

January 24, 2019

Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee Meeting – STAFF REPORT

Sonja Zupanec, MCIP, RPP Local Planning Services

Updated Project Charter and New Housing Advisory Committee

File No.: 6500-20 Gabriola Housing Options and Impacts Review Project

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee endorse the Gabriola Island Housing Options and Impacts Review Project Charter v.2 dated January 2019.
2. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff to contact the following agencies and community groups to solicit expression of interest for volunteer(s) to be appointed to a 2 year term on a newly formed 'Gabriola Island Housing Advisory Planning Commission':
 1. a) Snuneymuxw Housing Committee
 2. b) Gabriola Advisory Planning Commission
 3. c) Gabriola Housing Society
 4. d) People for a Healthy Community on Gabriola Island
 5. e) Gabriola Chamber of Commerce
 6. f) Gabriola Auxiliary for Island Health Care Society
 7. g) Gabriola Village Vision
3. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee endorse the 'Terms of Reference' for the Gabriola Housing Advisory Planning Commission.

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to present an updated project charter and recommend the LTC consider establishing a special advisory planning commission to advance the work on the housing project over the next two years.

BACKGROUND

The LTC passed the following resolutions at the November 22, 2018 regular business meeting:

GB-2018-114

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the "Housing Options Official Community Plan/Land Use Bylaw Review Project Phase 2" be renamed to the "Housing Options & Impacts Review Project" and be moved to the top priority on the Top Priorities List. CARRIED

The project has been renamed and the Top Priority List has been updated and posted to the web.

GB-2018-115

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request Staff to update the Activity for the Top Priority number one (1) Housing Options & Impacts Review Project be the same as the Objectives in the Housing Options Review Phase 2 Charter, except that bullet four (4) be amended to read "all housing" and bullet five (5) be amended by adding the words "ecological footprints" at the end. CARRIED

The Project Charter has been updated and staff recommend a revised workplan and establishment of a Housing Advisory Planning Commission (Attachment 1).

GB-2018-116

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request Staff to move the Review and Update the Gabriola Build Out Map on the Projects List to the In-Scope section of the Gabriola Housing Options & Review Official Community Plan/Land Use Bylaw Project Charter.

CARRIED

The review and update of the build out map has been included in the 'In-Scope' actions under 'Secondary Suites'.

ANALYSIS

Issues and Opportunities

Project Charter Revisions

Staff recommend updating the 'Workplan Overview' section of the project charter (Attachment 1) to reflect next steps and timelines for the development of a communication and engagement strategy. If endorsed, the updated project charter will be posted to the project webpage.

Housing Advisory Planning Commission

Staff recommend that the LTC advance the housing project by creating a special Housing Advisory Planning Commission (HAPC) subject to the provisions of Advisory Planning Commission Bylaw No. 296. Up to nine members can be appointed for a two year term and should represent a broad cross section of interest groups such as the Snuneymuxw Housing Commission, Gabriola Housing Society, People for a Healthy Community, Village Vision, and Gabriola Advisory Planning Commission (APC) Members. A draft 'Terms of Reference' (Attachment 2) has been prepared by staff for LTC consideration, to potentially guide the work of appointed members, whether it be undertaken by a HAPC or the existing APC. The first step to advance the project is the development of a communication and engagement strategy by May 31, 2019, for LTC consideration.

The current Gabriola APC consists of eight members who were appointed in June 2017 with terms expiring in June 2019. The APC members represent broad community interests, including housing, and had expressed interest in having the development of a communications and engagement strategy re-referred to the APC, pending confirmation of Top Priority projects for the new term. If there is sufficient interest, staff recommend that one or two members of the current APC could also be appointed to the HAPC. The LTC could continue to provide referrals to the APC on general planning matters and applications as they arise.

Draft Terms of Reference

Staff have prepared a draft Terms of Reference (TOR - Attachment 2) [see p.4 below] for LTC review and consideration. The TOR identifies the purpose of the Commission and proposes a workplan for the members. The LTC can use the draft TOR if it chooses to retain the existing APC to advance the housing project instead.

Rationale for Recommendation

Local Planning Services (LPS) staff currently have limited capacity to substantially advance the LTC's housing project, without assistance from external consultants or community volunteers. Staff recommend the LTC endorse the updated project charter and establish a new HAPC in order to support advancement of this project. The HAPC can guide the development of a comprehensive community consultation and engagement strategy for an anticipated multi-year project pursuant to an endorsed

terms of reference. Staff recommend representation from community agencies and organizations as per the staff recommendation, included on Page 1 of the report.

ALTERNATIVES

The LTC may consider the following alternatives to the staff recommendation:

1. Expand the list of agencies or community groups and request expressions of interest for a HAPC.

The LTC may wish to identify additional agencies or community groups to be represented on a newly established HAPC and can modify the recommended resolution on Page 1 of the report as necessary.

2. Amend the draft Terms of Reference for a HAPC.

The LTC may wish to modify the draft TOR and specify additional responsibilities, timelines or deliverables. In this case the recommended resolution on Page 1 of the report should include the words "as amended" and the meeting minutes can reflect the desired changes endorsed by the LTC.

3. Refer the Housing Options and Impacts Review Project Charter and development of the communication and engagement strategy to the existing APC, request an expression of interest from a member of the Snuneymuxw Housing Committee for appointment to the current APC and determine the level of interest/availability for existing members to have their terms extended beyond June 2019 to allow for project continuity.

The LTC may decide to advance the housing project by referring the terms of reference to the existing APC. The implications of this alternative are that the terms of the current APC expire in June 2019 and members may be unavailable to serve an additional term. Appointment of new members may result in a possible break in continuity in the work of the commission. There is currently one available seat on the APC which should be filled by a member representing the indigenous housing perspective. Recommended wording for the resolutions is as follows:

That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request that staff refer the January 2019 Housing Options and Impacts Review Project Charter to the Advisory Planning Commission for comment and that members be asked to work within the endorsed Project Terms of Reference to develop a communication and engagement strategy for LTC consideration.

That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff to solicit expressions of interest from members of the Snuneymuxw Housing Commission to be appointed to the Advisory Planning Commission for a two year term.

NEXT STEPS

If the LTC concurs with the recommendations, staff will contact the identified agencies and community groups to solicit expressions of interest to be appointed to a HAPC. The LTC can consider appointments during a closed session at the next regularly scheduled business meeting on February 28th, 2019.

[DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE]

The Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee Advisory Planning Commission Bylaw No. 296 permits the appointment of an Advisory Planning Commission to advise on matters of land use, community planning, or proposed bylaws and permits, pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, that are referred to it by the Local Trust Committee (LTC).

This Terms of Reference guides the purpose and roles of a Gabriola Housing Advisory Planning Commission (HAPC) to advise the LTC on matters related to the 'Gabriola Housing Options and Impacts Review Project'. The roles, responsibilities and procedures of the HAPC are also pursuant to Bylaw No. 296 and should be referred to separately.

1. Purpose

The HAPC is a select committee to the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) with final decisions in all matters brought before the HAPC resting with the LTC.

The HAPC will:

- a) Prepare a draft engagement and communications strategy to prioritize consultation methodology and topics, consistent with the Housing Options and Impacts Review Project Charter;
- b) Participate in LTC sponsored community consultation events on emerging housing issues;
- c) Bring an informed voice to the development of policy and regulatory amendments;
- d) Review findings from community engagement sessions; inform draft policies and regulations pertaining to the Housing Options and Impacts Review Project; and
- e) Provide advice and recommendations on policy and regulations to address housing needs across the housing continuum, including emergency shelters to market home ownership and indigenous housing needs.

2. Work Plan Overview

- a) WINTER/SPRING 2019 Inaugural meeting of the HAPC – Member introductions and background presentation/orientation by Islands Trust staff. Develop understanding of tasks, terms of reference for the work and best practices in the literature for achieving goals. Establish a meeting schedule to achieve work plan goals.
- b) Commission Meeting #2 – Review sample engagement and communication strategies. Identify key stakeholders, engagement phases/topics, key messages, required background information, engagement methods and preferred implementation options for the strategy during the project.
- c) Commission Meeting #3-#5 – Preparation of a draft engagement and communication strategy in final report format (electronic) for Local Trust Committee consideration by May 31, 2019.
- d) Subsequent Commission Meetings – to be determined (minimum 4 per year) as referred by the LTC.
Duties and Responsibilities

3. Duties and Responsibilities

a) The HAPC may request technical information from other agencies or individuals, through the Islands Trust staff.

b) All deliberations of the HAPC must take place at a meeting of the HAPC and such meetings must be open to the public.

c) Pursue any other matters referred to the HAPC by the LTC and report back to the LTC expeditiously, as required.

LOCAL TRUSTEE COMMITTEE MEETING – JANUARY 24, 2019

Re: Staff Report for the Housing Options Review & Impact Project, Phase 2 (see separate documents for the Staff Report and Phase 2 Charter)

Nancy Hetherington Peirce, January 27, 2019

TOWN HALL SESSION AT BEGINNING OF MEETING – two speakers

John Peirce, representing the Chamber of Commerce Board, noted the difference of emphasis between the Trustees' November 2018 choice of Housing Options & Impact Review as their #1 priority project, and the staff's current statement of "... limited capacity to advance the LTC's housing project without assistance ...".

Then I spoke as an individual involved with housing work:

- Timing:
 - o I asked if a specific application for an affordable housing project could be presented to the Trustees anytime during the work on Phase 2. Both staff and Trustees said definitely yes!
- Terms of Reference for the Housing Advisory Planning Commission (HAPC) – 1. Purpose:
 - o I stated my opinion that the first task, creating an Engagement and Communications Strategy, is not appropriate for a HAPC – except for the part that says "... to prioritize ... topics ...". This latter part is appropriate for a HAPC. Reason: the HAPC consists of people with interest and knowledge about housing – not about community engagement and communications strategies.

DISCUSSION OF STAFF REPORT

(Note: a description of the Gabriola Advisory Planning Commission is in the Staff Report: Analysis, Housing Advisory Planning Commission, second paragraph)

Pertinent points in Sonja's introductory comments:

- Staff would be a key resource for the HAPC
- Staff has examples of templates for developing an Engagement and Communications Strategy
- The Strategy "needs to be crystal-clear" to help the community understand the pace and scope of the work in Phase 2
- Staff would ensure the workplan "deliverables" are achieved
- The HAPC would not have any "opportunity to reframe" the Phase 2 Charter

Scott Colbourne asked the staff if there are ways to increase the staff capacity to work on Phase 2.

David Marlor, the Islands Trust Director for Local Planning Services, said in response:

- IT is "in the process of increasing staff", but not immediately
- There is also IT "project funding" to hire consultants, but this approach requires knowing what a consultant would do before applying for the funding
- There is also the option of a "special tax levy", but this is an "onerous" approach

After further discussion among Trustees and staff, Sonja said: "Implementation [of the Engagement and Communications Strategy] is the main area of work [for the HAPC to assist the staff]."

MOTIONS

Nancy's summary of the motions passed:

- A. LTC designated one of the nine positions on the Gabriola APC for a member of the Snuneymuxw First Nation
- B. LTC approved the establishment of the HAPC as staff recommended, adding two more positions

- C. LTC gave the Gabriola APC – not the HAPC – the task of developing the Engagement and Communications Strategy, without including the task of prioritizing topics
- D. LTC amended the Terms of Reference for the HAPC: they gave the task of prioritizing topics to the HAPC, and simplified the other tasks. Then LTC endorsed the amended Terms of Reference.
- E. LTC endorsed the revised Workplan Overview in the Phase 2 Charter

A. NEW MOTION RE COMPOSITION OF THE GABRIOLA APC

The LTC passed a motion that one of the nine positions on the Gabriola APC be designated for a member of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. (Note: Maximum size of any APC is 9 members.)

B. MOTION (RECOMMENDATION) #2 IN STAFF REPORT

The LTC first amended this motion to include “community members” after the word “groups”, and added two positions to the list of members: Sustainable Gabriola and one member-at-large in response to LTC advertising. Then the LTC passed the amended motion as recommended in the Staff Report.

BRIEF ADJOURNMENT

The meeting then adjourned for half an hour to allow some thinking time and for Sonja to create some proposed new motions to reflect the discussion about the Terms of Reference of the HAPC.

C. NEW MOTION RE COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The LTC passed the following motion:

That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee refer the ‘Housing Options and Impacts Review’ Project Charter to the Advisory Planning Commission and request the APC to assist with the preparation of a draft engagement and communication strategy by June 30, 2019 through the following activities:

1. *Reviewing sample engagement and communication strategies.*
2. *Identify key stakeholders, engagement phases and key messages, required background information, engagement methods and preferred implementation options for the strategy during the project.*

D. MOTION (RECOMMENDATION) #3 IN STAFF REPORT

The LTC passed the following motion to amend the Terms of Reference of the HAPC:

That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee amend the draft ‘Terms of Reference’ for the Gabriola Housing Advisory Planning Commission with the following

1. *Deleting 1a) and replacing with “assisting the LTC with the implementation of the Engagement and Communications Strategy and informing the topic priorities and schedule of consultation;*
2. *Deleting items b) through d) in Section 2 Work Plan Overview and replacing with b) Subsequent Commission Meetings – to be determined (minimum 4 per year) as referred by the LTC.*

Then the LTC passed a motion to endorse the amended Terms of Reference

E. MOTION (RECOMMENDATION) #1 IN STAFF REPORT

The LTC passed this motion, moving “review and update the Gabriola build-out map” to a separate category in the “In Scope” section of the Charter.

Letter from Shelagh Huston in response to concept of “Carrying Capacity” on Gabriola

Hello dear friends,

I’m happy that for a long time I’ve been able to be a ‘lurker’ on the Sustainable Gabriola email list. Even though I’ve never been a regular participant (being too insanely over-busy when living there, and now being off-island), I’ve been a huge fan of all you do and have done since the beginning. As a mere by-stander, I haven’t participated in the ongoing conversations. It’s been a source of satisfaction to me that since things are being so extraordinarily competently handled, I can just sit back and cheer you all on.

I’m delighted to see you take on yet another good thing, the planned Town Hall meetings. I understand that all our elected representatives support "holding regular 'town hall' discussions on key issues as identified by the community, recognizing the need to engage in meaningful dialogue intended to take difficult conversations out of the political realm, and to develop an understanding of the context and fears behind controversial issues."

This is a deeply encouraging sign of the growth into maturity of Gabriola as a community. Now that I live elsewhere, I’m even more convinced that Gabriola has the potential to be a critically-important ‘ark’ of survival and sustainability for the future, especially the possible feared long darkness ahead. What you do seriously matters.

The Town Hall is “an idea whose time has come” and, I believe, matters quite a lot. The ability to hold public conversations productively may turn out to be one of our most significant tools for survival. I support what was said in the topic on 'Discourse' in the November notes, as being exactly what’s needed.

I understand the Sustainable Gabriola meeting January 27 will consider the agenda for the first Town Hall meeting, and I see that "It has been suggested that an initial focus could be to determine the carrying-capacity of Gabriola," with full discussion of the parameters this Sunday, and a perhaps more limited scope at the actual Town Hall.

As a former environmental/ecological economist, I have some thoughts on the idea of “carrying capacity” that I’d like to share with you. I hope my desire to break out of my satisfied-lurker status and share a few quick thoughts on this will be welcomed. Please take my 3-cents-worth mini-essay as another contribution towards holding potentially difficult conversations. If you’d like to share my thoughts at the Sunday meeting, I’d be happy to have them circulated as part of the conversation.

I think that the topic of “carrying capacity” may be a poor foundation for considering the many aspects of sustainability on Gabriola. The concept has been used in the past, including in public conversations on Gabriola that I recall from the 1990’s, as a shorthand way of drawing lines to prevent undesirable and unsustainable development. But it cannot be validly used in this way. This makes it an undependable base-line, and using it opens the discussion to charges of trying to hide a values-based agenda behind a supposedly impregnable 'scientific' perspective.

“Carrying capacity” has been defined in various ways, as:

- *the maximum, equilibrium number of organisms of a particular species that can be supported indefinitely in a given environment, given the food, habitat, water, and other necessities (“limiting factors”) available in the environment;*
- *the number of individuals who can be supported in a given area within natural resource limits, and without degrading the natural social, cultural and economic environment for present and future generations.*

These definitions are not identical. The first definition is the original biological concept, applied to a particular species in an ecological niche. This works, to some extent, in cases where the way a species ‘makes a living’ is defined and fixed, such as a measured amount of bamboo shoots per panda per day. The second definition applies the concept to humans, where it has a much less stringent relevance. Even the definition I quoted was followed by the caveat, "*The carrying capacity for any given area is not fixed.*"

There are a number of problems in applying the idea of carrying capacity to humans. Usually, when people apply the concept, there is an implicit expectation that a specifiable carrying capacity can be found, and can be used in decision-

making for determining public policy regarding development and the limits to growth. For example, back in the late '90s and early '00s, people spent a lot of effort trying to determine how much groundwater there was on Gabriola, with the intention to limit settlement to the number of homes that could be supported by wells drawing on that groundwater, without diminishing or polluting the renewable supply. This seemed both reasonable and objective, a measure with which no-one could argue once the data was established. And the research done did establish that the amount was indeed limited (and put an end to some mythical conceptions of an unlimited supply supposedly coming from Mount Arrowsmith.)

However, this approach overlooks some vital facts, and the expectation that it is possible to find a definable carrying capacity of a given place to support humans is bound to be disappointed. Applying the notion to people involves making the unwarranted assumptions that humans, like pandas, consume some fixed amount of resources, and that those resources must be found or produced in the same place that they are consumed. It's obvious that neither are the case.

For humans, who have the ability to transport and store resources, there are, effectively no 'natural resource limits' in a given specific land mass such as an island (even though these limits exist for the world as a whole). I remember a time when firewood and water used on Gabriola were only locally sourced, but both are being imported now. And there's always been enough water on the island, just not in the ground; it comes in large amounts from the sky, and can be stored in cisterns.

Even the aspect of not "*degrading the natural social, cultural and economic environment for present and future generations*" depends vitally on how 'degradation' is defined, and for who and where. Bringing water to Gabriola doesn't degrade Gabriola, no matter what it may do to the water source. And what constitutes 'degradation' depends on value judgements. At a time when these matters were being vigorously discussed, it was pointed out that Gabriola could, in fact, survive with a far higher human population - it would just be very different than it is now. (For a light-hearted look at this, see "Gabriola and Manhattan—Two Islands", SHALE 6, pp.3–8, April 2003, <http://www.nickdoe.ca/pdfs/Webp291c.pdf>.)

This is not to say that putting several million people on Gabriola would be a good idea - I think it would be a disaster, especially for most of the nonhuman species who call our island home - only that it's possible. So, we are forced into asserting what we believe would be good, or ethical, or preferable, which are subjective value judgements - not a supposedly 'objective' measure of 'facts'. And I strongly believe that making value judgements is both inevitable, and totally appropriate. We have been misled for many years by people hiding determinations of preferences under false pretences of being 'objective' and 'factual'.

For humans, the level of resources used, and more significantly the environmental impacts of that use on both 'sources and sinks', is not a straightforward result of the number of people in a place. One of the earliest attempts to describe the role of multiple factors in determining environmental degradation was the IPAT equation, $I = P \times A \times T$ (Barry Commoner, 1972.) This states that environmental impact (I), expressed in terms of resource depletion or waste accumulation, may be described by multiplying **population** (P), the size of the human population, by **affluence** (A), the level of consumption by that population, and by **technology** (T), the processes used to obtain resources and transform them into useful goods and wastes.

The IPAT equation probably arose from another attempt to define objective limits to sustainability. And it too has failed in that regard, since it has not been able to identify sustainable limits to either individual or composite environmental impacts. But it's a useful conceptual tool which demonstrates that there are multiple ways of reducing undesirable effects. A given community could reduce their level of consumption (A), reduce their population (P), or make their technologies more efficient (T) - likely all three would be needed, in different ratios for different starting conditions.

And as a planet, we need to do all these things. One of the striking aspects of the climate change disaster is that the location of the source of the excess carbon makes no difference - the impacts are global.

I'm taking up your time on this, not because the details matter, but because the basis on which we hold these conversations about the future really does matter to the outcome. Even for this community, where we've spent years trying to learn how to talk and listen to each other, it's depressingly easy for disagreements to get shrill, for trust to be eroded, and for partisanship and divisiveness to raise their heads. Even if we don't realize we're doing it, if we try to

push through our preferred outcome by making indefensible pseudo-scientific claims, we risk losing the mutual goodwill that keeps the social fabric from unraveling.

So, even if ‘carrying capacity’ looks like a handy and capacious container for a bunch of important issues, I think it’s the wrong place to start from. Or, to mix metaphors, this road may look smooth, but I want to warn you there’s a washed-out bridge ahead.

I was always told as a kid not to complain about something unless I had could offer a better idea. Unfortunately, I don’t know if I can come up with an alternative. One idea, I don’t know if it’s better or not, would be to perhaps work together at the Town Halls to develop some kind of community ‘indicators’. Wikipedia says

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_indicators):

Community indicators are "measurements that provide information about past and current trends and assist planners and community leaders in making decisions that affect future outcomes". They provide insight into the overall direction of a community: whether it is improving, declining, or staying the same, or is some mix of all three.

In essence, indicators are measurements that reflect the interplay between social, environmental, and economic factors affecting a region’s or community’s well-being. Community indicators projects typically are conducted by nonprofit organizations within a community, although in some cases they are initiated by the public sector."

Back in 2002, I was briefly involved as a workshop participant in the development of some environment and sustainability indicators for Canada (see *State of the Debate: Environmental and Sustainable Development Indicators for Canada*, NRTEE, 2005. The National Round Table on Economy and Environment did some great work until 2013, when Harper pulled the plug on it.) And I studied the use of indicators as part of my interest in Community Economic Development. They can be a good participatory focus for discussing and grounding values-based and evidence-based community intentions, in a format that can help policy-makers know if they’re going in the right direction. Anyway, just a thought, to avoid negative dumping on someone’s idea without suggesting any alternatives!

I want to uphold you in doing this very important work. Anything which gets the general public actually talking to each other, fruitfully, without degenerating into toxic trolldom, matters much more now than it ever has. We’re not just trying to do a fuzzy kumbaya hippy exercise here - it’s survival which is at stake, in a world of extreme danger. May all you do continue to serve to keep our home safe and thriving for generations to come.

With love and solidarity and blessings,
Shelagh