

From: cj canada <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 10:31 AM
To: SouthInfo <SouthInfo@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Fwd: Setbacks

To the Local Trust Committee, and fellow community members, my friends and neighbours:

Regrettably, I am unable to get over to the firehall this morning. Accordingly, five points and a brief comment for your consideration.

1. A twenty-foot setback is a bare minimum for our island, and should pose no hardship to anyone building thoughtfully in alignment with that allowance.

In fact, owners may well find that in fact 'the regs' have enabled them to a siting more beneficial to they themselves, if only over time. For example:

I have been at the same place on this island for 37 years. The property across from me has changed hands six (6) times over that period. Each successive sale resulted in a variety of changes. My house is smack dab in the centre of my acreage and only that has made it liveable throughout, especially whenever new owners were busily tearing out the beloved follies of the previous ones, then building to their own fond preferences! (Current neighbour is exception that proves the rule, at long last.)

Note, none of these noisy, dusty, disturbing sprees involved anything as radical as dwelling spaces in setback allowances. For good reason: current by-law.

In short, halving a setback is a major change, and I hate to think how it would have affected for the worse the mini-history I've described.

2. If any particular lot's topography or other characteristics were to merit a variance, there already exists ample provision for such to be provided.

3. Other islands' decisions in this regard are moot and beside the point. South Pender has a particular character that people want to see protected, not trifled with.

Yes, we can all imagine a small structure (like a shed or pumphouse) not making much of difference, though my neighbours have historically feuded over less; but a whole dwelling and its footprint most certainly would.

4. The onus should be on parties wanting to locate their proposed structure ten feet closer to the property line to demonstrate the actual need for this incursion, in their own case and in their own view.

A mere preference for reduced setbacks and buildings situated so close to a property line does not constitute adequate or reasonable grounds. For example, I am at a loss to understand how a cottage, let alone a main dwelling, could need ten extra feet of siting optionality when at least two acres are in play.

If any property isn't felt by owners to be big enough for both structures without halving the setback, that hardly necessitates our Committee issuing a blanket change to zoning that has served the island well to date and can continue to do so in everyone's best interest.

Intelligent design can easily work within the already minimal interior side lot setback.

5. Our island's history pre-Trust means that there is more than one neighbourhood with narrow ocean frontage to maximize the number of lots along a beach.

These lots, under the change proposed by the APC (Petrie dissenting), could end up cramming structures horizontally (ie parallel to the seafront), creating the crowded, non-stop strip of buildings alongside each other that is so familiar, and unfortunate, in other settings. South Pender deserves better.

Comment:

As it happens, I just returned from an eye-opening trip to one of the Southern Gulf Islands with less well-considered setbacks. It was by no means a testament to such extra latitude (in the placement of structures) being used wisely, or with any actual necessity.

I consider us to be much better off here, and so oppose any change.

More dramatically, I have seen UBC cut by a half the distance, to -- what else? -- ten to twelve feet between edge of sidewalks and the front window of South Campus townhouses, and even by city standards the result is disturbing for passers-by and families alike. Even in a highly densified urbanised setting this setback is insufficient!

Reasonable setbacks anywhere are never skimpy in relation to lot size.

And for South Pender properties, a mere ten feet -- which might just fit in on Magic Lake -- would be entirely non-proportionate.

In conclusion, I consider this proposed change to be shortsighted with regard to liveability, insensitive to this island's well-established character, and essentially mischievous, in the sense that our APC Commission and Trust Committee time, talent, and hard work would be far better spent on forward-thinking legislation.

