

## **PIERS ISLAND IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT – CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT, 2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The past year has seen the winds of change pass through our little community as we welcomed a record number of new residents to Piers Island and said good-bye to so many good friends and neighbours.

As Chairperson for the 2015 and 2016 Annual General Meetings, I previously used the Chair's report to express appreciation to islanders who contributed during the year and to summarize the services of the Improvement District. But in this, my final year, I would like to take the liberty of delaying my thank you to the end of today's meeting, and in regard to services, I feel the individual reports by our Board and officers need no explanation by me, they simply need to be shared and discussed with you all in this open forum.

Instead, and because of the many new faces we have in the community, I would like to use the Chair's report this year to share with those of you who have never experienced life in an improvement district a bit of information about our governing body, the Piers Island Improvement District, how it is structured, established, and empowered, what to expect from your elected officials, and how your trustees depend on your active participation to shape and deliver services. In so doing, I will borrow and copy from materials published by that provincial body having oversight responsibility for Improvement Districts, the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

Improvement Districts are local authorities responsible for providing services for the benefit of the residents in a community. There are approximately 220 Improvement Districts in the Province, located mostly in rural areas and varying in size from a neighbourhood subdivision to small communities like Piers Island. Most are located within the boundary of a regional district and some within municipalities, yet these agencies are independent of each other.

Improvement Districts are empowered to provide local services such as water, fire protection, street lighting, parks, drainage, and garbage collection. General governance services such as bylaw enforcement, building inspection and animal control are under the purview, in our case, of the regional district, and land use matters such as rezoning, subdivision and environmental planning are the responsibility of, in our case, the Islands Trust. Services provided directly by an improvement district are generally financed by taxation or user fees set by the trustees in bylaws created for that purpose.

Every improvement district is governed by a board of trustees elected by the area landowners, and please be aware that the powers exercised by the trustees are considerable. Trustees enact and enforce the regulations and charges, assess and collect taxes, acquire, hold and dispose of lands, borrow money and expropriate lands. Their authority to do so flows from the improvement district's bylaws, the Local Government Act, and other applicable provincial statutes such as Letters Patent.

The Piers Island Improvement District was incorporated by Letters Patent originally issued on March 24, 1965 and re-issued on May 18, 1994. Its physical boundaries were established and the purposes for its incorporation were outlined in those proclamations, as were the structure and election process for the governance branch. And as mentioned, our Letters Patent granted the Improvement District powers similar to those accorded a municipal council.

The services for which the Piers Island Improvement District is responsible are: a) operation of a waterworks; b) provision of fire protection; c) operation of a parking lot, boat launching facility and storage yard for the benefit of land owners on Piers Island. It is also noted that one other important item in our Letters Patent is the establishment of an agreement to pay a grant-in-lieu of property taxes to the District of North Saanich for our Dolphin road parking compound. You can find a copy of our Letters Patent posted on the official PIID web pages at [www.piersisland.ca](http://www.piersisland.ca).

The three trustees of our Improvement District are tasked with managing the matters of the Improvement District and must report to the landowners annually, as we are today, on the operation of its services and the financial condition of the improvement district. At today's meeting we will also arrange for the election of one trustee to succeed one whose term of office is expiring today. Trustee terms are for three years, for a maximum of two terms, and because trustees wield awesome powers once elected, landowners who elect them are urged to consider candidates carefully and to stay informed in regard to the business decisions these entrusted representatives are making for them. Take the time to attend a board meeting; make the effort to inform your trustees of matters that have concerning consequences to the community; become a trustee.

Regular meetings of the board of trustees are open to residents and recorded minutes are available upon request. In practice, a copy of the draft minutes are sent out following each meeting and then posted to the PIID website once approved at the next meeting of the trustees. At trustee meetings, it is the trustees who make and vote on motions to take action and there is a general expectation that trustees will make informed, transparent decisions. This is a very different protocol than that used for conducting the Piers Island Association's annual general meeting where eligible members all vote on questions put before the membership. On matters of significant consequence, such as borrowing, trustees would want to engage landowners in open and transparent consultation so as to ensure they are sufficiently in touch with the opinions and concerns of their electorate before making their decisions, and as much as possible, consultation should continue with landowners until general assent can be achieved.

Assisting the trustees are the two most important members of the board team, the Corporate Secretary who handles general administrative tasks, and the Finance Administrator who handles all financial matters. These employees of the Improvement District do not hold office for a specific term as do the trustees, but instead hold office for an open term so that they can impart continuity and consistency to the district's business.

At this time I would like to mention that we have a full agenda to get through this morning so as Chair I will now take a moment to quickly outline how I propose to conduct the meeting to allow ample time to discuss each item with as many attendees as wish to speak. The AGM is the best opportunity during the year for the trustees to hear the perspectives of the islanders at large, so we will open the floor following each business item to facilitate full discussion. To move things along efficiently, while giving everyone an opportunity to participate, I will ask that we all observe the following guidelines for speaking:

- When the Chair opens the floor to discussion, please raise your hand to be acknowledged.
- When taking the floor for the first time today, please provide your name and address so that new people can hear who you are and can also introduce themselves to those among us who are longer time residents.
- Please address your comments to the trustees rather than other attendees.
- Please make your points briefly, taking no more than 2 minutes,
- Please respect others who have the floor by not interrupting or talking to other attendees.
- And once you have spoken on a matter, please do not ask to be given the floor again except for the situation where you are requested to clarify your previous comments.

If we can all observe these simple speaking courtesies, we will move through our agenda quickly but at the same time will have the chance to hear everyone who wishes to express an opinion.

So let's now begin the business of our agenda with the plan to be done before noon at which time we will take a quick break for lunch which has been provided jointly by the PIA and the PIID. Thank you, Nancy and Charlie for arranging the lunch, and thanks also, I understand, to the all-male kitchen staff for serving it.

Respectfully, Maureen Crooks, Trustee and Chair