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Subject: Housing and the Islands Trust mandate

Please see attached.

Meror Krayenhoff

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Should the Islands Trust “preserve and protect the environment, people and culture” mandate apply to housing?

- 1. Culture:** Prior to the creation of the SSI OCP, there was a building culture that was diverse and showed preference for local materials. From the local timbers used at Moby’s, Grace Point, Barb’s Buns, Artspring, and Creekside, to the local stonework on the side of Thrifty’s, as columns in the high school, to the local rammed earth and cob, our local building artisans with support from clients and GCs, would think long and hard prior to hiring and buying off-island. Some of these pursuits continue today, although with more difficulty as SSI no longer has a Senior Building Inspector who can authorize unusual building assemblies. What’s been missing for me is expressing local culture in our buildings. It has been missing for so long that many people don’t even know what that means. Imagine if the contributions made to SSI by the early Hawaiians or black people or hippies, or greenies, or spiritual folk, or artists, or farmers or loggers were honored in our architecture. More importantly, shouldn’t it be super important to architecturally acknowledge the First Nations? It’s one thing to start off a public meeting with recognition, but what does it say when we completely ignore the First Nations in our architecture? I believe that in our OCP, all new buildings are required to express our culture. Certainly, in the Islands Trust mandate, it states that the Trust is to preserve and protect our varied and distinct culture. How do we then end up with architecture that has all the SSI culture of what one sees in Colwood or Langford? Are our Trustees dropping the ball by ignoring the diverse local culture they are mandated to preserve and protect?
- 2. People:** At 8 yrs old, I was taught that Food, Clothing, and Shelter were the three things that people need to survive. It was presented as foundational knowledge, and I believed it to the point that it still lives in my pov. I’m not discounting the non-physical essentials such as love, acceptance, and dignity. Food, Clothing, and Shelter still matter, and now I know that each one has a scale. How much food, how much clothing, and what kind of shelter do we as a community define as our minimum standard? Are we willing to see people starving in front of the Fire Hall? How about people dying from exposure due to inadequate clothing? I hope and trust that our community will ensure that neither of these happen. When it comes to housing standards, new houses are required to meet the BC Building Code. We have not set minimum standards with regards to food and clothing but new housing does have a bar (low as it may be). However, used housing has no bar. There is no maximum amount of mold, no minimum amount of fresh air, no fire resistance, no flooding resistance, no maximum amount of leakage in the roof, no maximum amount of dryrot, no maximum airborne fecal coliforms, no maximum rodents, ants, silverfish, spiders, or woodbugs. We may not be willing to see people starve or die of exposure, but where do we draw the line when it comes to housing? As the Islands Trust continues (15+ yrs) to kick the housing issue down the road, our rental housing stock continues to deteriorate in both quality and quantity. Is it not part of the Islands Trust mandate to Preserve and Protect nature, PEOPLE, and culture? Does preserve and protect, not apply to the renters and homeless on SSI?

3. **People and Environment:** SSI through the CRD and Islands Trust, have taken no action to raise the minimum level of new housing. All that is required, is to meet the BC Building Code. There is no lower standard, and while some builders brag about building to the Code, if they built any less well it would be illegal. There are jurisdictions where the minimum has been set to: LEED, LEED Silver, LEED Gold, Energuide 84, and Passive House. Sadly, on SSI our CRD and Islands Trust are satisfied with the minimum. Is it not reasonable to expect a higher environmental building standard from a Preserve and Protect governance? Why are we in last place when it comes to caring about how our buildings impact the SSI environment and its people?

4. **Environment:** On SSI there exists a strong view that we need to cap the population in order to preserve the environment. The Islands Trust believes the way to do that is to limit the number of buildings, through zoning. The flaw in that approach is that it relies on a historic house density of 2.1 people per home, and a historic level of impacts on the environment from that one home. What if there was a mass migration out of the USA for political or environmental reasons, and many of those people were drawn to the gated (by ferries) community of SSI, willing to live at 5+ people/home? What if the consumption of water/lot doubled as people grew all their own food? My point is that capping the number of buildings to preserve and protect, relies on occupant numbers and traits that can vary wildly. At some point in the future, the 50,000 people living on SSI will wonder if today's Islands Trust were delusional to think that population control is best done by limiting the number of buildings/lot. If the core concern is the negative impacts of having more people on SSI, then let's deal directly with that concern. It is entirely possible to have way more people on SSI and have dramatically reduced impacts, and here's one way. Require all new homes to rainwater harvest, handle their own sewage, meet their own needs for electricity, and have no toxic (red list) materials. These requirements are all laid out in the Living Building Challenge and have been realized by the hundreds for over a decade now. Require all new homes to have a 220V electric car charging outlet. The average square footage of new homes built will likely drop a bit, but that's also an environmental win. In a windstorm with the power out for days, these homes require no emergency attention, and could well be the places that neighbours go to, when their homes fail to keep them warm. People living in these homes are overall healthier and need less medical care. In the long view, the scope of the water districts becomes less and the community has abundant water. Our reliance on BC Hydro becomes far less and power outages become rare, and not such a big deal. The roads become quieter (due to more EV's), and roadsides become healthier due to reduced exhaust. Is this not much more in line with the mandate of the Islands Trust? Does it really make sense to continue down this path of mitigating environmental and social impacts of increased population by trying to control the number of buildings/lot? Is the Islands Trust open to address the impacts of a growing population directly, or will they stick to their flawed status quo algorithm?

If housing is not included in Preserve and Protect, why not? If it is, then it seems like there is a failure in all three areas. The Islands Trust (excluding Laura Patrick) has failed to act to preserve

and protect the people, the culture, and the environment when it comes to housing. And they seem not to be inclined to rectify the situation, content to kick the can down the road.

I encourage the Trustees to do their job, as mandated. It is far past time to address housing. Please do something about it now.