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Talking to the Trust ~ Christa Grace-Warrick

On Wednesday, March 28, a group of 29 Galianoites chartered *Mistaya* from Salt Spring's Gulf Islands Water Taxi. The crew took them from Montague Harbour to the 2-day Islands Trust Council quarterly meeting on Gabriola where nine of those aboard were to make presentations. Three other Galiano delegants travelled by car.

It was a fine, early spring day and the two-hour ride was spent using charts to identify islands, big and small as they passed by: Galiano, Kuper, Thetis, Reid, Valdes, Ruxton, De Courcy, Mudge (some marvelled at how truly narrow Dodd Narrows is) and finally Gabriola.

After a bit of a mix up about where to disembark, a small fleet of cars hurried Galiano folks to Haven By The Sea Resort's auditorium, the venue for the meeting.

Trust Council Chairperson Kim Benson announced that the 26-member Council was to hear a heavy schedule of seventeen presentations from Islanders that afternoon, each to be kept four minutes.

First came a presentation by two exceptionally well-spoken girls and a parent from Aurora, Gabriola's learn-at-home support program. They presented their community mapping project. The program is part of Nanaimo/Ladysmith School District #68's 'educational mosaic.'

The majority of the twelve Galiano presenters were, in effect, asking for funds to accelerate the commencement of Galiano Island's OCP Review. Galiano's Trustees had recently asked council for \$6,000 to be earmarked for an isolated review of residential policy in 'Forest 1' designated lands and were awaiting a vote on this very day. Instead, these nine delegants wanted any funding to be allocated to a full-scale OCP Review. An example is on p.

Using maps, charts, and a binder of 200 letters, as aids in making their point, presenters concluded that the current review of 'F1' was contrary to the Islands Trust Mandate because the residential issue being looked at affected 42% of the land area of Galiano (even though these properties were owned by only 6% of the population). Unless a full OCP Review is conducted, issues that impact the whole community, such as watershed protection, groundwater recharge and road networks will be not be considered in decisions which, as one

delegate put, 'cause permanent, irreversible change.'

A map of what 42% of the land area of every major Trust Area Island would look like was used to underscore the seriousness of the situation. In fact, one delegate asked for an over-arching Islands Trust procedural bylaw which would automatically trigger a comprehensive OCP Review for any proposed change of use or rezoning which would affect more than 25% of an island.

Interspersed in the above delegations, Walter Forstbauer, Sandy Martin, and Barbara Geary, all owners of Forest 1 land on Galiano, talked about their desire to be able to legally live on their properties and the ways in which the current rezoning options did not work for them.

The Sleeper - Island Trust Act: Section 11

Interesting, little-known information from Section 11 of the *Island Trust Act* was brought up. According to presenter Harry Lipetz, this Section indicates that Trust Council members can override the autonomy of a Local Trust Committee by a two-thirds majority and in some instances are legally obliged to do so in upholding the Trust Mandate.

Other Presentations

A group of five more delegations from Gabriola were presented between the Galiano ones. Trust Council is always an important venue for showcasing current issues on the host island, often issues with broader implications for the whole 13-island Trust Area.

Often using effective visuals, Russ Congdon talked about the vacation rentals on Gabriola; Erik Andersen spoke to Council the effects of the controversial Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement between BC and Alberta which commenced on April 1; Howard Stiff and Deb Scott talked about climate change; and Ken Zakreski talked about the creation of a transmitter site for Gabriola Radio.

'A Place In The Islands'

Another break in Islanders' presentations was afforded by the launch of 'A Place In The Islands,' a glossy, picture-book, how-to guide for living on an island in the Salish Sea. This second edition is a cross-boundary project with close neighbours, the American San Juan Islands, funded from both sides of the

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international border. The original 1995 book focussed on only the San Juan Islands.

After the sessions, Galiano's boating contingent was shuttled to Silva Bay in the cars of a couple of much appreciated Gariolans.

Motions

Later in that same afternoon, Trust Council voted 15 to 9 to grant the funds requested by Galiano's trustees.

The next day, Trust Executive member Gary Steeves

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(North Pender) introduced a motion to have the Planning Committee review Section 11 of the *Islands Trust Act* and the current 'Islands Trust Policy Statement' in regards to Section 11 and to make recommendations to draft an administrative and procedural bylaw consistent with Section 11 and which identifies any new LTC procedures which it believes should be mandatory. This passed unanimously. 🍷

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