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Sent: Sunday, September 27, 2020 9:38 PM
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Cc: Peter Luckham <pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Peter Grove <pgrove@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Laura Patrick <lpatrick@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Support for new Housing Project

Sept 27, 2020

Local Trust Committee for Salt Spring Island
Islands Trust Office
#1, 500 Lower Ganges Road

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Jamie Sterling and I am the Marketing Manager at Hastings House Country House Hotel here on Salt Spring Island. I am writing to express my support for the new housing project as proposed by the Housing Working Group - the time is long overdue to prioritize housing solutions for Salt Spring residents.

As both a tourism industry professional and an active member of the Salt Spring Island community, the importance of housing cannot be understated. But the fact is, you know this story by now - businesses can't hire staff because the staff have no place to live so the business struggles and sometimes, it closes as a result. This should be reason enough to approve the project - the economic benefits of having a thriving business community are extremely important. In our case, at Hastings House, we started renting two houses for our staff. As a seasonal business, we hire service staff for the summer months, to which we offer shared rooms in one of our houses. Once the rooms fill up, both the hotel and our potential staff are out of luck - they might not have a place to live and we might not be able to find any other staff with secure accommodations. Not to mention that, once our season ends in November, the houses sit empty while the hotel covers the rental expenses until March, when we hire again. This is an unsustainable solution but it's what we've needed to do to continue operating. But again, you already know these stories, and no solutions have come of it.

Instead, here's a personal story: [REDACTED], shared staff accommodations are not a reasonable living situation for me, [REDACTED]. So my experience on the island has had me move five times since I arrived in February 2019. I'll be moving a sixth time at the end of the year as my current rental agreement, the only rental that was available when I needed a new place to live, is temporary. Just like all the rest. Housing is my single biggest challenge to living here and the only reason I question finding alternative work and moving elsewhere. Consider the implications of the fact that I am a well-educated professional who works full-time for a liveable wage but my living situation here is so unsustainable, I often feel like there's no way I can responsibly attempt to stay long term. It's a logistical nightmare, but worse, at times, it's [REDACTED] unbearable. I have had landlords tell me I was not allowed visitors, ever. I've had landlords increase my rent in excess of the annual legal limit after just two months. I've had to pay the highest rate of all for an apartment with a mold problem and then held financially responsible for attempting to manage it. As a renter on Salt Spring, I am reduced to accepting these illegal arrangements because I have no other choice. I am reduced to palpable despair for not knowing where I'm going to live next. Worst of all, I consider myself better off than most.

We need a solution now! There is no good reason for this housing crisis and the issues it causes. It brings individual and economic harm to the community and reduces the overall quality of life. As a working professional and as an engaged community member, I strongly urge you to make the proposed new

housing project the priority that it needs to be at the next Local Trust Committee meeting on October 6, 2020.

Please accept my sincere thanks for reading this letter and considering how positively this can impact individuals, families, and small businesses.

Kind regards,

Jamie Sterling