

It's been a busy and productive fall over here at ISLA headquarters. As we move ever closer to our goal of providing real affordable housing on Hornby Island, we've been concentrating our efforts in several key areas.

Site Development and Planning

The fieldwork for the environmental site assessment survey is now complete. This means that we have nearly all of the critical physical data needed to carry out detailed site planning. Our intention is to set aside sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands and streams as conservation reserves. The rest of the land can then be developed for housing.

Work on the land has actually begun. Our access road from Central Road into the property is underway, thanks to tree work by Jake Parker and excavator work by Dean Ellis. The road is a work in progress and will take a little while to complete. A major step forward.

We have begun the process of developing our application for zoning with the Islands Trust. This zoning package will define the number and nature of homes that are allowed on the land. It will include a housing agreement that, along with the residents' ground lease, will describe how the housing works and how it stays affordable over time.

October Workshop

On October 17th ISLA hosted a community workshop at New Horizons. The format was informal and designed to stimulate discussion on a range of topics.

I presented an overview of where we are today. This was followed by a detailed discussion of different styles and types of clustered housing led by Wayne Roberts. Sustainable and green building technologies were explained and examined. Massoud Zadeh led a discussion on issues involved with home occupations. We discussed community workspaces and community gardens. Michael Berman led us through a presentation of the many issues around home financing. And Kevin McMahan took on the difficult task of discussing the recurring topics that we continue to struggle with such as: "sweat equity", "the owner builder", "caravans", and more.

The afternoon finished off with a planning session. Using a large scale map and model houses, we tried out different planning schemes while discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each.

It was great to get the ideas and input from potential residents.

Broadening Community Involvement

Achieving and maintaining broad community involvement is essential to our vision of building affordable housing and sustainable community on Hornby. We want to hear from potential residents, supporters, and critics. We recognize that as we go ahead into our next phase, we're going to need all the help we can get. After all, this project belongs to all of us.

So if you've got suggestions or criticisms — constructive or otherwise — please let us know what's on your mind. Just get in touch with a board member, or simply drop us a line at housing@islacommunitylandtrust.org.

Final Notes

There are still some of the resident's surveys out there that have not yet been returned. We would love to have your input. In fact, it's necessary that we hear from you, so please if you can, take a few minutes and fill out the questionnaire. If you need help with it, or feel uncomfortable with any of the questions, please let us know.

And finally, if you'd like to keep track of ISLA board meetings, or check up on other news don't forget to visit our website at www.islacommunitylandtrust.org.

On behalf of the ISLA board, we wish you all a warm and happy holiday season, and a wonderful new year.