

Hank Bull

PRESENTATION TO HALFMOON BAY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OPEN HOUSE

Friday, November 4, 2022

Thank you to the chair, Linda McMahon, and to Kim and Shannon and everyone on the Community Development Forum.

My name is Hank Bull. I'm pleased to be a member of the Halfmoon Bay Community Association and I'd like to talk briefly about the Official Community Plan as it pertains to the Sechelt Inlet.

I have been a part-time resident of Storm Bay, in the heart of Swiya, for close to 50 years. I know the Inlet well. You can see that it's actually a network of three different inlets, protected from the outside by the Skookumchuck, which means there isn't a lot of boat traffic.

The Sechelt Inlet is relatively unpopulated. There are no roads, and no electricity. It's wilderness. The Inlet is home to many species of migratory birds, fish and animals.

There are some significant archaeological sites.

The Inlet is a paradise for kayakers, with a number of well-equipped Provincial campgrounds, and there are some great anchorages for sailboats. Apart from industrial uses--logging, hydro projects and a couple of fish farms--there has been no commercial development.

That now seems about to change. Small resorts are beginning to appear, like Gunnar's Lodge in Doriston, or the Earl Creek Resort at Gordondale, by the Skookumchuck.

Telus is proposing something much bigger. Billed as a youth camp and corporate retreat, it would be in fact a large rentable facility, with its own marina, multi-story accommodations, a spa, a swimming pool, a restaurant, a small farm and over 40 buildings altogether.

It's big, and quite ambitious, given that the site is off grid and far from services.

Several roads have already been built on the site and a number of wells have been dug. Construction is ongoing.

Telus is currently applying to the SCRD for a change, within the Halfmoon Bay Official Community Plan, from a "Rural" designation to "Tourist/Commercial," and also for a change in Zoning from "Rural-2" to a new, site-specific zone.

The SCRD should think carefully before acting on this.

A project the size that Telus is proposing would leave a large carbon footprint and a result in significant ecological impacts.

This change of use would represent a radical break with the intent and purpose of the OCP.

We have an opportunity to develop a plan for the future of the Sechelt Inlet that would recognize the value of this wilderness resource, while encouraging public use at an appropriate scale. It is in this context that any change of use should be considered.

This view is shared by many who live in the Inlet, including residents of Doriston, Tuwanek and Sandy Hook, as well as Storm Bay.

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Not included in the presentation:

Specific recommendations that can be taken forward to the SCRD:

1. Make no change of use without the prior approval of the shishalh Nation.
2. Ensure that any such change adheres to clear decision making criteria. I believe a set of criteria is now in development at the SCRD.
3. Ensure that any large docks and marinas have the necessary foreshore permits, as required by the Province of BC and the federal government.
4. Refrain from issuing spot re-zoning permits that would allow unrestricted commercial development by some future owner, in the event that the current owner decides to sell the land.
5. Attach covenants to any permits issued, strictly defining the purposes, and limiting the scope of development on a given property.

Even better, before doing any of the above, craft a coherent plan for the future of Area B. Ideally The Sechelt Inlet would qualify for designation as a Marine Protected Area by federal Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans. The shihshalh Nation and Province of BC might join such a request as an expression of their co-management of Swiya territory.

Comment from Zoom:

I'm John Carsley, V-P of the Tuwanek Ratepayers Assoc. I just wanted to underline our concerns about the proposed TELUS project at Cawley Point. As Hank so eloquently pointed out, this project is hugely out of scale for the site. The presentation made earlier Fall by TEUS's consultants appeared to be an exercise in "camp washing". - By all accounts, this is planned to be a very energy intensive high end corporate retreat with a few summer camp weeks tossed in for virtue. It appears to be totally out of scale project for the Inlet. We hope that Halfmoon Bay will request formal input from the neighbourhood associations on the Inlet about this zoning change. Thanks.

Shannon Rody:

They are asking for rezoning and I think this sets a very dangerous precedent. Not only is there no cohesive current plan for what should unfold up the Inlet, but there are also no identified dPAs or any real thorough assessments that have been done to set the tone for how the

community wishes to proceed in their development of the area now and in the future. The current OCP is very clear in stating that development should be kept to the areas that are already developed. Very clearly this is also an important area to the shishahl nation whom we are trying to honour in our reconciliation efforts. I get that there can be a feeling of “as long as it’s not in my backyard”, but I think precisely for this reason in that this area is so much further away from a questioning eye, we need to be crystal clear in deciding and communicating the best possible use and preservation of this area while we still have the chance.