

Feb 10, 2025

South Pender Island Trustees

I am writing to voice my thoughts on the proposed options regarding house size and setbacks that will be discussed at the Feb 14th trust meeting. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend as I have a conflict with a meeting with CRD staff regarding Brooks Point Regional Park.

I have lived on South Pender for over 50 years, and during that time have watched the gradual building encroachment on the sea and larger and larger homes constructed for smaller and smaller family units.

I am supportive of the APC recommendation to maintain front setbacks to the waterfront at its current levels. I am however not supportive of its recommendations regarding side lot setbacks and house size. I feel the 10 foot side yard setback infringes on the rights of homeowners to privacy from their neighbours, especially given that we live in a rural environment, The 10 foot setback is similar to what is established in urban environments. The existing 20 foot setback is much more in keeping with our rural lifestyle.

I am most disappointed that the APC did not present an option to maintain the existing house size limits as an option. I firmly support this option for the community. The existing house size limits allow an average increase of more than 170% over existing house sizes currently on South Pender. An increase of even 500 square feet to each category would mean an average increase in house size of more than double the existing house size as well as the additional allowance for garages and outbuildings. This will have a major influence on lifestyle for the community in years to come. My concerns are:

1. It will allow and encourage bigger homes on existing lots as older dwellings are replaced with newer modern units.
2. The larger units will impact the privacy of neighbours.
3. The larger units will cost more to build, will resell for higher prices, and will impact the ability of young and modest income families from settling on South Pender.
4. The Island will increasingly become the playground for the rich, who often use the Island as a summer getaway further gentrifying the community.
5. The larger homes will use more of our natural resources to construct and maintain as well as impact the natural environment by increasing the building footprint on each lot, putting increased pressure on the Islands Trust mandate to preserve and protect the natural environment of the Gulf Islands.

I would hope the trustees will consider these factors in their deliberations as to whether changes are required in the existing setbacks and house sizes. The Advisory Committee has provided no useful information as to why larger house sizes are required. The original community concern about the current house size provisions was mainly about existing homes that didn't conform to those bylaws being deemed non-conforming and the effect that might have on rebuilding, insurance, etc. Now that The Trust has shown that all existing units are deemed conforming under the wording of the existing bylaws, that concern is no longer valid. If an individual homeowner has valid reasons to request a variation on the existing regulations the variance process is there to serve them and allows neighbor input into the proposal, a process that is fair to all concerned. I would therefore ask the Trustees to keep the existing bylaws in place as they best serve the preserve and protect mandate of the Trust Council, give them a number of years to see how they work, and if problems arise in the future to look at them at that time. At this time there doesn't seem to be any problems with them.

Yours truly,

Robert Dill, Homeowner

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