



March, 2020 First Edition

## HICEEC REPORT

### **Affordability and Accessibility**

HICEEC occupies one of 6 Hornby seats on the Hornby Denman Ferry Advisory Committee. There are also 6 Denman reps, from matching sectors. And a 13<sup>th</sup> seat for the Area A Regional Director. The Chair of the Committee is Denman Islander, Frank Frketich

The Hornby reps are:

Education (Alissa Pratt)

Health & Elders – Ron Edmonds

HIRRA – Rob McCreary

Islands Trust – Grant Scott

Business/HICEEC – Karen Ross

Emergency Services – Fire Chief Doug Chinnery

2020 priorities identified by the Hornby members include:

- Summer long waits, on both ferries, in both directions
- Discussion of measures to handle the extra traffic due to the upcoming construction projects on Hornby (Beulah Creek Village, Arts Centre, School, Ford Cove restaurant, Thatch Pub, Clinic expansion, etc.)
- Issues with the Baynes Sound Connector – reliability and plastics pollution
- Year-round, traditional schedules not being re-instated, when other communities' schedules were
- Order of unloading at Denman West not being consistent with Hornby Lane 1 traffic at B.B., nor the order of arrival of all lanes.
- Public wifi at the terminals, especially Gravelly Bay
- A web-cam at the Hornby ferry terminal road, showing if there's line-ups
- Appreciation for the local ferry crews, and their commitment to excellence

### **Last call for getting your business on the map--literally**

Production of the 2020 Hornby and Denman Visitor Guide is under way. The deadline to participate is MARCH 7<sup>th</sup>. The Guide provides valuable information for residents and visitors to both islands, including Island maps, the ferry schedule, and messaging about Island values, especially regarding sustainability and careful nurturing of the islands. Thank you to the participating businesses for continuing to fund this community marketing initiative. This year's coordinator, Caroline Sneath, can be contacted at [caroline@hiceec.org](mailto:caroline@hiceec.org).

### **Denman Hornby Connectivity Project**

The preparation work has been done. The Digital Roadmap and Implementation Plan are complete. Through extensive consultation, in both communities, the project has been molded into setting a goal of getting fibre optic Internet access to every household on both Islands. Residents in both communities have strongly confirmed that they prefer building a land-based infrastructure to waiting for 5G, or other wireless options. Even residents not opposed to wireless options, agree that the challenge with satellite

based systems are redundancy, weather impacts, and limited bandwidth. We all agree – the higher priced fibre optic is the best choice. The diligent committee is now seeking investors and Internet Service Providers to implement the plan. This is a capital-intensive project, not an easy task for two small, remote islands. Our current primary service provider, Telus, has stated that they will not install fibre-optic “last-mile” service on the Islands “in the foreseeable future”. However, the committee remains optimistic that, with the support of the CVRD, a solution for funding will be found.

### **Where will HICEEC live?**

As of the date of writing, the landlord of the Savoie building, HICEEC’s home for the past 15+ years, have given notice that they will not be renewing the lease. Arrangements for negotiations are underway, and we remain optimistic that an agreement, for continued tenancy, will be arranged.

Needed repairs to the E.V. charging station, in its’ current location, are awaiting this decision.

### **What's going on with the “pillow tax”?**

The answer to that is due. Generally, an electoral area is the smallest portion of a regional district that may be prescribed as a designated accommodation area. For Hornby, Ministry of Finance staff have referred the matter to their legal department to determine if a variance is possible, and that Hornby Island can be separated out of Electoral Area A, and given a variance to become a “designated accommodation area”. Through lobbying, and with strong support from the CVRD and local short-term rental accommodation providers, we are optimistic that this variance will be granted. Anytime now.

When approved, HICEEC, the designated recipient, will hire expert help to assist in guiding the Board, the primary accommodation stakeholders, and a local tourism steering committee in conducting additional public consultation and developing a 5-year Strategic Plan, and annual implementation plan, for the funds, within the program’s parameters. This could include to educate visitors to abide by community values, build the shoulder season economy, support programs for off-season events, mitigate the cost of tourism on the tax roll, train front line workers, provide workforce housing, etc.

### **What else are we working on?**

Hornbyisland.com EVENTS calendar; busing on Hornby and Denman; participation in CAST and the Central Area Planning; support for shoulder season economic enhancement; liaison with the Arts community, green initiatives, etc.

Submitted on behalf of the volunteer HICEEC Board: John Heinegg, Katherine Ronan, Carlyn Bishop, Jason Griggs, John Grayson, Jeff Zamluk, Jim Bulmer, and Jack Hornstein.