

**SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Meeting on Monday, January 28, 2013 (9:00 am)**  
**Saanich Peninsula Health Unit, 2170 Mount Newton X Road**

<b>Present:</b>	David Howe	SGI CRD Director, EDC Member
	Mike Hoebel	Galiano EDC Member
	Richard De Armond	Mayne EDC Member
	Wendy Gardner	Pender EDC Member
	Larry Peck	Saturna EDC Member (to be appointed)
	Brian Crumblehulme	Mayne Advisory Committee Chair
	Shahid Hussain	Pender Advisory Committee Chair
	Zorah Staar	EDC Recorder

### **1. CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mike Hoebel called the meeting to order at 9:13 am. During discussions, Larry Peck agreed to become the Saturna Member of the Southern Gulf Islands Economic Development Commission (EDC), subject to official CRD appointment.

The proposed agenda topics were approved by consensus. However, Social Finance Models was discussed earlier because Shahid Hussain had to leave at mid-day, and the other regional initiatives were discussed multiple times during the meeting, with comments summarized under the item 4. headings below.

### **2. NAME OF THE COMMISSION**

Some EDC Members had received feedback that “Economic Development Commission” sounded like single bottom line, traditional development, rather than the resilient and sustainable local economies and triple bottom line initiatives supported by the EDC Bylaw. A name change could mean less need to explain this. David Howe also noted the CRD regional sustainability plan.

All present were in agreement that a Commission name change would be a good idea, if this was doable from a CRD perspective and without any significant downside. Members also agreed that having a name which included sustainability meant “walking the talk” as well. EDC Members were asked to consider potential new names, and David Howe would explore relevant procedures with CRD Staff.

### **3. MANDATE AND ROLE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

There was a need to clarify the mandate and role of the 3 EDC Advisory Committees (Pender, Mayne, and Galiano). Saturna didn’t have an Advisory Committee per se, but Larry Peck was connected with 5 “Saturna Works” committees on economic and related issues, which could serve a similar function.

The EDC originating Bylaw No. 3803 provided as follows at section 3 (b):  
“Advisory Groups may be established for each of Galiano Island, Mayne Island, Saturna Island, and Pender Island. These groups will work in collaboration with their respective Commission member to help deliver the Commission’s mandate”.

Chair Shahid Hussain had drafted proposed terms of reference for the Pender Advisory Committee, which Brian Crumblehulme then adapted for the Mayne Advisory Committee. These draft documents had not yet been emailed to all EDC members, but Hussain mentioned that the Pender document included the following proposed roles for the Advisory Committee (summarized):

- assisting in the implementation of the EDC’s regional initiatives;
- identifying and facilitating the implementation of local sustainable, triple bottom line initiatives, which might be unique to an island, and for which there was no expectation of CRD staff or resources; and
- facilitating some local initiatives to become regional, if appropriate.

SGI Director David Howe made comments including the following:

- Howe had understood that the EDC Advisory Committees would focus on supporting the EDC’s regional initiatives, to help get their islands behind these initiatives, and to facilitate them being funded and implemented;
- these 6 regional initiatives (see item 4. below) involved infrastructure and other essentials which could benefit all the islands, and which might lead to tax dollar funding in the form of Gas Tax grants, referenda to create a new service, and/or other government infrastructure funding;
- many local initiatives discussed by the Advisory Committees were business opportunities that didn’t need or wouldn’t be eligible for tax dollar funding, and to assist these initiatives (e.g. by drafting business plans for them) wasn’t what was envisioned for the EDC Advisory Committees;
- social finance and investment wasn’t really available to us yet (e.g. from a Community Economic Development Fund to be established, or from the new Community Contributions Company not yet supported by regulations);
- it was very important for the Advisory Committees to focus their available energies on initiatives that could be funded and produce effective results within a reasonable time, and not to create undue expectations;
- the local initiatives of greatest use to the EDC at this time were those that could be brought within the umbrella of one of the existing regional initiatives, and were therefore more likely to be fundable and supported;
- to add a new EDC regional initiative, we’d need to remove an existing one.

Those present discussed the foregoing description of the Advisory Committee mandate and role, which was different than some had thought.

Mike Hoebel wanted the Advisory Committees to “straddle” the regional and local initiatives. Wendy Gardner noted the limited time and resources of Advisory Committee members, and the shifting membership of the Pender group. Richard De Armond said that the Advisory Committees could “bridge” the regional and local initiatives, but that local ideas which came under regional initiatives were more likely to come to the top.

David Howe suggested that the Advisory Committees provide a mandate document to the EDC, regarding supporting regional initiatives while pursuing local options. The networking at Advisory Committee meetings was resulting in all kinds of cross-pollination and exciting possibilities. However, Howe said that it was important for the EDC Members from each island to ensure that the Advisory Committees were thinking regionally. It was also important to find “champions” for each regional initiative (hopefully dispersed over all 4 islands).

Finally, most of the people on the EDC and Advisory Committees were over age 50. We needed to engage younger residents and families in this process of new sustainable development, to listen to their needs and help them stay here.

#### 4. UPDATES ON REGIONAL INITIATIVES

**Note:** During the discussions that followed, Wendy Gardner agreed to take responsibility for overseeing EDC Communications, and the other EDC Members agreed to act as overseers to keep track of progress on particular EDC regional initiatives (e.g. report on work being done by “champions” and others), as follows:

Social Finance	David Howe
Transportation	Richard De Armond
Experience the Gulf Islands	Mike Hoebel
Broadband Infrastructure	Mike Hoebel
Education	Larry Peck
Resource Inventory	Larry Peck
Communications	Wendy Gardner

**a) Social Finance:** There were related updates and comments as follows:

- BC’s new Community Contributions Company did not yet have regulations, so it was not operational as a hybrid vehicle for social finance;

- Vancity Resilient Capital Fund had facilitated the Galiano Learning Centre land purchase, but it did not appear that they were interested (generally) in targeting Gulf Island investments back to support island enterprises;
- Community Social Planning Council of Victoria had developed a new Community Economic Development Investment Fund, but it didn't have any money yet, so Gulf Islands might as well create our own fund, to facilitate island residents shifting to local investment (see more below);
- a new Southern Gulf Islands Development Fund (by whatever name) would need to have regional diversification, and meet a number of complex regulatory requirements; we'd also need to find a "champion" and others with the knowledge, credentials, and time to initiate the fund and then personally facilitate island people moving their investments into it; plus the fund would need to make money! (through loans or equity investments in local enterprises), in order to create returns for fund investors;
- Stephen Whipp said that investors interested in values-based investing had trouble finding "real stuff" to invest in, and were willing to take a lesser rate of return when they did (especially if it involved their own community);
- David Howe suggested asking Stephen Whipp to do a series of values-based investing workshops for our island citizens (explaining the economic, social, and environmental benefits, and various options);
- Note: Shahid Hussain had to leave the meeting at 12:06 pm.
- another source of social finance was increased local buying, to shift off-island shopping and create everyday investment in island businesses (Galiano and Mayne Chambers of Commerce very active on this; Saturna struggling the most, with one store, B & B's closing, people leaving); EDC could help by facilitating a joint local buying and local investment initiative;
- finally, David Howe noted that Island Savings had opened 500 new Pender accounts, and Colin Nichol of their Financial Planning Division was willing to discuss potentially helping the Gulf Islands set up a vehicle for social finance (such as an investment fund – David Howe to follow up).

**b) Transportation Planning (including on-island transit):** This was the inter-island and on-island regional EDC initiative already funded by part of a Gas Tax planning grant, and which supported "Experience the Gulf Islands" and also went beyond it. There were related comments as follows:

- many former links between our islands were "broken" or no longer existing (e.g. the various boats that used to move people and materials between us), or these links were impaired (e.g. current state of community docks);

- Larry Peck had proposed more use of the Gulf Islands Water Taxi, which had 3 under-utilized 40-passenger boats, mostly used for school, and which could do more with some initial subsidization (David Howe said let's explore using these taxis as inter-island passenger/bike carriers, which would require scheduling and government support, e.g. a champion could initiate a Gas Tax request, and then the system could expand?);
  - we could also arrange for island buses to meet the water taxis, e.g. David Howe said the Pender private bus owner was interested in cooperating with other Penderites who'd proposed a seniors / community bus, and it would be even better to do a regional version of this (funding more likely);
  - two key aspects of inter-island transportation were **ferries** and **docks**, and progress here involved going to people who could write the cheques, i.e. from the provincial government (note: CRD not currently offering additional investment to improve community dock infrastructure);
  - there was a big downside to putting energy into seeking more provincial subsidies to reduce ferry fares, because people taking ferries to shop (and not considering all the costs) were part of what was killing our businesses.
- c) Experience the Gulf Islands:** ETGI Coordinator Ed Andrusiak was willing to handle trail issues, but the other transportation aspects of "Experience the Gulf Islands" were a separate EDC regional initiative (see b. above). There were comments about Experience the Gulf Islands as follows:
- this initiative had initial funding from a Gas Tax planning grant (see b. above), but CRD Parks has yet to come up with their requirements for hiring a Planner, which could delay funding until March;
- Moved by Richard De Armond, seconded by Mike Hoebel**, that the Economic Development Commission approves in principle advancing EDC funds to the Experience the Gulf Islands initiative (on an interim basis). **CARRIED**
- there had been initial Experience the Gulf Islands presentation meetings on all islands except Saturna (coming soon), and a major March meeting was being planned, to involve all interested stakeholders;
  - on Mayne there had been various committees working on aspects such as Points of Interest, Island History, and Island Lifestyle, and on Pender there was a trails-oriented meeting to occur later this week.
- d) Broadband Infrastructure Improvements:** It was noted that Mayne and Galiano were the islands most significantly needing expansion of broadband infrastructure. There were related comments as follows:

- Mayne and Galiano had held meetings to consider various broadband options, and the CRD recently did a related report (with inaccuracies), but the core issue was finding \$150,000 to pay for the required switches;
  - a potential local broadband provider wanted capital up front and a guaranteed income stream (so Shaw and Telus wouldn't grab customers), and he also did not appear interested in a hybrid company or co-op model;
  - David Howe reported on the latest communications with Shaw and Telus, who suggested that with the very small number of people on Mayne and Galiano, there was not the scale and potential economic benefit required for new broadband infrastructure (but some nodes might be possible);
  - also, Telus was given \$65 million of provincial funding to extend broadband to rural communities, so Howe planned to advocate with Telus and also at the political level, to have this funding benefit Mayne and Galiano (especially since our sensitive environments limited industrial options, and Mayne and Galiano had worse internet than most rural areas);
  - Larry Peck described the Saturna.net Co-op's high speed internet service, developed with two \$50,000 grants and hard work, and now being upgraded.
- e) Education Initiative:** This was the EDC regional initiative to create the Southern Gulf Islands as an education destination, e.g. for visitors and new residents to be drawn here. It was somewhat on the "back burner" at the moment. There were related comments as follows:
- Larry Peck mentioned the proposed Saturna Education/Research Centre, which could potentially fit within this regional initiative (suggested to talk to Galiano Conservancy about their education centre);
  - Richard De Armond suggested including "distributed" learning (e.g. packages?), and marketing as the Gulf Islands (not individually);
  - education would be a "clean" industry for our islands (i.e. creating economic activity without damaging our sensitive environments).
- f) Resource Inventory:** David Howe and others had suggested the need to do an inventory of our island resources, strengths, weaknesses, etc. Former CRD Director Ken Hancock had suggested a 4-T Benchmarking analysis of our Technology, Talent, Tolerance, and Territory Assets (based on Richard Florida's framework regarding the rise of Cultural Creatives, who might be common here). There were other models too. The key was to identify the valuable people and other resources that we already had, and the areas where we were lacking something important for sustainable economic development, and therefore needed to create it.

## 5. COMMUNITY DOCKS

See 4.b) above (starting on page 4). David Howe suggested that community docks would move forward as part of an overall inter-island transportation plan.

## 6. ISLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICES

Prior to the EDC becoming active, Galiano had already established a Community Development office. It was set up by Justin Stephenson and Mike Hoebel as a place that local non-profits and some businesses could pay to use (as scheduled). Now “Experience the Gulf Islands”, the EDC, and the Galiano Advisory Committee were operating out of this office, so David Howe had approved paying \$250/month of rent from the ETGI budget. In addition, Pender had the CRD Hope Bay office that could be used for EDC purposes. There was support for funding such offices on all the islands, ideally including space for the local “champions” working on the EDC’s other regional initiatives.

**Moved by Wendy Gardner, seconded by Mike Hoebel**, that the Economic Development Commission allocate up to \$250 per month of available resources (per island) towards rent for 4 EDC/Advisory Committee offices. **CARRIED**

David Howe noted the restriction on using CRD equipment within non-CRD facilities. Mike Hoebel raised the issue of high-quality video conferencing equipment, which David Howe felt could involve the Chambers of Commerce setting up a joint venture with businesses who wanted to pay to use it.

## 7. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN DEVELOPMENT

There was a need to circulate more information about who was involved with the EDC and Advisory Committees, and what we were doing. There was also some misinformation about the EDC out in our communities. There were perceptions about the EDC moving too slowly, or too quickly and not taking into account enough community feedback. David Howe said that we needed to share good information about the EDC, its regional initiatives, and other activities.

The EDC communications plan could include monthly articles in local newspapers, which was already happening on Galiano (the Active Page) and Mayne (the Mayneliner), and could happen on Pender (Pender Post) and Saturna (Saturna Scribbler). More people could be reached through the regional Island Tides newspaper, but all of this would be facilitated by some funding for the newspapers involved (e.g. paying for column space, or buying an ad that directed the reader to the nearby article about EDC business).

**There was general EDC Member agreement** to pay up to \$50 or \$75 per island, in order for monthly or regular articles about the EDC to be published.

This was subject to available EDC funding, which was \$40,000 for the first year (\$3,300 per month), and should be sufficient to permit communications of the foregoing type.

Dave Howe felt it was also important to invite community feedback to the EDC via each community's EDC Member and Advisory Committee. Word of mouth and telephone calls could be a powerful tool in this regard.

An EDC website was also a powerful and necessary tool, and should be established ASAP. This could be separate from the CRD website, and should be easy to access, professional, credible, engaging for our communities (including social media), and updateable by more than one person. **There was general EDC agreement** in support of allocating some EDC funding for this purpose. Wendy Gardner agreed to research some options, follow-up, and report back.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:01 pm.