

## **Former Trustee, John Money, on Governance** January 15, 2022

Some thoughts on Governance in the gulf islands, the Islands Trust (IT), it's mandate to preserve and protect for the people of British Columbia as well as the residents, and the IT's need for a 9-million-dollar budget:

Right now, that 9 million dollars will come out of the gulf islands taxpayer's pockets and will be spent in Victoria or at least a large percentage of it. Imagine, if you will, that we are preserving for the people of BC and that this 9 million will come from BC pockets and will be spent solely in the gulf island's 13 communities, which is close to \$700,000.00 per community.

Each island could set up a community seat; an office full time planner, part time environmental expert, part time forestry expert and a good secretary to keep the experts on task. In the smallest of communities that is 3 full time jobs that can attract younger people with families.

Now, let's say, gulf island taxpayers contributed another 2 million with the money going to each community seat according to the amount of tax collected in that local Trust area. This would hire more planning and experts.

Depending on the tax base, each community seat would have anywhere from 4 to 8 or 10 full time jobs. All are neighbours with a hands-on experience of what is needed in their community. 4 to 10 new families with new kids in school.

Families buying in the stores, going to restaurants and pubs, and basically contributing to the health of the community and at no cost to the environment.

Now you are preserving and protecting with BC paying their fair share and gulf islands paying much less.

Let's add the regional tax dollars to the community seat. Local building inspection, local by-law officers, local full-time operators of water systems, and a secretary or two to keep everyone focused. Because of the age and income demographics, in many islands the community seat would almost be the leading job provider without impacting the environment. Control and planning would be done completely by locals.

All of this pie in the sky is interesting; but I really do believe it is long past time that we create a local government that lives and works in our communities and that spends the tax dollars in the community it gets its money from; and I believe it will reduce taxes in the gulf islands while giving each community more control over it's own destiny while preserving and protecting their unique amenities.

John Money, Former Saturna Island Trustee 21 years and 6 years on Trust Council