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Road plan recalled, new trustees name revision of Galiano's forest bylaws a priority

~ Helena Chambers

In a packed meeting of the Galiano Local Trust Committee on January 18, newly elected trustees, Michael Sharp and Roy Smith, passed a motion to section off Galiano's Forest Bylaws from the OCP Review, due to take place early this year.

Smith cited what he perceived as 'widespread dissatisfaction' with the ground-breaking bylaw that has set precedents for planning decisions in many jurisdictions throughout BC. He gave as evidence of community discontent the number of variances being sought by applicants for rezoning. Sharp read a prepared resolution which called for a review of the forest bylaws. The review is to be placed as top priority on the work list.

In the town hall portion of the meeting held at the end of the agenda, Smith was asked why there was such unseemly haste to act on so serious an issue. Smith responded that we have to deal with these laws. We are opening up the possibilities. We'll have discussions before carrying this forward. We'll have to walk a fine line.

Other speakers asked if he, Smith, was clear that as things stand any change in the bylaw would impose the Provincial Private Managed Forest Land Regulations. 'In doing so, you will erase community control of any forest land which is or becomes part of the PMFL.' Smith replied that he was aware of this.

Road Network Plan Recalled

Also targeted was the Galiano Road Network Plan (GRNP), the result of ten years of dedicated work by Islanders. The intent of the plan was to place a statement of the Galiano community's interest and intent before the Ministry of Transportation & Highways who ultimately guide road planning. The Road Network Plan Bylaw is closely tied to forest policy and holds the key to orderly planned development of low density residential use in the forest zones.

The GRNP, which has passed all necessary approval levels at Local Public Hearings and within the Ministry bureaucracy, reached the minister's desk for final approval

in May 2004.

Galiano Local Trust Ccommittee Chair, Gisele Rudischer, pointed out some of the consequences of a recall of the plan and emphasized there were other options. Smith seemed to be under the impression that the plan would interfere with the authority of the Ministry of Transportation & Highways. After some disjointed and confused interaction between committee members, Sharp's motion to recall the plan was passed.

It is not known why the bylaw has not already been signed off. Asked, in a subsequent phone call, whether the ministry had given any reason for not signing the road plan, Islands Trust planner Brodie Porter replied, 'They have not.' The minister cannot refuse the bylaw unless he states the reason(s) for so doing.

'Proof of Potable Water Not Necessary'

During the review of rezoning and subdivision applications, Smith noted that two of the subdivisions awaited proof of potable water. 'Why?' he asked. 'A promise to install water catchment and grey water recycling should be enough.' Brodie Porter responded that proof of potable water for subdivision approval was a requirement of the Trust Executive Council.

Delegation Speaks to Misinformation Campaign

Ex-trustee Sheila Anderson spoke on behalf of a delegation, addressing the issue of misinformation rife on the Island. 'As a trustee I was constantly amazed that those opposed to our bylaws ... were prepared to overlook, fabricate, or exaggerate the facts in order to promote a climate for change, chipping away at the resolve of the community ... a resolve long debated and established through full, open public process, several elections, and within the policy mandate of the Islands Trust.' Anderson went on to object to 'the repetition of the myth that our community is ill,' categorizing it as 'a form of emotional abuse, a battering of our collective self esteem.' She charged that 'the assertions

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that our bylaws are 'no good' and need to be changed was promoted by both of you (referring to Smith and Sharp) and others who have a personal interest in seeing them change.'

After the close of the meeting, people expressed disappointment that no clear reasons were given for the need to revise the forest bylaws in advance of the OCP Review. Many felt they had been presented with a 'done

deal.'

In the January issue of Galiano's *The Active Page* magazine the trustees said, 'We will be working hard to ensure the community is informed and involved in all the issues, and when possible, before anything is brought to a Local Trust Committee meeting.' ✍

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