

Health Clinics on Gabriola Island – July 4th, 2011

These are the views of the writer, Jeremy Baker, Gabriola Island.

Some Gabriola folks have decided that the two health clinics we have on Island, are not enough to save the elderly in a moment of crisis.

Notwithstanding that we have an Ambulance, First responders, Helicopter service, a custom motor vessel on standby, some persons want still more.

Again, notwithstanding that we have a modern Regional General Hospital in Nanaimo, specialized General hospitals in Vancouver and Victoria, all with helicopter air ports, the same persons want yet another health clinic on Gabriola.

The members of the Health Care Society of Gabriola have collected lots of money but not enough to finish construction let alone run a new Clinic and have pressured the Islands Trust into taking the following steps:

1. The I.T. has used the taxpayer's money to pay the I.T. to rezone a Forest lot so that the owner of the Forest land can donate 5 acres as a "gift" to the Health Clinic. Note that we already have suitably zoned land set aside specially for the purpose. The I.T. did not ask the taxpayers if they supported such expenditure. The I.T. also pushed the rezoning through ahead of other applications already in the works.
2. The first reading of the application to rezone was taken with only Malcolmson from Gabriola voting with the conniving of her stalwart supporter, Bell from Hornby Island. The reading was done after hours by E-mail or telephone. (A classic example of resolution without meeting). How Democratic is all this?

A large proportion of the donated money appears to come from the B.C. Lottery through one of the service groups on Gabriola. A lot of us are wondering if the donor of the 5 acres of rezoned land (roughly worth \$200,000) will eventually ask the I.T. for rezoning of the rest of the Forest lot for more high-end land for residential use.

Note that we already have over 600 lots yet to be used for that designated purpose, namely residential development. The owner of the property has already put the roads in and cleared most of the trees off. The place looks like a moonscape, which no doubt will be seen as attractive to those who hate trees.

The I.T. is going to have problems with saying no to the next rezoning application!

Finally, V.I.H.A. has stated that all they will contribute to the running of the proposed Health Clinic will be bare bones support for office material. Some observers have considered that the proposed clinic will be for a private health care facility paid for by public funds.