



News Release

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ISLANDS TRUST COUNCIL LAUNCHES COMMUNITY HOUSING TASK FORCE

VICTORIA — The Islands Trust Council has created a new Community Housing Task Force to develop a housing strategy for the Islands Trust Area. Trust Council unanimously approved the task force at its quarterly meeting on North Pender Island June 17-19.

“Trust Council has identified affordable housing as one of its draft strategic objective for its 2008-2011 term of office and we are delighted that this is moving ahead so quickly,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “If we are to help maintain community diversity in the Islands Trust area with a population of different ages and abilities we need a strategy for appropriate community housing initiatives. We want to improve the current and future ability of the Islands Trust to use land use planning tools, create innovative policies and work on key partnerships to develop affordable housing initiatives in the Trust area.”

“Clearly a big issue will be affordability for young families and working people,” said Salt Spring Island Local Trustee George Ehring, Chair of the Local Planning Committee, to which the task force will report. “Our island communities have limited affordable year-round rental options and real estate costs have outpaced local incomes. Another key issue that has been identified is the aging population and the need for age-appropriate housing. There is a strong desire from existing trust area seniors to ‘age in place’ and broad community support to maintain age diversity.”

Membership on the task force will be determined by the Local Planning Committee of Trust Council.

The Community Housing Task Force will build on initiatives undertaken by Local Trust Committees by taking a collaborative approach for the region that will identify environmentally responsible options and solutions to deal with housing affordability in a rural setting.

The task force will have nine months to complete its work.

Trust Council has allocated \$15,000 to develop the strategy and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities has provided an additional \$10,000 to specifically address seniors’ housing needs.

The Islands Trust is a federation of independent local governments that represents some 25,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres. It is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year.

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