

PHARA TOWN HALL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Thank to everyone who attended the Pender Harbour and Area Residents Association's (PHARA) Town Hall meeting via Zoom on January 31! We apologize for those who could not join after we reached the maximum number of participants (100). We are posting audio from the event in the coming days. As those who attended are aware, the meeting was Zoom Bombed by a very sick person who posted some very disturbing content. Again, we apologize for not being able to shut the person down sooner than we did. Attendees should know that no personal information was compromised.

About PHARA

We started the meeting with a little about PHARA. We were founded in 2013 as the Pender Harbour Advisory Council, a non-profit volunteer organization to support the interests and needs of residents and visitors of Pender Harbour, Egmont and the rest of Area A.

We believe that all important decisions that affect our communities should be made by those who live, work and play in Area A. To this end, the larger our membership, the better we are able to influence our regional, provincial and federal governments.

Our current PHARA board is made up of the following directors: Lucy Archbold, Bill Charlton, Linda Cordell, Ann Harmer, Eliza Kinley, Sean McAllister, Catherine McEachern, Sage Robson, Paola Stewart and John Verver, and lastly, your president, Peter Robson.

PHARA and Covid 19

It was a year ago that the Covid 19 pandemic changed all our lives forever. It also caused PHARA to focus on helping our community get through it all.

One of those measures was to create a special Covid-19 page on our website. We compiled an extensive list of measures being taken by essential services, businesses, and service providers in our area to slow its spread. This list, which is a great reference for the community, continues to be updated daily. And

remember, if you have changes to your business or organization, please let us know. Contact info is on our website.

A very special thanks to Jan Verwey for keeping the website going strong—not only with Covid, but with regular news postings.

At the same time, a Community Covid Task Force was assembled by our local community associations. Its object was to make sure the increased needs of our communities were met. It included, in part, PHARA, our Area A Director Len Lee and representatives from the Health Centre, paramedics, fundraising organizations, food bank, Healthy Meals program, community school, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, the Legion, fire departments, our Anglican church and I probably missed a few others.

Our task was to make sure everyone in the various groups was on the same page and knew what the others were doing. Those groups helped assure emergency and non-emergency health and fire protection services were in place while protecting service providers. It involved significant fundraising efforts to provide for the increased needs of the food bank and for our youth, seniors and venerable people. We coordinated with volunteer groups involved in grocery, meal and prescription delivery as well as harmonizing with other groups and governments on the coast. Our communities really pulled together and I applaud the Task Force's efforts in keeping our community as mentally and physically healthy as possible despite the hardships we all faced—and continue to face.

Emergency Preparedness: As we all know, should there be some kind of disaster in our community or elsewhere on the coast, be it fire, earthquake, landslide flooding—or having Donald Trump move to Pender—our community could easily be cut off from the rest of the coast. Our single highway has served us well, but should it be blocked for any reason, we would be isolated, without access, other than by water, to the lower mainland, to get groceries, to access the hospital and so on. At one point some years back, there was an emergency preparedness plan for the Pender/Egmont area, but that is

no longer in place and should disaster strike, we need to know what to do, who to contact and how to get the essentials of life including shelter and food, until things can be restored. We hope to be able to communicate a strategy this year so everyone in our communities has answers at their fingertips.

This is all tied to the Emergency Support Services program of the SCRD and they are looking for volunteers in our area. A commitment of approximately 2 to 5 hours per month is required for meetings, free training and exercises. Of course, more hours will be required during emergencies or disasters. Anyone interested in becoming involved in the Emergency Preparedness can contact us via the PHARA website and we'll pass on your info.

Madeira Park Name Change: By now, I think everyone in our communities is aware of the ad hoc changes to our highway signs and the proposed name change from Madeira Park to Salalus. This is not a dual naming exercise; this is an actual official name change. PHARA led the move to oppose the name change which was done without consultation with those who live here. The letters we wrote to the SCRD, the Sechelt Nation and the Provincial Government are posted on our website. PHARA has received about 60 letters from community members opposing the name change and thanks to all who took the time to share their opinions.

I understand the SCRD is going to try to keep us with the Madeira Park name and instead work with the band to come up with other local features that could be re-named.



Land Use Plan:

Many of us will now have heard that the BC Government, in conjunction with the shíshálh Nation, is moving ahead with a Land Use Planning process for Crown Lands on the Sunshine Coast. For some time, our Area A has requested some control over zoning of Crown lands and for the opportunity to be involved in how decisions are made.

To this end, the public was invited to complete a questionnaire in order to help the shíshálh-BC Land Use Planning Table frame the overall planning process and the initial planning themes.

The deadline for the questionnaire was January 31. However, further public consultations are being promised by the Planning Table, so this is just a start. More information and a link to the questionnaire and background documents can be found on the PHARA website.

Derelict Boats: A couple of years ago, PHARA received funding through Transport Canada's Abandoned Boats Program to remove two of the Harbour's worst derelicts, the Kwatna and Lulu Island. That funding has only been offered for random periods of time and the last window closed just a few days before we submitted the paperwork to remove Rick Cooke's two derelicts in Garden Bay. We expect another window in the Abandoned Boats Program to

open this spring and we are confident that we will receive funding to get rid of those and several other derelicts.



One notable eyesore in Gerrans Bay was the Chuckanut. It had been abandoned for years and local mariners had been making sure it didn't sink. However, this fall it did sink and local volunteers, including Bruno Pepin and Garden Bay Marine Services' Danny Fielding and deckhand Larry Page managed to keep it more or less afloat by adding floatation. We appealed to Transport Canada and the Coast Guard for help, but they declined as they had once inspected the Chuckanut and decided that it didn't contain any pollutants that would trigger emergency action. A few weeks later, in a storm, it and a houseboat rafted to it, broke loose and banged around the harbour. Once again, Transport Canada and the Coast Guard declined to take action (or to task our local RCMSAR). And once again, Garden Bay Marine Services came to the rescue and managed to secure the vessel in Irvines Landing. It's a long story, but PODS generously allowed us to use the launch ramp at their future discovery centre to haul the Chuckanut ashore where it was broken up and then landfilled in Sechelt.



Special thanks to Bob Fielding, Eliza Kinley, Laughlan and Kerry Rand of K E R Enterprises, as well as the SCRCD for their cooperation and help. All these people volunteered their time and equipment. At this point, we need to top up our Derelict Boats fund to cover incidentals, so if can help, please send an e-transfer to PHARA with the subject being “Derelicts.” Just go to our “Join Us” page on our website for e-transfer details. I’d also like to give a shout out to Ian and Diane Hopkinson who are in the process of taking over command of the derelict boat committee from Eliza Kinley and me. Ian is a veteran master mariner and a marine surveyor, so we’re delighted to have him and Diane aboard. Give us a wave Ian and Diane if you’re out there.



Beach Access: As we all know, tourism is one of the main economic drivers of the Sunshine Coast. It benefits all facets of business: restaurants and grocers, accommodation, retail outlets, adventure tourism

and so on. However, one of the biggest drawbacks to tourism in Area A is the lack of access to some of our finest oceanside attractions. Many of our parks and public accesses have zero signage for visitors. For example, residents often report talking to carloads of visitors who are lost and frustrated while trying to find our very special Francis Point Provincial Park, but there is absolutely no directional signage anywhere. Being unable to find our best oceanfront attractions (other than the Skookumchuck) is clearly detrimental to tourism and enjoyment of our communities.

To this end, we have asked that the SCRDR allocate staff resources/time to facilitate permissions with the Ministry of Transportation for a signage project. The SCRDR has already provided us with a Grant-in-Aid and we hope they can push this through the minefield that is the Ministry of Transportation.

The six sites we have identified are: Francis Point Provincial Park, Garden Bay Provincial Park, the Mount Daniel trailhead, Baker Beach, Martin Cove and the Bargain Harbour pullout. So now we're waiting for word that the SCRDR will allocate some staff resources. Right Len?

Trash Bash: The annual Backwoods Trash Bash was cancelled, though the Pender Harbour Hikers did arrange some small, informal roadside and backwoods trash collection events (much thanks to Ken and Marg O'Coffee).

Trails Funds: One of PHARA's other roles is to administer the funds received by the Pender Harbour Hikers from the Community Forest fund. That funding was to build and install sign kiosks and trail signs and to maintain the current inventory of trails as well as to assist in building, GPSing and signing new trails. These men and women have done an excellent job and our extensive network of hiking trails are something our community can be really proud of. This past year, despite being hampered by Covid restrictions, volunteers have built six new trails and GPS'd them all, they've cleared fallen trees and installed a new cutblock sign at the start of the Cecil Hill Trail. For more info, simply Google Pender Harbour Hikers.

Our Ocean Cleanup project was put on hold until we can find someone who can take over the project. If someone wants to take this on on our behalf, please contact me.

Dock Management Plan: (report given by Sean McAllister and Bill Charlton, co-chairs of the Dock Management Plan Working Group (listen to the recording for the full report)



Lifetime Achievement Award:

While we missed our 2020 town hall meetings and our annual Volunteer recognition awards. On behalf of PHARA and the Pender Harbour Chamber of Commerce, we'd like to make a special Lifetime Achievement Award to an exceptional and beloved volunteer, Rose-Marie Everett, who sadly passed in early January of this year. To speak about Rose, we've asked Jon Paine, a good friend of Rose and Brian, to offer a tribute. (Listen to the full tribute on the recording)



Pandemic Trails: And while Jon is here, we'd like to give a special callout to Jon and the crew that built an excellent network of hiking and mountain bike trails adjacent to Mixal Lake. The Pandemic trails can be accessed via the intersection of Bear Bay Road and Mixal Road or from near the end of Lee Road. We owe a debt of gratitude to Jon Paine, Dennis Cotter, Ken O'Coffee, Kevin Wells, Andrew Barker and his wife Lori as well as a number of other volunteers. These guys spent months and months, day after day during, the pandemic. This is just one more aspect of the community coming together to create something that we can all enjoy. The trail network can be seen through the Trailforks app at the App store.

REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY GROUPS

Several community groups spoke about what they'd been up to over the past year. They included:

Pender Harbour Learning Centre/Community School: See attached report and audio recording by Francine Clohosey, Manager of the Pender Harbour Community School Society.

Rotary Club: Presented by President Bill Charlton. See attached report and recording about the great work of the Rotary and plans for a replacement community school.

Pender Harbour Health Centre: The Pender Harbour Health Centre has been offering community-based health care for more than 40 years. It was founded by the community for the community after Saint Mary's hospital was moved to Sechelt. There's some great news coming from the clinic and Susann Richter, Chief Operating Officer, introduced us to our new doctor Colin Sutton from Nova Scotia. He will be starting his full time practice at the Health Centre this spring and will be employed directly by the Health Centre as opposed to the previous doctors from the Sechelt medical clinic who leased the space at the Clinic.

Reading Centre: Karen Dyck, former secretary of the Pender Harbour and Area Residents Association, and one of our longest serving and most dedicated community volunteers spoke about the latest with the Madeira Park Reading Centre.

Pender Harbour Living Heritage Society: The Pender Harbour Living Heritage Society is the non-profit behind the Sara Wray Hall in Irvines Landing, though they do a lot more. Their mandate is to preserve, promote and share Pender Harbour's unique heritage through community projects and events. President Ian Mackay spoke about their recent projects, including interpretative signage for a number heritage buildings including Lloyds store (John Henry's), Pender Harbour Golf Course, Bargain Barn and our Community Hall.

The community reports were followed by a talk about news with the SCRD from our Area A Director, **Leonard Lee**. (Listen to the recording)

The meeting finished with a **Questions and Answers** session from the audience (Listen to the recording)

Closing remarks

As the primary source of funding for PHARA is through memberships, we urge non-members to join. Memberships are....

membership@phara.ca