

Lasqueti Island Ratepayers Association

April - 2024

Attached you will find the original proposal by the Lasqueti Island Ratepayers Association (LIRA) to the Local Trust Committee advocating a change to two specific bylaws which prohibit the construction of private docks on properties which have access to a public road.

The Local Trust Committee has indicated that they would like to see a significant public input into the decision-making procedure. To this end we expect that the Advisory Planning Commission will be the vehicle by which public interest in private docks will be assessed, along with the possibility of town hall and/or public information meetings.

We don't believe that the originators of the Official Community Plan intended to ban private docks. The majority of the population—then and now-- don't live on the waterfront so it has never been an issue.

OCP Policy 15: "Private docks may be considered on a site specific basis in the Marine General (M-2) zone. In considering an application for a dock, environmental and social effects must be addressed..."

The current Land Use Bylaw blockades anyone from applying except properties totally isolated from access to a public road.

Bylaw 4.13(b): "Despite any other provision of this Bylaw, one (1) dock per contiguous upland parcel that abuts the foreshore on Lasqueti Island is permitted where the dock is providing access to a parcel abutting the foreshore which parcel is not accessible by a dedicated right-of-way or registered easement..."

Bylaws are written by urban planners who, if it were not for a map, wouldn't know Lasqueti existed and are unacquainted with the realities of living here.

LIRA Directors: Karl Darwin, Gail Fleming, Eugenie Pelletier, Jan Darwin, Craig McFeely,
Richard Ayers, Gwen Bigsby, Barry Parks.

The Lasqueti Island Ratepayer's Association was established in 1997 in response to the inability of our elected representatives—the regional director or trustees—to be able to initiate a project without the advocacy of a community organization.

The purposes of the society are: (a) to provide direction to and liaison with other levels of government where the interests of property owners may be affected; and (b) to provide in general for the welfare of Lasqueti Island in any capacity deemed appropriate by the membership.

Pragmatically speaking, this mandate translates into identifying a problem and proceed to a solution with a minimal amount of democratic process.

To this end we were instrumental in initiating the construction of the multi-use barge ramp and obliquely conspired to help get the False Bay hill paved. Today we are involved in a court case to prevent the privatisation of Tucker Bay road.

Currently, there are ten locations where private docks are permitted under the current Land Use Bylaw. The criteria for the establishment of these locations is that they are inaccessible to a public road.

We propose that Land Use Bylaw 4.13(b) be changed to permit, in conjunction with the objectives in the Official Community Plan, to permit the construction of private docks on properties which are accessible by public road.

The principal objection to private docks is that they will proliferate in great numbers, detract from aesthetics of the shoreline and damage the marine ecology.

Let's count the locations where private docks might be built: Starting at Jenkins Bay and going around the island, they are: Jenkins Bay, Graveyard Bay, Richardson Bay, Boat Cove, Windy Bay, Rouse Bay,

(2)

Anderson Bay, Boho Bay, Long Bay, Tucker Bay, Conn Bay, Sandy Cove, West Point, Mine Bay, Scotty Bay, Maple Bay, Spring Bay, Cocktail Cove, Mud Bay and lastly, False Bay. Eight of the 20 locations go dry at low tide and three are exposed to high winds. This leaves nine remaining possible locations spread along an estimated 50 kilometres of shoreline.

Lasqueti, whether you like it or not, is not some ecologically endangered fairyland but a growing community with unique problems, one of which is the absence of an adequate public dock to accommodate the growing fleet of residential boats. If you doubt the community is growing, you need only count the parked cars in False Bay along with the 70 or so mooring buoys dotting the waters around the island.

The public dock in False Bay was the ideal location to accommodate the berthing of the 226-foot S. S. Cardena which served the island for decades. The occasional south-west gale-force wind had no effect. Today, the short-lived but fierce south-west gales that blow into False Bay make it less than ideal for mooring small boats. The problem could be solved with a breakwater. However, False Bay is too deep.

Scotty Bay has been proposed as the best location for a public dock. However, the one public access is prohibitively steep and ends on a drying mud flat. The location suffers from another geographical feature unique to Lasqueti: There is a dearth of flat land anywhere near any public access to park cars. In fact, there is hardly any flat land near the water anywhere.

Lasqueti is served by a five-day-a-week passenger-only ferry. You can assume that one day it will be inadequate if the population continues to grow. When will we need a bigger ferry? Or how much longer before a five-day service is inadequate? Or suppose you had a new ferry with a capacity of 100, where will it dock?

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Private docks are, of course, a great convenience to the owner of one. It alleviates the necessity of packing freight and groceries on and off a frequently overcrowded ferry.

We live in a fool's paradise. Nothing ever happens here. Nevertheless, the regional district is obliged to outline evacuation routes in the event of some calamity. The current plan is that everybody drive to False Bay.

Suppose the island had to be evacuated due to a wildfire? Unlikely, but possible. Suppose you had a car fire on the dock in False Bay? Unlikely, but possible. How about a 70-knot south-wester on a king tide? Unlikely, but possible. What advantages do private docks provide to the community? Additional points of departure, should it become necessary.

We don't believe that private docks, given the few locations where they could be constructed-if ever-are much of a threat to the environment. Nor will they solve any problems posed by growth. There is no logic to prohibit them and some advantage to the community to permit them. Consequently we would ask that changes to bylaws 4.13(b) and 4.15 be undertaken.

LASQUETI ISLAND RATEPAYER'S ASSOCIATION