

# **Denman Community Land Trust Association (DCLTA) ANNUAL REPORT**

**Submitted for AGM June 15, 2021  
By Co-Chairs Stephanie Slater and Doug Olstead**

There's been a lot of activity since the Denman Community Land Trust Association (DCLTA) held its last annual general meeting (AGM) in August, 2020.

In fact, one reason we are returning to our members less than a year after that date (albeit closer to the association's usual AGM date) is that we need to come before the membership with motions that will position us for quick action on the Pepper Lane Seniors Affordable Housing Project when several milestones are reached.

## **Pepper Lane Summary**

The current focus of the DCLTA is to design, construct and operate an independent living complex for the use of low-income seniors (age 65 or older). The project – (named Pepper Lane after the family who originally lived on the site) will be centrally located in the Denman village area (off Denman Road behind the Guest House). The project is still in the planning phase and has achieved the following since 2014:

- Conducting a needs assessment
- Securing a memorandum of understanding to purchase the two acres of land for the project, which is currently a single density, four-acre lot owned by Bev Severn
- Raising \$100,000 in donations and pledges to buy the land
- Conducting a waste assessment for development
- Identifying an initial design concept
- Water monitoring
- Land surveys
- Studying options for incorporating energy efficiency into the design
- Meetings with government approval agencies (e.g., Islands Trust, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Agricultural Land Commission, Island Health)
- Informing neighbours and the community about the proposal (including a new, project-specific website: <https://www.pepperlane.org/>)
- Consultations with funders, contractors and operators of affordable housing projects in B.C.
- Engagement of project consultants

## **Islands Trust Bylaws**

The Islands Trust must give re-zoning approval for the site in order for Pepper Lane to proceed. The amendment to a Land Use Bylaw created specifically for this project was

approved by the Islands Trust and is now before the Minister for Municipal Affairs and Housing, along with the accompanying amendment to the Denman Island Official Community Plan. Final approval is expected soon. Approval by the Islands Trust included the first use of the density bank established in the Denman Island Official Community Plan.

*Housing Agreement Bylaw* - To ensure that DCLTA's proposed eight units be used only for low-cost seniors' rental accommodation, a housing agreement must be registered against the title to the project land. The agreement defines details such as tenants' age and income levels and usage of the unit (i.e., that it is the occupants' permanent and principal residence)

*Restrictive Covenant* - The Restrictive Covenant will register other kinds of restrictions against the title to the land, including details of vegetative buffers, berms, and fencing for the property borders and minimum energy-efficient construction standards as well as groundwater monitoring requirements.

It is hoped that the final amendments of the Housing Agreement and Restrictive Covenant will be concluded at the Local Trust Committee meeting on July 6 with formal approval by the Trust completed shortly after.

### **Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure**

The current four-acre property needs to be subdivided to create two strata lots and a shared lane. On Feb. 8, 2021 the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure gave approval to this subdivision subject to a number of conditions including the need to develop an acceptable wastewater system plan and prepare a storm water management plan. Work on these elements is expected to take until the end of this year.

### **Agricultural Land Reserve**

The proposed project site was in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The Agricultural Land Commission approved removing it from the ALR in a series of decisions, the final one on Feb. 14, 2018. The decision is conditional on the DCLTA fencing the boundaries of the site that border on remaining ALR-designated land. A fundraising drive this spring raised more than \$10,500 to underwrite this and other fencing work. (Many thanks to the seven Group of Seven artists who contributed original works to be awarded as draw prizes in that campaign!)

### **Funding Options**

The board has had discussions with both BC Housing and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Commission (CMHC) and both agencies are highly supportive, offering the prospect of a combination of grants and low-interest loans.

On the recommendation of BC Housing, the DCLTA has engaged project advisor Walter Hoogland of Constructive Management to guide the project. Mr. Hoogland has considerable experience working with non-profit housing projects. The fee for his work will be paid from a seed funding grant anticipated from the CMHC.

The association has also engaged designer Chris Iliffe to work on the building plans. While a design concept is in place, further work is needed to ensure the design meets all current requirements. This design work is required in order for the DCLTA to apply for seed funding.

### **Board of Directors**

With the Pepper Lane project ramping up, the board decided to expand its numbers and has recruited several new directors who bring a wide range of relevant experience – including a former provincial Minister of Housing! Long-time directors Harlene Holm and Guy Marion decided to leave the board following 12 years of service to this project. We thank them for their tireless efforts, without which Pepper Lane would not be viable.

The DCLTA's bylaws require that the members approve any expansion to the board, hence one of the motions presented today.

### **Conclusion**

After many years of difficult work that has ranged from invasive weed removal (a standard element of most Denman projects it seems!) to fundraising, to navigating the many shoals of government legislation, it feels like the Pepper Lane project is reaching a tipping point and is poised to finally move toward the significant milestones of land purchase and building construction.

The volunteer leadership of such a complex project is not for the faint of heart but the unwavering assistance of Denman Island residents and other supporters has helped DCLTA directors and other volunteers keep up the momentum on this project. It now feels that we are close to achieving an important milestone that will help improve the quality of life for some of Denman's senior population and enrich the community as a whole by preserving the diversity, experiences and stability of the island's population of older adults.

Thank you,

Doug Olstead, Stephanie Slater  
DCLTA Co-Chairs