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May 10, 2011

File Number: GF/T-1-2011 (1418)

via e-mail: [lucich@saltspring.com](mailto:lucich@saltspring.com)

Julia Lucich  
Salt Spring Island's Transparency and Accountability in Governance Team

Dear Julia Lucich:

**Re: March 2011 Islands Trust Council Delegation from TAG**

I am writing in my role as Chair of the Islands Trust Council to thank you for your presentation at Trust Council's March meeting. This is the first time Trust Council had heard of Salt Spring Island's Transparency and Accountability in Governance Team, and we share your commitment to transparency and accountability in governance.

Some of the issues you raise should be directed at the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee if you wish formal consideration. I have attempted to respond to the issues relating to Trust Council.

We appreciate your concerns about the availability of agenda packages on our website. Like many other government agencies, we have found that the growth of the Internet has led to rapidly increasing public expectations about information accessibility. While we support the fundamental principal of transparency, our response to these new expectations must be balanced with other expectations about minimal budget increases. We have therefore focused our resources where the demand has been greatest; at this point, we are only posting agenda packages for local trust committees and this is new this term. We are investigating having all Islands Trust meeting packages available electronically, but have not yet had the staff capacity or the website capacity to do so. It is our goal to remedy this in our 2011-2012 fiscal year, thanks to a budget item dedicated to updating our website with a content management system that allows easier updates. Thanks for voicing this concern; this spring is the first time I've heard a member of the public request online postings of Trust Council agenda packages. In the meantime, Trust Council agenda packages (which include all staff reports) will continue to be available at our Salt Spring, Gabriola and Victoria offices.

We understand our daytime meetings are problematic for the working public and we also understand our budget is under close scrutiny. Many of the staff serving local trust committees are protected by a collective agreement that requires double time off or double pay for work on evenings and weekends. Local trust committees balance accessibility and cost-effectiveness. By scheduling lengthy business meetings that require staff attendance on weekdays, there is money left to schedule evening and weekend meetings for public input or community information about more important local zoning issues. While few of the staff that support Trust Council meetings would receive extra pay for evening or weekend meetings, the costs of accommodation and meals for trustees and staff may be considerably more expensive if quarterly Trust Council meetings were limited to these times. I will raise your suggestions with the Executive Committee as they may wish to determine if it is feasible within our current budget to change the timing of these meetings in future.

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Julia Lucich  
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The Islands Trust works hard to ensure that we are following proper processes and legislation to ensure that our meetings are fair and open. If you are aware of specific cases of breaches of administrative fairness, please document those in a formal administrative fairness complaint. We have developed the following policies regarding administrative fairness, which can be viewed on our website:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/tc/pdf/tcpol5-4-iidec111993.pdf>

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/tc/pdf/tcpol7-1-isep172009.pdf>

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/tc/pdf/tcpol7-1-iimar092001.pdf>

In response to your comments about climate change, I can assure you that climate change emission reductions are squarely an Islands Trust responsibility, by virtue of BC's Bill 27, which requires emission reduction targets to be included in all Official Community Plans. The Greenshores Program has only just begun, and will take several years to complete, but you might be reassured to know it is funded almost completely by grants, and is largely focussed on voluntary stewardship education. In both cases, regulatory changes are decided locally with public input, and not imposed by Islands Trust Council. Bylaw enforcement is a Trust Council program, and its complaint-driven focus is consistent with most rural local governments.

In my experience, all Council members are committed to hearing different voices and input. I believe all trustees do their best to balance the very divergent input they receive and to make decisions that they believe are in the best interests of their communities. I encourage anyone in your group voicing concerns to contact me or the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee, and to participate in the upcoming local election.

Thank you again for being active in island democracy and for participating in the March meeting of the Islands Trust Council.

Yours sincerely,



Sheila Malcolmson  
Chair, Islands Trust Council

pc: Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee