw 530.pdf

Please post to the website.

To: Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee
From: Maxine Leichter
Re: Bylaw 530 - Letter that appeared in the Gulf Islands Driftwood

Limits to Growth Ignored

Please reject Draft Bylaw 530. I think the article I sent to the Driftwood (below) explains the reasons why.

Salt Spring is on the brink of a massive zoning change that threatens the island as we know it. Can you imagine thousands more year-round and summertime residents on top of the huge increases already locked in from undeveloped lots? Just think of the ferry lineups! We're already experiencing water shortages, and that will be exacerbated by climate change.

Yet to show they are "doing something" about the affordable housing shortage, our trustees have given first reading to Bylaw 530 which would allow 968 sq ft secondary suites on most single-family zoned properties and increase the size limit of many cottages.

Trustee Laura Patrick cites staff shortages at the hospital, businesses and other services. But the bylaw does not ensure affordability or stipulate who will occupy these additional homes. In reality, the Islands Trust has little power to solve a continent-wide housing problem.

Most people don't want to be told who to rent to or how much to charge. There is no profit in building to rent, while illegal vacation rentals remain popular because they are lucrative and face little enforcement. Trustees have already allowed thousands of second residences, yet the housing problem persists because it is never-ending and construction costs are high. And many people simply don't want to share their properties full time.

This bylaw won't provide more housing anytime soon, but it will increase property values and make the island even more unaffordable. Over time, as properties change hands, the higher densities will be developed for economic reasons. Our lakes are already close to being tapped out, and groundwater is limited. Allowing an ever-greater population will put even more pressure on limited resources and services.

The Trust was formed in 1974 to stop over-development on the islands. That's why our Official Community Plan limits the island's population to a little over 17,000, about 6,000 more than today. Experts warn, however, that even existing zoning may be

unsustainable. To get around the population limit, the Trust says the extra suites aren't "densities". But playing with words won't hide what happens on the ground.

Staff advised trustees NOT to give first reading because more research is needed. But trustees went ahead anyway. Trustee Laura Patrick says she has to "do something", but common sense says don't "do something" that causes more harm than good.

Over 200 subsidized affordable housing units are already built, planned or under construction. Additionally, some businesses are providing housing for their employees. These are practical strategies that work. They will take time, but so will any small positive effects of this misguided bylaw. In the meantime, will the lack of immediate results prompt trustees to consider even more higher densities?

The recent governance review said every island should determine its carrying capacity, or how many people can be accommodated without destroying what the Trust was set up to save. It's decision time for Salt Spring Island: limits or no limits, protect or develop?