

I am Sheila Malcolmson, candidate for Islands Trust;
Thank you all for coming, for running, for hosting this All-Candidates' Meeting...

Since 2002 my work as a Trustee has been informed by listening to a broad cross-section of the Gabriola community, and, by my background in tourism and environmental regulation.

If elected, I will continue to stand for:

1. The Preserve and Protect mandate of the Islands Trust
2. Positive community process; and,
3. Informing and involving islanders in decision-making.

You know, if the Islands Trust was all about nature reserves and frog ponds, we'd all love it. It is amazing that our form of government has its own land conservancy built in.

But, the local government side of the Trust is what has more day to day impact, and it is Gabriola's zoning authority you'll be electing next Saturday. I wish the Trust could be more loved by islanders, but realistically, who loves city hall?

Without zoning regulations, Gabriola would have been subdivided further and further, like all the small lots approved before the Trust was created.

Without it, we'd have condos and more sprawl – we just don't appreciate zoning regulations until the neighbours do something we regret.

Our existing bylaws were written at a time when islanders didn't want to be told what to do, and mostly didn't have enough money to build anything with big impact. Times have changed, and development pressures are huge. With Gabriola's Official Community Plan and land use regulations being reviewed this term, we can decide again as a community how we want development and construction regulated.

Until that time, we can't enforce bylaws that we don't yet have... When I hear that bylaw complaints aren't being acted on, I feel what is really happening is that the 1999 bylaws are not addressing the development impacts we are now feeling.

We need some fabulous community process to design controls that respect freedoms and protect what we value, and I'd love to be in this position to help with that community conversation.

We've had some real successes lately:

- addressing every rezoning application and policy review

with balance, protecting the environment and community interests, while saying Yes to most applications.

- We rezoned for a firehall on DeCourcey Island and adopted a new Official Community Plan and Land Use regulations for Mudge.
- We're on the verge of signing historic protocol agreements with Snuneymuxw First Nation and the Hul'qumi'num.
- Since I was elected, the Islands Trust helped preserve almost 900 acres in new park and nature reserve, and with community groups we've mapped frog ponds, Gary Oaks, eelgrass, and eagle perch trees.
- We've just brought the tax exemption program here, to reward voluntary stewardship on private lands. It is an Islands Trust program that is unique in BC.
- I've put affordable housing on the workplan, hosted an island-wide forum, and secured \$14,000 for an affordable housing needs assessment.
- The Islands Trust Fund has protected \$31.5 million in land, spending less than \$5 million to do so.

Looking ahead, I'm eager to move forward on a review of Gabriola's Official Community Plan. Open-minded as I am to everyone's input

(and that is a duty of Trustees, to have an open-mind), I personally want to include:

- A Farm Plan for Gabriola
- An affordable housing strategy with the RDN
- Climate change protections

And

- an extra level of protection to wetlands, special ecosystems, and steep slopes.

This is vital to the balance we'll need to incorporate the 850 new homes that existing zoning allows.

Each of our decisions have been the result of multiple collaborations and much public input. We can only reflect the input we receive, and I so encourage islanders (and all the candidates) to stay involved, and give the trustees the benefit of your ideas. It makes our job easier every time, and we need a wide breadth of opinion to design solutions that work.

Gabriola may be facing great development pressures, but with care, we can

- minimize development impacts,
- encourage good stewardship, and
- maintain the precious diversity of our community,

keeping it affordable and sustainable to live in this beautiful place.

Thank you.

(November 8, 2008, Community Hall)