

Denman Island Residents Association Public Meeting September 10, 2018

Present: Ron Shepherd; chair, Bob French, Doug Wright, Andrew Pringle and 15 other residents

1. Public meeting called to order at 7:30 P.M.
2. Motion to approve agenda with the following additions; Ron Wilson will discuss our Carbon Footprint, seconded and all in favour - approved.
3. Motion to approve minutes from our last meeting on June 11, 1018, seconded and all in favour - approved.

Executive Report

The new and annual online filing required under the Society Act has been completed.

New Business

4. Seniors/Activity Centre Tax Funding Request:

A representative from the Seniors Centre was not available and Ron updated the residents with the following: the CVRD has been contacted and is in support of combining the tax funding for the Community Centre and the Seniors/Activity Centre. Currently only the Community Centre is funded via a line item on residents tax bills. The discussions continue. Residents can expect an increase in taxes. More news will be provided when it is available.

5. 2018 General Local Elections:

DIRA is trying to organize an all candidates meeting prior to the election which will be on Oct 20th. Two candidates for Islands Trust have said they will attend and we are waiting to hear back from the CVRD regarding other candidates.

6. Denman Island Residents Carbon Footprint:

Ron Wilson is in the process of putting together a series of public forums for the community to discuss ways to identify and learn more about how to reduce our carbon footprint. In addition, he hopes the community can determine steps to influence our political leaders. The series will start on Tuesday Oct 2nd and run for about 7 consecutive Tuesdays in the hall. Prior to the series a movie called "Beyond Crisis" will be shown in the hall.

Committee Reports

7. Waste Management:

Bob French explained the hardware store is no longer selling garbage tickets and the

General Store has generously offered to start selling them. The new price will be 1 ticket for \$3 or 2 tickets for \$5. Receipts will only be provided for residents who buy their tickets at the recycling centre.

The new garbage contract tender has been opened and advertised on Denman Island and Courtenay/Comox.

8. Community Dock Committee:

It has been a busy summer at the dock with about \$1,000 in revenue for the month of August. In addition, positive feedback has been received from all of the boaters.

9. Parks Committee:

Laura Pope updated the residents regarding the following projects the parks committee is involved in.

In Denman Provincial Park, parks staff and junior rangers completed the trail that bypasses the Lake Farm driveway in July. In late August the low impact removal of building debris on the eastern end of this trail was also completed. The trail will ultimately be improved to a full multi use rating. This may happen next year if there is sufficient funding. The public can now access the east side of the lake and all the trail systems loops without trespassing. The CVRD also was able to get a Statutory Right of Way in place on the road that runs along the eastern boundary of the park. The Parks Committee is very grateful to the CVRD. This took some extraordinary effort on their part to get this linear park/SRW registered on title. This road is commonly called the Gravel Pit Rd. This SRW finally solves the problem of access for park users from the east side of the island and also allows for the completion of the main trail loops in that part of the park. We will be working with BC Parks to complete a 200-meter section of trail that needs to go around the private property that crosses the Gravel Pit Rd and will totally complete this park access. This will be worked on this fall/winter and will be in place for use next spring.

We have been working with CVRD staff to try and figure out how to make the Morning Beach Park lower trail safe and sound. Dan May had hoped that we could begin work in late September using a landing craft to move equipment, which is needed to move the lower set of stairs. This has proven to be much more expensive than is practical. We are working on another plan that may involve deconstructing the stairs by hand and moving them. No decisions have been made at this point. There may be safety related closure on the stairs when the winter storms come again this year.

The proposal for a new neighborhood park on Piercy Rd. (likely called Piercy Park) has been approved in principle by the CVRD. Staff is very positive about this proposal and has recommended it for approval. This would formalize this 1.63-acre area as a family picnic area with excellent beach access. An application has gone to highways for CRVD to register it as a park. We should hear back about this in about a month or so.

We have talked to Talina McRae from MOTI about trimming the high branches on the large Cedar trees at the base of the graffiti hill. Also, we have asked her to look at the

other side of the curve where the no-posts are to make it more user friendly. The CVRD have sent several proposals for the CIT to go up this hill but there is very little actual room to place a trail. In the meantime we have asked that every action be taken to make it as safe as possible, and that means increasing sight lines at the base of the hill as this is a very dangerous curve. The good news is that MOTI has asked Mainroad to do this work as part of the new maintenance contract and it could be done as early as this fall.

There was a huge and very lively response to the CVRDs Cross Island Trail Open House at the Market on the 8th of Sept.

The Trails Committee will likely give a fuller report on the Cross Island Trail and the results of the survey once those are collated by CVRD. As always we welcome new members and guests to our meetings. We are changing our time to 9:30, still on the first Wednesday of the month at the Firehall. And again we thank the Fire Department for allowing us to meet there.

10. Trails Committee:

Tim Fuchs provided maps of the new trail Laura described near the gravel pit.

11. Wildlife Advisory Committee:

Dennis Forsyth let everyone know that this year has been the worst for deer being hit on the road and needing to be euthanized. Last week there were 3 deer which needed to be killed. Dennis has written many articles on this subject for the local paper and is planning another for the next Flagstone. In most cases the hits are due to speed and carelessness - which means they are avoidable.

12. Marine Guardians:

Edi Johnstone informed the residents that the Marine Guardians have recently been focused on and extremely concerned about the safety of our foreshore and how to protect beach users (of all species) from the alterations made to our beaches as they become increasingly industrialized. This was brought to the attention of the membership last summer, and in August 2017, DIRA sent a letter to DFO expressing concern about intensive aquaculture practices, fisheries violations, and various hazards to wildlife, recreational users, and issues with upland owners accessing Baynes Sound. In addition, numerous letters from concerned Denman residents were sent to the agencies responsible. Some of our complaints are at last, being taken seriously.

The actions taken by the authorities in response to our complaints are as follows:

- A gill net installed on one shellfish tenure was entrapping fish when tides activated the net. It also posed a threat to recreational users and other animals that could become entangled in it. It has been removed.
- Illegal crab traps used on some shellfish tenures allowed crabs to enter but not to exit. Herons, eagles, ravens and crows were in danger of becoming entangled in nearby nets while trying to feast on the trapped crabs. These crab traps have been removed.

- A letter complaining about the proliferation of dangerous rebar stakes on westside beaches was sent to the Ministry of Fisheries in August 2018. This generated a response from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources (FLNRO) reporting that on April 30, 2018, Denman shellfish tenure owners were notified by letter to “shepherd hook” their rebar stakes within 90 days or risk losing their tenures. We have observed one tenure that has started to comply- most have not.
- 4ft high netted walls of superfluous aquaculture equipment around the perimeter of a tenure on Piercy Road Beach have been taken down.
- A recent bylaw complaint regarding a tenure being operated in what appears to be a W1 Marine Conservation area is being “investigated” by the Islands Trust bylaw enforcement team.
- Lastly, Transport Canada and FLNRO are planning to do a tenure audit in the early fall.

Ongoing problems we would like to address:

There are many tenures that appear to be operating outside their boundaries (according to their markers and management plans). This poses problems when trying to determine if it is safe to wade, swim, paddleboard, kayak or even throw sticks for your dog if you can't be sure there are no loose nets, rebar stakes, navigational hazards etc. hidden below the surface. There were several serious incidents this summer needing emergency medical intervention caused by hidden hazards in tenure areas and there will be more in the future.

What can DIRA do?

To ensure our beaches are safe for recreational users and wildlife again, we need to keep up the pressure on the agencies responsible. Obviously, some of the more dangerous equipment and infrastructure on our beaches should be banned altogether. In the short term, DIRA could lobby for signage warning of potentially lethal dangers such as rebar stakes lurking below the surface or perhaps buried in the shifting sand. Residents and visitors could also be educated about these threats to safety via an ongoing public media awareness campaign.

What are the Marine Guardians doing?

We are encouraging residents to keep writing to FLNRO, DFO and the Ministry of Transportation's Navigable Waters Protection Division in hopes of making our beaches safe again. We are also hoping to have the upper area of the W1 Marine Conservation zoned areas of some of our beaches incorporated into the existing CVRD Denman Island Parks and Greenways Master Plan. Based on their survey, the CVRD has already identified the absence of beach walks as a conspicuous gap in the Greenways Plan. A recent article published in the Grapevine floating the idea that we include some beaches in the Greenways Plan and have them designated for recreational use, received a positive response from many residents. Our reasoning is that with the promotion, exposure and increased use of official beach accesses and beach walks, a greater appreciation of our surrounding waters and beaches would follow. And with that raised awareness, this precious resource might eventually qualify for some much-needed oversight.

There was a motion for DIRA to send a letter to the CVRD Parks and Active Transportation Planner, Mark Harrison requesting that the CVRD consider incorporating suitable beach corridors in the Greenways Master Plan. The motion was seconded and 11 residents voted in favour with 3 voting against. The motion was passed.

There was another motion to carbon copy this letter to the local Island Trust which was seconded, and voted in favour. the motion was passed.

13. Internet Committee:

Graham Hayman outlined recent activities which included, 9 members, 5 meetings and 6 goals. The internet survey is still circulating with 175 replies so far. The results will be published eventually. The committee is in the process of applying for a start-up grant from Denman Works. There are two options under consideration: upgrade copper wire or change to a fibre optic cable.

LIAISON REPORTS:

14. Islands Trust:

David Critchley informed residents that a development permit has been issued for the work required at Morning Beach Park.

Island Trust received a lot of public input from the last meeting in August regarding the Farm Plan. This is a work in progress with a lot of more work needed to definitions and other issues.

Islands Trust is working with local First Nations to develop more engagement with them and an event (such as tours of native sites on Denman or story telling).

The end of the current term is ending with elections in October.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:55, seconded and passed.