

ANNUAL REPORT

Denman Community Land Trust Association (DCLTA)

Submitted for Annual General Meeting, Sept. 17, 2023
By Stephanie Slater, Co-Chair

It's been a busy year for the DCLTA – one of lows and highs. Fortunately, we have some encouraging highlights to report.

Pepper Lane Project

At our last AGM (Sept. 11, 2022) we were awaiting the final approval to the Islands Trust bylaw amendments that would allow subdivision of the property intended for the Pepper Lane Seniors Affordable Housing project. That approval came later that month. However, after eight years of planning and no funds confirmed for construction, the landowner was discouraged and decided to withdraw her offer to sell us the property. That was certainly a low.

Agreement with Denman Housing Association

We experienced a high not long after, however, when the Denman Housing Association (DHA) offered to dedicate five units in the 20-unit [Denman Green](#) project exclusively for seniors. We continue to work closely with the DHA (more on that further on).

New Property Identified for Seniors Housing Project

We hit another high recently in our search for an alternative property for a seniors' housing project. In July, the DCLTA signed a memorandum of understanding with a generous property owner who will donate a portion of a property – pending successful re-zoning and subdivision approval. The property is owned by Emcon Services Inc., whose president is Frank Rizzardo. Emcon Services is one of the largest highway, road and bridge maintenance contractors in Canada. Its properties include the works yard on Piercy Road, Denman Island.

Our agreement is that Emcon will donate the western portion of this property, which is next to the Denman Island Health Centre and backs onto the Denman Green property. Details have to be finalized, but we expect the subdivided site would be approximately 3,000 square metres at a minimum. Design of the seniors' housing will depend on community input and consideration of the lot size and lot features.

The current tenant – Mainroad Services – would not be affected in their operation of the works yard.

DCLTA has started the initial work needed to move this project forward, though we are still very much in the early stages of due diligence and determining the work required to present a subdivision and re-zoning proposal to the Islands Trust. Stay tuned!

Collaborations

Both the Denman Housing Association (DHA) and the Denman Community Land Trust Association (DCLTA) are working to address the shortage of affordable housing on Denman Island. While our two organizations had been liaising before the Pepper Lane project fell through, that incident prompted an even closer collaboration, including an exploration of the suitability of amalgamating. We decided that – for the short term at least – it was most productive to remain as two entities. This is mainly due to the time and energy needed by the DHA to focus on getting Denman Green financed and underway. Meanwhile, the DCLTA is a registered land trust, so we have a somewhat larger mandate to acquire land for affordable housing.

Our two groups continue to work together, sharing knowledge and expertise. Three individuals serve on both boards and the DCLTA has committed funds to the Denman Green project (see more in our treasurer’s report).

The DCLTA also continues to be a member of the BC Non-Profit Housing Association and has joined the fledgling Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts. In addition, we have held information meetings with representatives from housing organization such as the Cooperative Housing Federation of BC and Abbeyfield Canada. We look to others for insights and advice and in turn offer our perspective as a rural community working on this challenging issue.

Meanwhile, we continue to invite suggestions or inquiries about potential land for affordable housing for Denman Island residents of all ages. We can discuss purchase, long-term lease, subdivision of property, donation of property (including with life lease for the owner), bequests, and other options.

We are also exploring different options for housing tenure, such as rental, ownership and co-operative ownership. Of note is the fact that our bylaws allow us to turn over land to another non-profit or charitable organization for development as affordable housing – so we are open to partnerships.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the board of directors of the DCLTA. They are a group of dedicated, capable and experienced people who are a pleasure to work with. We had increased the size of our board to prepare for the increased demands of building Pepper Lane. When that project was sidelined, three of our board members chose to leave the board: John Clark, Brad Hornick, and Doug Olstead. We thank them for their service.

The remaining eight board members re-doubled their efforts to advance affordable housing. We were soon joined by Dave Ricketts, who also serves on the board of the Denman Housing Association. (DCLTA board members Sue Hammell and Pam Willis in turn joined the board of the DHA).

We also wish to thank volunteer bookkeeper Virginia MacCuspig.

Finally – but perhaps most importantly – we are very grateful to our DCLTA members, donors and others for your support. It was difficult to share the news about Pepper Lane but it was uplifting to receive so much encouragement from our DCLTA members and other residents of Denman Island.

Your encouragement helped us renew our inspiration and dedication to championing this important effort for the Denman Island community.

Thank you!

Stephanie Slater, Co-Chair
Denman Community Land Trust Association