

Governance

To: Islands Trustees, Russ Hotsenpiller, Chief Administrative Officer
Cc Lori Foster, Executive Coordinator/Recorder, Islands Trust Policy & Purpose Discussion Facebook Forum

The Governance and Management Review Study is important for all of us citizens in the Islands Trust area and we should be able to transparently engage with respectful commentary/feedback to our staff and trustees. It is my understanding that some trustees and staff propose to delay this important information from becoming public until after the Phase 3 Public Engagement ending in May 2022.

Citizen Request:

1. Please keep the upcoming January 10, 2022 and February 7, 2022 Select Committee Meetings on Governance and Management Review open to the public and on the public record (similar to the November 1, 2021 meeting agenda and video).

<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/event/select-committee-governance-and-management-review-9/>

2. Please make the final report available to the public, as intended, at the February 7, 2022 meeting.

I am writing as a retired municipal employee of 25 years living part-time, year-around in Magic Lake Estates on North Pender. My role as an architect, now retired, was to review development proposals to achieve social and community goals as laid out in bylaws and guidelines. I also worked closely with neighbourhoods listening to the many valid responses to difficult questions of future changes to their communities. It is my experience in this public process that I am writing today.

Many local governments work hard to achieve the level of engagement that is rising in the Islands Trust area related to the Policy Statement and the policy directions already being taken by Council. This is a great opportunity!

My observation is that when the public is not listened-to or shuttered, it has the affect of amplifying the response, making the input more emotional and more divisive. Transparency is the way out of that. Trust your constituents. As a staff person, I was always aware that those citizens paid my salary and that I "served" them.

Rather than seeing errors in citizen input as "misinformation", in my work experience, it was seen as an opportunity for staff and elected officials to take the time to explain the complexities of the process to interested citizens. Engage, inform, listen and most importantly: incorporate that input on an equal level with other objectives like "Preserve and Protect". When there is a ground-swell of public input as is now being seen, it means there are problems with the policy direction, not problems with the citizens. The upcoming Phase 3 Public Engagement will be an opportunity for trustees and staff to really hear the citizen inputs and substantively incorporate those inputs.

If I have gotten a name or parts of this complex process wrong, even with my extensive experience in local government, it is not spreading misinformation, it is a genuine attempt to study as much as the process that I reasonably can. If understanding the process is difficult for me to get right, imagine how difficult it is for the average citizen. We need your support and consideration.

I look forward to seeing the Jan 10th and Feb 7th meeting show up on the website calendar page for public viewing and that the Governance and Management Review Report shows up for public viewing in the agenda package for the February 7, 2022 meeting as intended.

<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/whats-happening/meetings-and-events/>

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Mary Beth Rondeau
North Pender Island