

SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS ELECTORAL AREA
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
Minutes of Meeting held **Tuesday, Mar 5th, 2019 at 9:00am – 1:20pm**
Lebbetter Board Room
Mary Winspear, 2243 Beacon Ave, Sidney, BC

SGI CESC Commissioners: Ben McConchie (Chair, Pender) Mike Hoebel (Galiano), Deb Goldman (Mayne), Priscilla Zimmerman (Saturna), David Howe (Director)

Guests: Justine Starke (Staff) , Deb Morrison, Mamie Hutt-Temoana, Andrea Mills, Melody Pender - Recorder

1. Ben gave a brief introduction of Justine Starke. Justine is looking forward to working as a resource with the CESC and helping them meet their goals and objectives.
2. Agenda approved by consent
3. Dave Howe moved adoption of August 29th and October 2nd, 2018 minutes, Mike Hoebel seconded **MOTION CARRIED**
4. Director's Report
 - a. Dave handed out a final report for CRD First Nations. "The Board directs staff to undertake a feasibility study for an indigenous economic development participation model to be considered by the incoming board". Current Board has approved a \$50,000 study. Dave has volunteered of his own time to provide guidance and advice to set up an Indigenous Economic Development Commission. There's a lot that can be done together with both commissions towards Cultural Educational Tourism as well as dealing with tankers and orcas.
 - b. In regard to Connectivity, Dave has spoken with Susan Stanford of Citizen Services and Colleen McCormick who would like to talk about Coastal Communities. They will put up the money, come out and establish what is needed but they have to hear from the community what they are willing to accept or allow.
 - If we get the rural definition changed, we will have the money and can go from there. Many of the ministers are still working on it including Adam Olsen.
 - Justine mentioned that in her experience when dealing with cell tower issues with the community it is a lack of education and understanding of the different types of technology out there and it would be helpful if you could have experts in the fields to discuss the importance of connectivity, to the economy, to emergency services, to all these things. There hasn't been anyone to host these educational conversations and perhaps it could be the role of the CRD. They could use the resources from the government and the province and experts from the CRD to lay the groundwork.

5. Chair's Report
 - a. Ben welcomed Deb Goldman to the Commission. Deb shared about her experience of 30yrs with the BC Government. She is very interested in the sustainability of our islands and looks forward to working with the CESC.
 - b. Ben would like the CESC to meet once a month and he would like to see the CESC build relationship with SSI and stay / be involved in the DMMO
6. Arms-length or Independent Society - discussion on moving this forward
 - a. Mamie gave an overview of her study
 - Set up a society that would look at community economic development
 1. Helping organizations and businesses start in the community
 2. Setting up an economic base on each island
 3. Its base is sustainability
 4. Society can be self-financing
 - a. Apply for grants from groups like Vancity, Victoria Society etc
 - b. Can set up a fee for service
 5. Set up with board of directors, staff and business development people
 6. SGI CESC's is a good fit for transitioning into the Society as all the initiatives are things the Society can implement
 - As previously discussed there are two ways to set up
 1. Arm's length society which is similar to the Sooke Museum. Operates completely separate from the CRD except for the funding. These funds can only be used for operations only. The board would need to approve and bylaws be changed. It could take up to 6 months.
 2. Independent society would need some funding to get it up and running to hire staff for p/t admin and someone to start to write grants. This is not a community futures program. That would be something completely different.
 - Ben discussed the options available from Mamie's report.
 - b. Justine acknowledges that she is very new to the CRD and may not know everything that can be done. She would like to discuss with CESC their goals and what obstacles are in their way that they feel can't be overcome as a commission.
 - c. Ben opened it up for discussion. Justine really liked the SGI 2020 report and feels the ideas are great.
 - Ben – SGI needs an economy based on education – like a university town.
 - Priscilla – would take Ben's idea a step further by adding engagement, education and enlightenment. Making it broader – environment, aligning with university's good but also a wellness component. If we could solve the problems of broadband and affordable housing the rest would fall into place. We need to start with those two key components.
 - Mike – infrastructure is the key in his opinion, he likes Ben's idea and he also agrees with Priscilla. After the SGI 2020 Mike met with several groups and the feedback he received they didn't need to advertise about the island to encourage them to move and live on the island but to build the main

infrastructure and supports like transportation, broadband and housing. Infrastructure is the foundation. Build it and they will come.

- Deb – agrees with everyone. Infrastructure also needs to include things like daycare and trades tickets etc. She likes the Edu tourism and the cultural tourism but would like to see people be able to upgrade their skills, so they can stay and work on the island. On Mayne there are lots of good work going on but there seems to be a lot of silos and a more integrated community where the Chambers and volunteer groups are working together is really needed.
- Mamie said the infrastructure such as housing, broadband, transportation, training, all the things that are important could be achieved through the society as the added benefit would-be full-time staff to work on the specific areas that require attention and the ability to build relationships with organizations already established and share their resources.
- Mike sees the benefit of having both the CESC and the society. He feels there is still a need to have direct access to the staff and the decision makers in the CRD.
- Priscilla’s sense is that since we are changing from a body that identifies the issues to be addressed to implementing these ideas we’ve come up with, I think we stay with the CRD until we get our feet on the ground and understand exactly what we are going to do in the implementation stage and then look at becoming a society two separate entities.
- Justine spoke about SSI CEDC and their movement to the arm’s length society. The commission needs to come up with several benchmarks that then need to be approved by the board. They have different struggles than SSI and the SGI’s because they are separated by water.

Mike motioned the CESC requests CRD staff, Justine Starke, to prepare a report on examples of what the CESC is able to do under its current structure. Ben seconded. **MOTION CARRIED**

Ben motioned that the CESC requests Mamie to continue moving forward with the CESC Guide 2018 society work and report back in three months at which time the CESC can make a final decision on which structure they would like to go with. Seconded by Mike Hoebel. **MOTION CARRIED**

7. Island reports – Commissioners

a. Galiano

- Report attached
- Key points:
 1. Galiano community bus pilot project
 2. CRD and Islands Trust office space
 3. Galiano Health Care Centre renovation and expansion project
 4. Ensuring 911 availability during emergencies
 5. Affordable housing
 6. Salish Sea Renewable Energy Coop

- b. Mayne
 - Looking forward to having the CRC office and meeting space with a Visitor Centre (funding from MI Chamber)
 - Daycare Centre opening up in the fall, a real positive for the island. Part time care only looking forward to full time care.
 - Mayne Island Housing Society – had their first AGM, applied for charitable status and had community engagement with 20 volunteer organizations. Support from MLA, MP etc. There is some potential land available, the board of directors has lots of excellent skillset and very active.
 - c. Pender
 - Last trust meeting was live streamed with many connections and 40 construction workers attended the meeting. Without going into detail on the meeting (recorded on the live stream on Facebook) it showed to Ben that Pender is thriving in the construction industry. He wants to know how we can support them and keep the environment safe. We are experience the environment meets the economy. We need to think about different options on how to build in the future.
 - A brief discussion on transportation and the bus pilot projects.
 - d. Saturna
 - Priscilla had to leave the meeting. Will bring update to next meeting.
8. BC Rural Islands Economic Summit – a brief discussion was held and a motion was made. Mike motioned to support in principle the BC Rural Islands Economic Summit, an amount to be determined once the CESC budget has been confirmed in April. Ben seconded.
- MOTION CARRIED**
9. Brief update on Island Coastal Economic Trust – deferred to next meeting
10. Update on E-Vehicles on the islands – Deb was interested in hearing more about what the possibilities were. Mike reported there has been some talk about e-busses and every island would love to have them but they are very costly. Andrea also reported from Pender there is someone looking into a fleet of e-vehicles but is waiting to hear what new regulations are for Uber
11. Educational/Edu-Tourism Report from the Chair - a full presentation regarding the results and plans for promoting education in the Southern Gulf Islands – deferred to next meeting.
12. Proposed new Webmaster – Melody has secured a new webmaster, Stephen Richter who developed the SGI 2020 website. The Commissioners were in agreement to use Stephen at \$120/hr when needed and subject to budget.
13. New Business – no new business
14. Next Meeting – Melody to send out a doodle poll for beginning of April.
Meeting adjourned at 1:10pm.

Report to the Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission
Michael Hoebel, Galiano Commissioner
March 5, 2019

1) Galiano community bus pilot project

The Galiano Island Community Transportation Society completed a two-year pilot project for community bus service last year, operating a used minivan and 18 passenger shuttle bus purchased with CRD grant funds. The service ran a regular schedule on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from April through September, meeting the major ferry arrivals on those days. Much was learned about routes, schedules, and passenger preferences. Seasonal residents and visitors, rather than full time residents, provided most of the ridership on these runs, for which fares were charged. In addition, the vehicles were chartered for weddings and other special events, which provided some additional revenue. However, even with unpaid volunteers driving most of the scheduled runs, the high cost of vehicle maintenance, inspections, and insurance meant that a \$5000 grant in aid was required to cover operational costs last year.

The Society has determined that to continue to operate the service again this year will require more outside funding than last year. Even though most of the planning, promotion, and administration of the service can be handled by volunteers, finding enough volunteer drivers with the required commercial driver's license has been particularly challenging on Galiano, and the Society has concluded that the drivers need to be paid. Even if the Society is successful in applying for another grant-in-aid this year, it will still be necessary to raise at least \$5000 more in donations, and those donations would be dependent upon finding a way to give the donors a tax receipt (the Society is not a registered charity). As of now, it is uncertain whether the Galiano community bus service will be able to start up again this spring.

2) CRD and Islands Trust office space

The Galiano Local Trust Committee currently rents office space near the Sturdies Bay ferry terminal, with a small contribution to the rent from the Galiano Parks and Recreation Commission. The LTC would like to reduce their rental costs and are interested in discussing with the CRD a possible move to a different office location in Sturdies Bay that would be shared between the two organizations. At the same time, the CESC has been contributing to the rental cost for the small Galiano Community Development Office, also in Sturdies Bay. (The CDO is the Galiano satellite office for the SGI Community Resource Centre and houses the CRC videoconferencing equipment.) The question is whether all these various office needs could perhaps be consolidated, especially considering that there is a new CRD community liaison position that presumably will require some office space.

3) Galiano Health Care Centre renovation and expansion project

The Health Care Society is partway into a major renovation and expansion project for the Galiano Health Care Centre building. This project has received \$150,000 in non-traditional program funding from the Capital Regional Hospital District towards an overall project cost of approximately \$750,000. (The Health Care Society has raised about \$390,000 itself, and will finance the balance through VanCity). Separate from the building project is replacement of the existing 25 year old septic system at the Health Centre for a cost of approximately \$50,000. The Health Care Society is currently looking for funding support for this separate but very necessary upgrade, and will be approaching the CRD and the CRHD.

4) Ensuring 911 availability during emergencies

The December windstorm and the February snow highlighted the need for robust 911 emergency telephone service. On Galiano after the windstorm the Telus landlines were not restored for more than three weeks in some neighbourhoods, and cell phone service is weak or non-existent in a number of locations on the island. As a consequence, island residents were at risk if a medical or other emergency occurred. There is unfortunately no cell tower on Galiano as a result of opposition in the past by a small group of island residents.

However, in the aftermath of the winter wind and snow events another group of islanders has come together to advocate to the Local Trust Committee, the CRD, the province, and carriers such as Rogers and Telus for improved cell phone infrastructure. The group has received letters of support from both island fire departments, the emergency program, and several key island organizations. Given that the CRD is administratively and operationally responsible for the 911 emergency telephone service, the ad hoc group has urged the LTC to actively work with the CRD to ensure that islanders have uninterrupted access to the essential 911 service in the future.

5) Affordable housing

As on the other SGIs, there is a critical need for significantly more affordable rental housing on Galiano. The island has three different housing societies, two of which have been in discussion with the CRD about project support.

- a) Galiano Island Housing Society - this is the oldest of the housing organizations on the island, and it has been operating a 16 unit seniors affordable rental housing complex called Page Drive for more than 25 years. This society is planning a 4 - 8 unit expansion in the near future.
- b) Galiano Community Housing Association - this 8 year old society owns a 10 acre parcel adjacent to the Page Drive seniors complex, on which it plans to subdivide 20 strata lots. Fifteen of these strata lots would be available for lease to individuals and families who would build and own their own affordable housing, and five of the potential dwellings in this "Galiano Green" project would be built as rentals.
- c) Gulf Islands Galisle Affordable Rental Housing Society - this society is just a year old. It is partnering with the Galiano Club, which is donating five acres from the community forest land that is managed by the Club to be used for an affordable housing project. The Society plans to build 6 - 12 units of affordable family rental housing on this land. Applications have been made to both BC Housing and CMHC for project funding, and work has begun on the infrastructure for the building site (water, power, road access).

6) Salish Sea Renewable Energy Coop

The Salish Sea Renewable Energy Coop originated on Galiano and was registered as a for-profit coop just a year ago. The coop already has approximately 120 members from all the SGIs, about 50 of whom participated in the coop's bulk buy and installation of over 800 solar panels and associated equipment for grid-tied systems last fall. Due to the demand the coop is planning another bulk buy and installation of solar equipment this year. A longer-range goal of the Coop is to install one or more community solar "gardens" (small solar "farms") on the islands, which would be locations for grid-tied solar equipment whose output would be credited to the Hydro accounts of coop members who invest in the enterprise. Unfortunately, at the present time, BC Hydro policies do not support community solar farms and SSREC is lobbying the provincial government and BC Hydro to get the policies changed. SSREC is applying for a CRD grant-in-aid to support its educational and advocacy work.

7) EV charging stations

At least a dozen Galiano residents own fully electric vehicles, and more residents have ordered them. In addition, increasing numbers of visitors arrive on the island driving EVs. Currently there is only one Level II EV charging station on Galiano, at Bodega Resort at the north end of the island. Fortunately, at the south end the Galiano Club has received CRD CWF that will allow the installation of Level II public chargers. In mid-island the Galiano Conservancy has received CRD funding that will allow installation of Level II public chargers at the Millard Learning Centre.

8) Salish Sea Institute

Finally, on the international front, as a result of a visit to Galiano by a representative of the Washington-based Salish Sea Institute last summer, there will be a "Learning Together in the Salish Sea Retreat" on Galiano in April. It looks like a working partnership is developing between the Galiano Conservancy and the Institute.