

General Meeting Monday, November 18, 2024

Attendees: Ron Shepherd (chair), Jenny Balke, Claudia Kroll-Gray, Andrew Pringle and 14 residents

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM in the Back Hall at the Community Hall

1. Motion to approve agenda - MOTION PASSED
2. Motion to approve minutes from previous general meeting on October 21, 2024 - MOTION PASSED

3. DIRA Executive Report

Bottle Depot Finances - The Bottle Depot has been losing money for the past few years and is projected to increase that loss in future years. The bottle depot manager will be recommending cost saving strategies to eliminate that loss. There may need to be a cut in operating hours and efficiencies with regard to the bottle donations. Encorp provides some funding for the bottle depot but will not be increasing that for at least two years. Government funding is not available for bottle depots.

The next public meeting will be on February 10, 2025.

DIRA's 50th anniversary will be in 2025 and the board would like to hear thoughts regarding how to celebrate. There was some interest and one resident suggested advertising in both local papers.

The Denman Sailing Club disbanded a few years ago and allocated their unspent money to local non-profit organizations. Two DIRA committees, the Graham Lake Swim Dock and the Community Dock received a donation of \$3,924 each.

Committee Reports:

4. Denman West Community Dock and Boat Launch Committee

There was a recent committee meeting and a new chair was elected, unanimously. The new chairman is Mike Duffy.

There are ongoing discussions with the owner of a boat which has been docked for several weeks. The owner is not paying moorage and the committee would like it removed before rough weather may cause the boat to damage the dock.

In the past BC Ferries provided after hours emergency evacuations, however that service was never in their contract and is no longer available.

When emergency evacuations are required, other options are available which includes the use of the community dock. The emergency services personnel decide the most appropriate method of evacuation.

5. Parks Committee

The chair for the Parks Committee was unavailable for the general meeting but provided the following updates. Highlights were read to residents.

Parks Trail Map

The Denman Parks trails map is in the 24/25 Hornby Denman Tourist Guide. No complaints, so we are optimistic the effort to accurately map the trails while keeping private property separate from trail users was a success. The QR code ad went onto the fold out Denman page.

Largo Road Beach Access

We also had a plan to walk the MOTI access from Lacon south of MacFarlane, down to the beach via an unopened road access that is marked on the maps as Largo Rd. The PC did this twice and felt it was feasible.

Our hope was to create a walking trail access to the beach to allow a loop walk from Hinton Rd to Largo and back up along Lacon. We had asked CVRD to see about getting a License of Occupation for the MOTI access and to make it a CVRD mini park.

While the Largo Rd access itself is very accessible there are other issues. On Oct 1st I met with Daniel May from CVRD and we again walked it using our previous map of the trail. Dan brought

the BC Archeology Registered Sites map of the same area and it shows a very extensive hillside and beach midden basically centered on Largo Rd. The midden is clearly visible on the beach and up onto the hillside.

At the time Dan felt that it could be difficult to do a trail in this area as the midden is so extensive, and that just to apply for MOTI permissions would be much more expensive than in the past. Now, given what has recently happened with the CIT construction and the added requirements when working in any area within 200 meters of the water, it would be very challenging to get approval for the Largo Rd access. We left it that Dan would confer with his superiors and that CVRD could potentially confer with the neighbors in the area to see if there was enough support in the area to move ahead with applying for a permit.

The Big Hill

Denman Cross Island Trail - Big Hill - History Document

NOT READ AT MEETING.

2013 -Initial section of Denman Cross Island Trail built from Arts Center to bottom of Big Hill.

In 2013 CVRD initially reached out to MOTI to discuss the two proposed hill sections as part of the Denman CIT: Big Hill and ferry hill

CVRD had engaged an engineering firm for very conceptual design options for building the trail along the Big Hill section. Design options included using wire gabion baskets to build a trail next to the road edge.

MOTI did not support the construction of the trail within the road allowance at that time. There was not enough space on existing road as well as the cost would be very expensive

CVRD moved on to planning the next section of trail between top of hill and Swan Road. Planned to continue discussing the big hill section with MoTI.

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2015-2016 then Parks Manager Doug Demarzo met with Brendan Kelly of MOTI to discuss the big hill as part of the overall trail plan. MoTI was focused on the Beulah Creek project on Hornby at that time and the big hill was not a priority. CVRD moved into the design and construction phase of Swan to Corrigan section in 2017-2018.

2020 - Doug Demarzo and Daniel May both had discussions with MoTi regarding the Big Hill. MoTi had done some testing/coring on the hill but still had no short term plans for road upgrade. This project would be very expensive as it would require blasting to widen the road.

MOTI had mainroad brush back the cedars at the bottom of the big hill for better visibility at the request of the CVRD and Denman Community.

CVRD moved to planning and construction of Kirk Road stairs and trail to connect to the Denman West Ferry terminal in 2020.

In 2022 Parks Manager Mark Harrison raised the Big Hill section again with MoTi in a CVRD/MOTI meeting.

In 2024 Daniel May again raised the Big Hill section with MOTI staff member Kellen Truant and a gap in the Denman CIT trail with MOTI. MOTI suggested that they would look into it.

In 2024 Mark Harrison again raised the Big Hill section with MOTI staff member Kellen Truant at a CVRD/MOTI meeting.

This meeting and subsequent meeting in 2024 seemed to get some traction with MOTI and Kellen Truant suggested that MOTI would direct attention to the hill and do some more testing and cost analysis.

END OF HISTORY

From 2013 until now this hill has been a gap in the cross island trail that seems to be unsolvable. Sections of trail get to the Big Hill and stop at both the top and bottom. CVRD has raised the issue of the gap in the trail with MOTI in 5 meetings over a period of 10 years and MOTI has been basically immovable on every potential solution that has been brought forward. In the meantime there have been multiple car accidents and two serious accidents involving bike riders. This of course does not include the many, many accidents that have taken place over the last 40 years.

In May I had a conversation with David Larue from MOTI. I advanced the idea of additional signage at the top and bottom of the hill using signs already on Denman. I gave MOTI a couple of months to see if any signage would be placed. Nothing has happened. MOTI has some strict rules that apply to signs but as the signs requested are already on Denman in three separate locations they must be usable on the verge at the top and bottom of the hill.

The signs that seem most appropriate are large yellow diamond signs that say Multi Use Shoulder – and under that is wording that says Horses, Cyclists and Pedestrians. Given the additional volume of ferry traffic in the summer, with groups of cars in the 45 – 50 range all heading up or down this hill hourly, something needs to be done to make it as safe as possible

for ALL users of the road. MOTI's take on it is that if the signage that is already there is followed, it is as safe as it can be. I disagree. I see this signage as a stopgap measure for extra awareness while the longer term safety issue of the hill is looked at and finally solved – before there is loss of life.

I would like MOTI to place the additional signs as soon as possible and then to plan a meeting with members of our community on ways that this very dangerous hill can be made safer.

I would like to write a letter on behalf of DIRA to David Larue (MOTI) and Kellen Truant (MOTI) With CC to Daniel Arbour (Area A Director) to Doug DeMarzo (CVRD Manager). The letter would outline our concerns and ask for a meeting as soon as possible.

End of Parks Committee Chair report.

Discussion followed with residents expressing a need for an evaluation of all Denman roads which are in need of upgrading. For example, there are no bike lanes or even an edge to pull over.

Road issues have been discussed at resident meetings in the past. Jenny has been trying to get a representative from the Ministry of Transportation to attend a public meeting, unsuccessful so far and may require a daytime meeting.

DIRA operates via committees and if road issues are going to be a focus of DIRA, a Roads Committee needs to be established. Some residents expressed interest in this option. The formation of a committee would facilitate more powerful communication with government agencies, rather than individual efforts.

6. Internet Committee:

The Internet Committee has not formally been reactivated but some of its previous members have continued to evaluate the progress of CityWesty's activities. An article will appear in one of the local papers. The following highlights from the article were discussed at the meeting.

Research by a Denman resident shows that optical fiber cable has not been laid along as much as 38% of Denman roads. The driveway boxes and rolls of cable in the Main Road yard near the Clinic should by now be serving residents, but were abandoned by Driftwood Communications, the ditching contractors. The referendum on a 10% levy on property taxes by CVRD was very widely supported, yet these homeowners are being taxed for service not delivered. Now there's light at the end of the tunnel. Citywest has finally made a statement. "CityWest is working with funding partners on a proposed increase to the scope of the Denman Island project. This scope increase will materially cover the majority of the remaining homes and businesses in the

community with fibre-optic services. CityWest's plan is to update the community in January 2025, once we have a decision on our proposal. – Stefan Woloszyn, CEO of CityWest”

Denman Works is planning to send a letter to Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT), endorsed by island service groups (Denman Residents Association, Denman Works, Denman Fire Service, Hornby-Denman Health and Denman Medical Clinic) urging them to fund Citywest to complete installation of the missing infrastructure. Tony Gregson of Denman Works said “We understand that NDIT was glad to accept the research on the missing infrastructure, which has been handed over to Citywest with a request for a scope of work and a schedule. From the CEO's announcement, that may be happening, but given the history of silence around the issue, it surely can't hurt to remind them we want this problem fixed. It's a complex situation, and maybe they have their reasons, but their refusal to communicate amounts to a dereliction of public trust when people are paying taxes for a service they are not getting and are not told why.”

7. Liaison Report - Islands Trust

The fifth anniversary meeting of the Baynes Sound Marine Ecosystem Forum recently held. This group was initially funded by Islands Trust. Many groups were represented including First Nations, Project Watershed, VI University, Islands Trust, Denman Marine Stewards and others. A Denman resident, Dori Woodward received the King Charles medal for her conservation efforts. International groups spoke. There was extensive discussion regarding the shipbreaking in Baynes Sound and the serious breaches of environmental standards which are impacting the surrounding water with toxic metals, paint, asbestos and so on. The CVRD is trying to take DWR Shipbreaking to court but is waiting for the availability of a courtroom.

Islands Trust and other government agencies had their third “government to government” meeting with the Comox First Nation. Potential changes may be coming in 2025 if the Comox First Nation signs a treaty.

There will be a local trust meeting soon but that has not been scheduled yet.

Policy statement discussions continue regarding housing and the Official Community Plan for the trust area.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 PM - MOTION PASSED

