

# LASQUETI FIRST!

It's probably safe to assume that 95% of Lasqueti residents don't think about the Islands Trust 95% of the time. After all, why be concerned with a level of government which purports to preserve and protect your little piece of paradise? The island has experienced a demographic change as the older established population declines, being replaced by ex-city dwellers seeking the novel challenge of living off the grid. A prevalent view is that Lasqueti is the way it is because of the Islands Trust. The fact is that Lasqueti is the way it is despite the Trust – a level of government which promotes an environmental mandate to a degree which, carried to its logical destination, will prevent Lasqueti from developing into a self-sufficient community.

Lasqueti does have a future. What we imagine the future might be is mired in a dictatorial tangle of policies and procedures known as the Islands Trust's Policy Statement. In a nutshell, any proposal which contradicts the policy statement is doomed to failure even though its time may have come and be of benefit to the island.

"Progress" on Lasqueti evolves in a trickle over decades.. The scheduled ferry service which you enjoy today began as a subsidized 25-foot water taxi around 1963. The barge ramp came into existence after residents battled the Trust for 25 years to get zoning. There was opposition to paving False Bay hill. The beach access at the end of Laing Lane was opposed by the trustees of the day. The pub and Provisions at one time did not exist. The Judith Fisher health centre was just an idea. It is all infrastructure which makes Lasqueti a more functional community. Private docks are now on the menu.

The time has come to talk about private docks and possibly time to re-visit the official community plan, and the role of our elected trustees who must choose between their responsibility to the community and their contractual obligation to comply with the Policy Statement. Trustees, although elected, are essentially employees of the Trust.

At a local trust committee meeting held in May, the trustees voted not to proceed to the first reading of the Carey dock application effectively shutting out any further public consultation. That decision, however, is in variance with Lasqueti's land use by-law which allows docks; Lasqueti's official community plan (OCP) which permits docks; and contradicts the Lasqueti Community Association's OCP Review position "to develop methods for a community-driven dispute resolution process to handle concerns regarding by-law non-compliance."

The only by-law Carey violated was that, in effect, if the property on which the dock is built is accessible to a public road, you are automatically disqualified from applying. Currently the Lasqueti Island Ratepayer's Association is challenging the by-law given the fact that there are so few locations where any dock could be built anywhere.

Various B. C. Governments, provincially and regionally are limiting or banning your access to docks and marinas which are the lifelines for emergency evacuations, tourism businesses, and moving freight--relieving the pressure on our often over-crowded ferry.

While the Policy Statement exudes negativity on the subject of private docks, ask yourself: How will you flee in the event of a natural disaster? Inhabited islands are susceptible to natural disasters such as wildfires. A major earthquake will cut Main Road into pieces as earthen dams dissolve.

A study undertaken by the municipality of Bowen Island concluded that preventative measures need to be in place to strengthen community resilience. If these fail, evacuation by private boat is the only choice, and staging areas--ramps, beaches or docks--should be identified.

If you take the logistics of evacuation seriously, you could argue that private docks save lives.. It is time we stopped being victimized by urban planners who are immune from the consequences of their decisions.

**TOWN HALL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2025  
COMMUNITY HALL  
3:00 - 6:00**

*"Lasqueti First!" is an independent group of concerned Lasquetians*