



## **SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS FORUM**

### **Meeting notes from Monday December 11, 2023**

#### **Attendees:**

- Laura Patrick (SSI Local Trust Area), Ben Mabberley (Galiano Local Trust Area), Paul Brent (SGI CRD Director), Gary Holman (SSI CRD Director), Dag Falk (South Pender Local Trust Area), Clare Frater (Director, Trust Area Services), Adam Olsen (MLA Saanich North and the Islands), Ned Taylor (MP May's Constituency Coordinator / Member's Assistant), and Laura Parker (MLA Office, note-taker)

**NOTE:** Zoom 'Meeting Summary with AI Companion' was used to assist in note taking. The 'Meeting Summary' was reviewed, compared to notes taken by staff, and edited by our office to compile these notes.

#### **Quick recap**

The meeting covered a range of topics including:

- Trust Council's discussion and decision-making format,
- the impact of the speculation and vacancy tax on second homes, the applicability of the short-term vacation rentals legislation, and the issue of homelessness on the Southern Gulf Islands
- the involvement of First Nations in harbor governance
- and road safety concerns.

**Adam:** introduced MP May's new constituency coordinator, Ned Taylor, who replaced Alexa in September.

#### **Summary**

##### **Trust Council's Decision-Making Format**

**Group:** There was a discussion about the challenge of council meetings due to their large participant format. The participants acknowledged the current format's inefficiencies and considered adopting the committee of the whole structure, as suggested by Adam, who had experience from the Central Saanich Council.

**Adam:** emphasized the need for the Trust Council to come together, to approach the provincial government for what it needs.

## Island Communities' Housing Discussion

- Speculation and vacancy tax
  - **Group:** A general discussion was held about the impact of the speculation and vacancy tax on second homes on the Southern Gulf Islands.
  - **Adam:** suggested use of these properties to alleviate the housing crisis.
  - **Group:** There was also a discussion about the province's reluctance to address the housing situation and the Islands Trust Act.
  - **Adam:** suggested ITC as a whole could call on the Min of Housing and Premier – how are they planning on including the SGIs in these issues?
  
- Short-Term Rental Legislation Clarification
  - **Group:** discussion about the applicability of the short-term vacation rentals legislation in the Southern Gulf Islands.
  - **Gary:** clarified that the registry applies province-wide, but islands have to opt in.
  - **Adam:** suggested organizing a briefing with the Ministry of Housing to better understand the legislation's implications.
  - **Laura:** brought up the need for the Local Trust Committee and the CRD to collaborate on understanding the challenges and opportunities presented by the act, as different islands may interpret it differently. She has asked staff to look into it - There is a protocol agreement between CRD and IT.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Adam:** will request a briefing on STVRs applicability in SGIs – notify the Minister that elected officials will be in attendance

## Harbor Management Issues

- **Gary:** asked Adam re: management issues in governing harbors, and the potential involvement of First Nations in these initiatives
- **Adam:**
  - Has been speaking with W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council (Tseycum and Tsartlip) - met with a technical working group collaborating re: the proposed Strait of Georgia National Marine Conservation area.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Adam:** f/u w/Eryn at WLC– when is the next meeting w/Chiefs?
  - next step – working with the Parks Canada
  - Vancouver Fraser Port Authority has a new person - Min. Rankin has met w/him.
  - shared he is going to Ottawa in late February - plans to participate in a panel discussion re: FN involvement - he will continue advocating for the expansion of the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's jurisdiction.

- **Ben:** found out that LTC cannot remove mooring buoys or vessels – can inquire bring to attention but no jurisdiction to do anything about it.
  - o The need for solutions to assist to these people rather than just removing them
- **Group:** The fast-growing problem and the magnitude of the issue were highlighted, with mentions of other locations like Tsehum Harbour, Brentwood Bay, and Burgoyne Bay facing similar challenges.
- **Adam:** spoke about the creation of the Marine Guardian Program by First Nations - cautious optimism about the project moving forward to advance enforcement, management,
  - o partnership approach- FNs, Parks, Min. Transportation – good potential
  - o suggested writing a formal letter to the new Minister of Transport and to Parks Canada, summarizing these ideas – **ACTION ITEM**
    - **Laura:** they need to come see what is happening here
    - **Paul:** a video would be good to put together **ACTION ITEM:** he knows someone who has access to a drone
- **Ben:** agreed, highlighting the need for services to encourage cooperation with authorities.
- **Gary:** discussed the potential for a barge with services in Ganges Harbor, and Adam suggested the idea of a pump-out boat with groceries.

#### Other issues brought up:

- **Paul: healthcare**
  - o He received an email with letter from BC Emergency Health Services regarding changes to our paramedic support on our islands - except Saturna, which he'll be progressing
    - “Positive Changes in the Delivery of Pre-Hospital & Community Paramedic Care in Your Community” - **share with group**
- **Laura: homelessness**
  - o spoke about the successful homelessness program of the San Juan Island counselors - They take a holistic approach to supporting homeless individuals.
- **Adam: LCC**
  - o asked Gary to provide an update on the LCC's progress as his office is getting a lot of emails from Chuan Society
  - o **Gary:**
    - discussed the proposed budget increase, pool refurbishment, and negotiations with the Chuan society for an encampment in a park.
    - He also mentioned an upcoming meeting with Randy Cunningham about the Southern Vancouver Island tourism partnership. The tourism partnership has committed to allocating \$100,000 per year to rural housing.

- He also outlined the Five-year plan for the LCC, which will focus on housing with a greater emphasis. The LCC is seeking a coordinator for housing and a local coordinator.
- **Adam: BCAM**
  - shared he is attending a meeting with Minister Lana Popham at the BC Aviation Museum to discuss the potential relocation of the Martin Mars bomber.
- **Ben: Roads**
  - voiced concerns about the lack of road safety measures, such as yellow lines, on the Gulf Islands, particularly for seniors who rely on night travel.
  - The group agreed that road safety is a top concern and plans to lobby the Ministry of Transport to address this issue. They also mentioned specific individuals, including Francois, the area manager for roads, and Owen Page from Salt Spring Island, who could be involved in this effort.
  - **Adam:**
    - brought up the importance of conveying the issue of safety considerations when dealing with the Ministry of Transportation.
    - **Gary:** suggested involving ICBC in safety studies to better understand and tackle issues.
    - **Paul:** expressed concern over the deterioration of the provincial highway infrastructure due to inadequate maintenance and lack of paint on certain roads – MoTI has an exclusive contract with a line painting company but it's not fulfilling its duties
    - **ACTION ITEM:**
      - **Adam:** will send an email asking ICBC about their role in addressing road safety issues.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- **Laura (staff):** will connect w/Jerram (MLA staff) to set up a briefing on the applicability of the short-term vacation rentals in the Southern Gulf Islands.
  - Adam: will follow up with the group and invite the trustees to it.
- Harbor Management Issues
  - **Adam:** re: WLC & technical working group - f/u w/Eryn about the enforcement and management initiative and find out when is next meeting w/Chiefs
  - **Adam:** will put all these ideas into a formal letter to new Federal Ministers – will share around for signatures
  - **Paul:** contact person who has access to a drone
- **Adam:** will send an email asking ICBC about their role in addressing road safety issues.

- Next regular meeting (usually second Monday of each month):
  - ~~January 8, 8:30 – 9:30am~~ - cancelled
  - February 12, 8:30 - 9:30am
  - **March 11 – next half-day meeting, 10:30 – 2:30**
  - April 8, 8:30 – 9:30am
  - May 13, 8:30 – 9:30am
  - June 10, 8:30 – 9:30am
  - July 8, 8:30 – 9:30am - hold or take summer off?
  - August 12, 8:30 – 9:30am - hold or take summer off?
  - September 9, 8:30 – 9:30am
  - October 14 - Thanksgiving – reschedule or cancel this month?
  - November 11, Remembrance Day – reschedule or cancel this month?
  - December 9, 8:30 – 9:30am