**Housing on Hornby Meeting Notes**

**Sunday, September 26, 2021**

**11am – Spark and ZOOM**

**Present:** Islands Trust – Grant Scott

APC – Vicki Bale, Joanne Ovitsland

CVRD – Daniel Arbour

HIRRA – Lynn Nunley

HICEEC – Katherine Ronan, Donna Tuele, Karen Ross, Rudy Rogalsky

HIHS – Barbara Baird, Sadie Chezenko, April Lewis (note taker)

**Background**

Daniel has for the past two years, been working with Denman Island Islands Trust trustee, Laura Busheikan around housing on Denman and is very appreciative of the opportunity to meet with Hornby Island stakeholders re: organizing around housing needs on Hornby.

**2014** – The CVRD held a non-binding referendum to initiate a homelessness and housing support tax service. Over 82% of residents on both islands voted in favor at that time. The CVRD staff were reluctant to move forward on the initiative as it was seen as downloading the responsibility for housing from the provincial level to the municipalities.

**2016 –** The CVRD held a referendum to initiate the housing tax service. Hornby and Denman were not included in the process as they are part of the Islands Trust area. Comox chose to opt out of the referendum. It was passed by 54% and currently generates $400-500,000 annually.

**Coalition for Ending Homelessness Comox Valley**

This Comox Valley group (37 different organizations all connected to housing and homelessness) has recently formed and meets regularly to coordinate housing initiatives, collaborating on the prioritization of housing needs in the Valley and collectively allocate the funds raised through the CV housing tax service.The Coalition has created a 5yr plan and budgets accordingly. The Comox Valley Community Foundation has set aside $75,000 for grants specific to housing this year and these funds will also be administered through the Coalition.

There have been 1200 market rental units and 100 non-market units created in the Valley in recent years serving the population of approximately 40,000 people.

HIHS has recently become a member of the Comox Valley Coalition.

**CVRD Support for Housing**

This lack of available, affordable year round housing on the islands is one of Daniel’s priorities as the Area A representative and he continues to advocate strongly on our behalf at the provincial and municipal levels. He announced that HIHS has been successful in securing a $10,000 grant from the CVRD to upgrade the septic system at The Village.

**Current Initiative**

The 2018 Islands Trust housing needs assessment found that approximately 100 new non market housing units are needed for each island. Support from Islands Trust and the CVRD and will be needed to create strategies to make the zoning changes required and find the resources to achieve this goal.

**Current CVRD Initiative**

With that in mind, Daniel is proposing that a feasibility study be carried out that would assess the current housing needs and potential for creating a housing tax service for both Denman and Hornby Islands. Using tax dollars already collected from the islands, a consultant would be hired to carry out the study which would have four possible outcomes:

1. status quo (no new tax service)

2. a tax that is collected on Hornby and/or Denman that would then be added to the housing taxes already collected for the whole Valley

3. a tax that is collected on Hornby and Denman Islands, is held as a joint source of revenue and would be used only for Hornby and Denman Islands

4. a tax specific to Hornby and one specific to Denman with the funds collected for each island being used for housing specific to each island

If the feasibility study recommended that a housing tax service for Hornby be created, this would be on the CVRD election ballot in 16 months.

All meeting participants supported the feasibility study.

All agreed that transparency and careful planning are required as there are residents who are already concerned about rising taxes.

**Islands Trust Opportunity**

Islands Trust is in a policy statement review process that includes housing. The timing of the Hornby housing stakeholders meeting is very opportune as policy review occurs only every 25 years and there is an upcoming IT meeting scheduled for Oct. 8th on Hornby with the policy review statement on the agenda. Given that the policy statement informs all changes to a community’s OCP and the resulting by-laws, it is critical that the foundations for addressing the housing needs on the island be included within this updated policy statement.

A brief submitted to the IT by the group meeting today and a request for a delegation from this group to speak at the Oct. 8th meeting would ensure that the housing issue is included in the minutes and then can become part of the policy statement review process.

One cannot assume that current illegal dwellings will be grandfathered into any new OCP update or bylaw changes.

Caution for creating strategies to address housing issues: remember to consider the mandate of Islands Trust to preserve and protect

**Suggestions Specific to Islands Trust**

* Extend current moratorium (Dec. 31 deadline) on non-action against illegal secondary dwellings suites
* Legalize existing illegal secondary dwellings and suites
* Simplify processes\less red tape
* Provide support to engage in the TUP process
* More support from Planners
* Change zoning to accommodate increased density for year round housing only, dependent on water and septic capacity
* Other models - Relative to Cortes and Tofino, you must provide a year round home for the owner or a renter on the same property. Whistler provides below market ownership housing as well as seasonal rental accommodation for workers.

**Suggestions Specific to Islands Trust**

* Confirm that existing coops only are permitted
* Increase bylaw enforcement of existing STVR regulations

– caution given about the possibility that a non complaint driven process would result in home owners having to deal with the consequences of proactive inspections

* Encourage covenants on title
* Rezone private land to community housing
* Create a TUP task force to assist home owners with the TUP process for existing and new secondary dwellings, rezoning, covenants, etc

- need to demonstrate that secondary dwellings are part of the housing needs strategy and work, but the building may need support to meet the standards required to obtain a TUP. Could

- could IT and/or HICEEC secure funding to assist with upgrading the houses to meet the TUP requirements and/or to provide support through the TUP process?

* Consider all Trust areas working together to create needed changes

**APC Tasks and Timing**

The APC is concluding its work on creating inclusive language in the OPC to acknowledge the importance of Hornby to the Komok’s First Nation and to protect their interests in our community plan and bylaws.

As their next focus, the APC will consider housing and STVR’s together as STVR’s have an impact on the available rental housing stock on the island. There are concerns that some of the recommendations that may come forth about STVR’s will create resistance that may impact movement forward on other housing strategies.

A second area of concern is how best to communicate about the need for bylaw changes with both resident and non-resident home owners who operate STVR’s, that even though the proposed bylaw changes may help address the housing issues on the island; may better protect the island environment and better serve the year round residents, the changes may make it more challenging to operate an STVR.

There is funding needed to cover the cost of the support given to the APC by the Trust Planners.

**Please note: The following suggestions arose from today’s meeting and are only the beginning.**

**Need to:**

* Be open minded
* Be patient – government process and regulation change can take some time
* Be willing to look at both short term actions and long term strategies
* Create many strategies/road map to reach goal
* Access multiple sources for funding
* Include people who need housing in the planning
* Safeguard existing housing stock for residents
* Explore the definition of resident in relation to the vulnerable environment of the island
* Obtain and collate current data

- review the 2018 data and consider current priorities, changing trends

- accurate statistics around carrying capacity for water and septic

- housing data will be available in Spring 2022

- analyze trends to determine if the 100 new units would be sufficient and for how long

- number of STVR’s operated by residents, number of non resident operated STVR’s, maximum number of guests advertised, size of lot, water and septic capacity

**Types of housing needed:**

* Market housing for middle class:

1. Housing for older Hornby homeowners who would like to downsize and who would love to stay on the island

2. Affordable ownership housing for those who have work but who earn below what is needed to purchase at current rates. (“below market” ownership).

* Non market housing for residents with a low income
* Workforce
* Designs/projects that incorporate rainwater catchment

- consider the current disconnect between advertising for increased tourism when there is a water shortage during the summer that impacts year round residents

- Black Creek has suspended new housing due to lack of water

- Nanaimo has had rainwater catchment as part of their bylaws for some time

- Darren Bond’s presentation to the CVRD for a pilot project to support low income earners to purchase rainwater cisterns. CVRD staff will review and bring forth a recommendation.

* To incorporate food security into housing strategies

**Funding:**

* Preference to work on projects that do not require government funding

(still waiting for BCH funding for the Beulah Creek project after ISLA’s and BCH’s initial meeting 5 yrs ago)

* Consider multiple sources of funding: provincial, municipal, local and private sources, and public private partnerships
* Consider how the MRDT funding fits with strategies

**Possible Solutions:**

* The 15 units being built at The Thatch may provide opportunity for current home owners on Hornby to downsize and remain on Hornby
* Secure existing inexpensive land and houses/retain existing housing stock by offering repayable loans to homeowners currently living in substandard housing to bring their water, septic, etc up to code so they can remain in their homes
* Add to existing stock by offering financial support to homeowners who are over housed to retrofit their homes to create a secondary dwelling to accommodate a tenant or roommate
* There is more capacity at The Village
* Consider securing crown lands

**Tasks**

* HIHS will submit a brief to Islands Trust and a request to speak at the Oct. 8th IT meeting
* Participants are all encouraged to attend and speak at the Oct. 8th IT meeting
* Meeting participants will send letter of support for the feasibility study letter to Daniel Arbour

**Next meeting Sunday, Oct. 3 11am Location to be determined**