

Hi Laura, thanks for suggesting we meet. I appreciated learning of your views on various island challenges. I hope I didn't give you the impression that I am against capitalist economics and, by implication, for one of the alternatives. When it comes to maintaining the health of the biosphere, *all* economic doctrines have up to now, failed miserably for their neglect to put front and center the inescapable need to sustain the life systems that sustain us. It seems we are all caught up in the "split-brain" phenomenon: on the one hand, we know nature must thrive for us to thrive; on the other hand, we are driven by short-term thinking to making trade-offs, compromising nature to achieve our immediate needs/wants.

Below are some thoughts stimulated by our meeting on Friday (November 30, 2018). I think we may be on the same page concerning the need for island-wide coordination on water issues, involving not only the Water Districts themselves, but also the diverse views and voices of islanders. But before moving toward a more inclusive discussion of water on the island and setting up something to take the place of SSIWPA, I believe we need to take a hard look at how and why SSIWPA failed to deliver. And it would also be prudent to first have a tentative agreement among the water districts, including NSSWD, that they see a benefit from a cooperative approach to water on the island in general, and what specific kind of approach they might whole-heartedly support. Doing that would not, in my view, justify another tax requisition. Meetings with and among water districts should, if the effort is well conceived, cost time but not money.

And then too, in my opinion, it will be essential to clear the air on the use of funds that were given to SSIWPA through tax requisitions over the past five years – and in particular on the use of funds for the Coordinator's fees, to the tune of approximately \$425,000 total. In my view, there appears to have been a major lack of transparency on the use of SSIWPA funds – first of all in regard to revealing how much (about 85%!) of the tax requisition went to Coordinator fees, and secondly in regard to the fact that, while earning such a high professional fee, the Coordinator had absolutely no credentials in the water analysis/monitoring/management field. I find that disconcerting to say the least, and so have many other SSI taxpayers who have now become aware of these circumstances..

In my formal letter to Mr. Luckham of 28 November 2018, I asked for an arm's-length audit of the fees paid to the coordinator and a review of the value received from her services for the related expenditures. That seems to be an absolute pre-requisite to any further Trust support for a new phase of SSIWPA – one founded on a new, clearly defined purpose and on absolute transparency on funds expended. As I also mentioned in my letter, should an arm's-length audit of SSIWPA expenditures reveal that the fees were not justified, there ought to be restitution to the public purse.

Below are some specific points I jotted down after our meeting. Some, but not all are included in the above:

- Re SSIWPA: In its current form, with a nebulous purpose and nothing to show for it, it should be completely disbanded. The way forward should be to take a step back and carry out a retrospective analysis of SSIWPA's performance or lack thereof, so we don't make the same costly mistakes twice. Competent leadership is critical; lack of vision, deadly.
- Any successor organization should have a clearly defined purpose that the water districts wholeheartedly buy in to with tangible contributions of resources, as needed. One first needs to find out what the districts themselves would view as "value added" from a collaborative effort, and how to achieve it, and ask them for the terms under which they would see it fit to coordinate with one another.
- As per our letter to the Trust Executive and Council, we feel strongly that there ought to be an audit of the monies expended by SSIWPA from 2013 to the present, particularly 1) the amounts that went to cover the Coordinator's fees (some 85% of the special tax requisition) and 2) the justification for what to us (per our letter to Peter Luckham) and to many others appears to have been a very bloated compensation. Why was the Coordinator's fee set at such an exorbitant level? Why was a person hired with no professional credentials in the watershed management/evaluation field? What duties were performed? What is the record of billings for what was accomplished? If the audit finds that there is insufficient justification for that compensation, monies should be returned to the tax payers or the Trust.
- In my view, there is no need for a further special tax requisition for SSIWPA. In view of all that has come out, it would not help if the incoming LTC again approved the SSIWPA request. For the interim discussions and efforts to coordinate plans between the water districts, no resources should be needed.
- The notion of an "intentional community" should be enshrined in the OCP. Its meaning must be spelled out: e.g. while respecting and valuing social, cultural, economic, and political differences in the community, everyone coming to live on SSI and in the Trust Area in general should be expected to share one fundamental common value: one of respect for the vital importance of maintaining a healthy ecocultural system on Salt Spring and preserving and protecting our forests, freshwater bodies, marine waters, and the rural character of the island. People must also become keenly aware of the limited (and increasingly limited) supply of water on the island and of the restraints that this poses for water use.
- These principles should be spelled out and become mandatory reading to newcomers, requiring their understanding and agreement before new sales of property can be finalized. Certainly not easy to enforce or to make acceptable within our political system! But it should be a social contact among everyone on the island that this ethos be fully shared, and those that break ranks should be held socially accountable.
- A broad discussion on these themes should be promoted, to seek to bring on board even the more recalcitrant—including special seminars for real estate agents and developers! Doing "the right thing" by the island—that is, respecting Nature, not destroying it through foreshore leases, staircases down steep hills, monster homes on the hills with land clearing all around, etc. etc. These behaviors are slowly but surely degrading our island home and destroying the "paradise" that real estate agents and developers seek to sell.

- The build-out needs drastic revision, and should be established on the basis of current understandings of the limitations of essential resources for living on the island. There should be expanded Development Permit Areas, with stepped-up bylaw enforcement.
- In the interest of solving one issue—e.g., affordable housing—there should be no relaxing of rules and regulations put in place for other critical goals, such as protecting land and water.
- Degraded environments on the island should be restored, not degraded further with the excuse that they're already degraded!
- As an example of the need for proactive policies by the Trust: in re. to the issue of commercial logging on Beddis Road, Peter McAllister mentioned in the Driftwood (November 7, 2018): "People have been pounding on the doors of the Islands Trust for years asking them to establish some rules around responsible forestry, but nothing has been done." He also mentions that Galiano established a tree-cutting DPA that covers the entire island "to ensure that tree removal on the island is limited, sustainable, and strictly necessary for the intended use of the land." A similar provision, it turns out, was considered on SSI during the previous OCP review and quickly rejected. It's high time to put it on the agenda again.
- The current application from Penelakut Seafoods Inc. to harvest Manila clams, Pacific oysters, and littleneck clams along the shores of Booth Bay, extending into the Booth Canal inlet, constitutes in my view a retrograde step in terms of efforts to sustain the health of our coastline, for reasons already well described by the application's opponents. This appears to be a strictly commercial venture, not one designed to re-establish traditional shellfish harvesting. There is nothing in the proposal that remotely aligns with the ways in which Coast Salish people harvested coastal marine resources historically, such as by establishing "clam gardens", which were in tune with the sustainability of natural process. The proposed use of predator netting would be highly harmful to other marine life and vastly reduce the vitality of the coastal ecosystem in that area.
- As an aside, foreshore leases all around the island, which essentially were put in place to give property owners privacy and exclusive access to the foreshore, should be carefully scrutinized and withdrawn where they impede public enjoyment of the foreshore, and even more so where they allow owners to build stairways and ramps that disturb shoreline ecology.
- All of the above suggests fundamental principles to guide a much needed, major revision of the OCP. An OCP in line with the imperatives of the present time will be one that fully embraces the idea of maintaining and restoring ecosystem health on Salt Spring and puts it into practice. Such an OCP could serve as a model not only for SSI, but also for all the islands within the Trust area, and for communities beyond.
- The field of ecosystem health (with whose development I have long been associated—see e.g. Rapport, D.J., et al (eds.). 2003. *Managing for Healthy Ecosystems*. CRC Press. 1456pp; Somerville, M. & Rapport, D.J. (eds.) 2000. *Transdisciplinarity: Re-Creating Integrated Knowledge*. UNESCO/EOLSS Publishers (reprinted by Queens/McGill University Press);

Rapport, D.J., et al (eds.) 1998. *Ecosystem Health*. Blackwell Science. 372pp; Smit, B., et al 1998. *Agroecosystem Health: Analysis and Assessment*. University of Guelph. 116pp.; Rapport, D.J. et al (eds.) 1995. *Evaluating and Monitoring the Health of Large-Scale Ecosystems*. Springer-Verlag. 454 pp.) has become widely established internationally. It has been adopted as an operating principle by major international bodies, and has expanded the practice of public health, medicine, and veterinary medicine throughout Canada and in many other countries.

- The “genie” is very much out of the bottle, and I sense there is wide support across the island for an ecosystem health approach to underpin our OCP, and for its adoption as an operating principle for all we do. In that connection, I recently took the initiative to revise and update the concept paper on ecosystem health that I prepared in 2007 for the CRD and the Trust as input into the previous OCP review. I will soon forward that revised document to the Trust for consideration for the upcoming OCP review process.

Best regards,

David J. Rapport