
Extracts of articles and letters published in the *Flying Shingle* in the years 1991–7 on the Weldwood controversy

compiled by Nick Doe

November 1991

Beginning in January... Weldwood will be logging 309 acres of its tree farm area.... The company headquarters is located in the US and it has land holdings and development in Brazil. ... Jerry McClintock, Engineering Forester, stated the work will be better managed than last time... [and that] “there is no scientific fact to back up claims that this area is a watershed”. ...Another section of Weldwood land is being sought by a developer with a view to subdivision, located in the Whalebone area....

April 1992

Editorial page

June Harrison

...When asked what Weldwood thought of the current logging practice on the island, Weldwood manager, Carl Rathburn said:

...everyone wants a tree farm, but nobody wants it logged. Logging, by its nature, is destructive and ugly.

...Weldwood representatives claim that they have not met, thus far, with anyone from the Trust to float any ideas about [concerning a proposal from Weldwood]. However, one of the Island’s Trustees informed me that they have indeed met with Weldwood brass to “discuss their options”.

...Just a note of caution to our elected Trustees. We have a community plan. It has served us reasonably well. Any attempt, overtly or covertly to change the community plan to suit Weldwood will bring out the troops and cause a storm.

...It is Weldwood’s business to seek as many bucks as they can for their land. It’s

our business to be the stewards of the land for generations to come.

Weldwood options...

Frank Bond

...In 1987, MacMillan Bloedel sold its 180-acre forest status land on the southern crown of [Galiano] island to Land Rich Resources who had it clear-cut, and then tried, unsuccessfully, to rezone it for subdivision. Today, the ground is hard-packed and dry and supports only thistles.

...The Islands Trust is currently being sued, along with the Galiano Conservancy Association, by Macmillan Bloedel for damages in the wake of bylaw changes that prohibit the erection of buildings on alienated forest lands on Galiano Island.¹

May 1992

We shall overcome

June Harrison

...Overheads, attractive designs, maps showing very little, and a table laden with pop, cookies, and coffee awaited the full house at the local Community Hall on May 4.

...What followed at the meeting, following a presentation by Herb Auerbach, President of Strong Western Advisors, was nothing short of an outpouring of anger from those who rose to address the Weldwood representatives.

...Susan Yates complained about their irresponsible logging practices...the oil left on the ground and covered by trees, the late

¹ The Supreme Court of BC ruled in favour of the company in 1992, but the decision was set aside by the Court of Appeal in 1995.

night logging by lights, disturbing many nearby neighbours. “You assured us that you were in the forestry business and now you want to be developers”, she said.



...Following the meeting, one of the Weldwood Consultants claimed that he did not view the meeting as totally negative and that he felt that there was support for planning with the company.

Letters to the editor

...I am writing to protest...any further subdivision of land for residential building use.
Peter Smith

...I feel Weldwood ...should follow the same Community Plan as laid out by the Islands Trust, that the rest of us Gabriola residents must abide by.
Carol Michael

...As property and resident owners for the past seventeen years, we feel that there should be much thought put forth before any large development comes to the island.
Richard & Edith Murphy

...As a resident and property owner...am very much against any further subdivision or any further subdividing of any existing lot sizes.
Ella Chapman

...There are enough lots already subdivided.... We don't need any more subdivision.
R. Thompson

...While the Weldwood mailing was being distributed, representatives of “special interest groups” such as the Gabriola

Community Forest Committee received letters from Strong Western Advisors “seeking community support” for the option favoured by Weldwood. Strong Western proposed to meet each group to “discuss...the potential that a plan...could hold for you”. The Forest Committee replied that Weldwood should first present a comprehensive development plan to the elected Trustees and that those officials should, at their discretion, initiate meetings between Strong Western and any interest group on the island. ...In magnificent manipulation of meaning Strong Western ignored its earlier solicitation and stated in reply that the purpose of the proposed meeting was to discuss “process, not a plan”. But participation in a process established to give development rights to Weldwood is support in principle for a plan that the community has yet to see.

Neil Aitken

June 1992

Letters to the editor

...You have experienced our anger...it has served its purpose. We propose therefore the following: (i) Weldwood puts before the Community their preferred plan, (ii) both you and we declare a moratorium on further actions until Weldwood's proposal has been submitted to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

John Garson, Ruth Garson, E.P. Wilson, Glen Millar, Imelda Hedingham, Adrienne Kemble, Genevieve Teed, Frances Smith, Ruth Loomis, Neil Aitken, Peter Pentz, Ron Smith

...Now to hear that not only can our Islands Trust not give us any sort of mandate but they are not allowed to say anything for fear of being sued... can this really be true?

Kelli-Rae Clark

[ED: The LTC felt they could not be directly involved in plan development because they would be responsible for approving it. An OCP Review Committee was asked to work with Weldwood.]

October 1992

Weldwood's Option 7

Frank Bond

...The Official Community Plan Review Committee recommend that residents consider the latest Weldwood proposal; to give 1820 acres of land to the island in exchange for the right to develop a 350-lot subdivision.

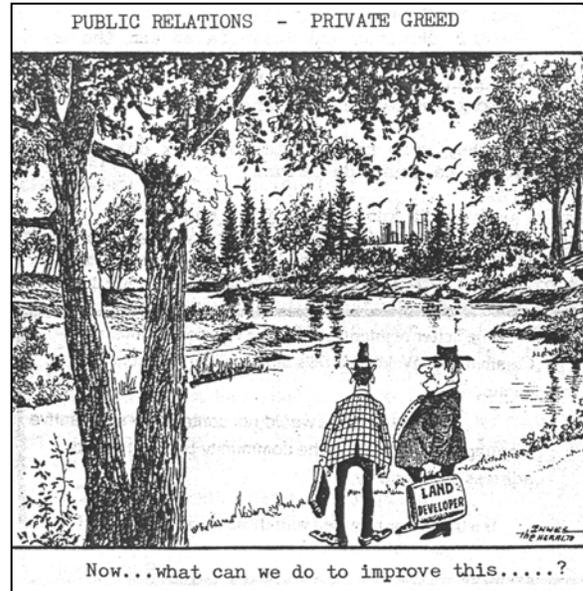
In a meeting at the community hall, Friday evening, October 20, about 100 island residents politely listened as the five-member committee outlined their support for the proposed plan, referred to as Option 7.

Under Option 7, Gabriola would be given all of the Weldwood lands between North and South Roads (containing the island's three main watersheds) and 80 acres behind the Fellowship Church on the North Road.

In return, the Islands Trust would rezone 608 acres of Weldwood's land in the Whalebone area to allow development of 1 to 2-acre lots subject to the following conditions: environmentally sound common water and sewage treatment, community access to green space and waterfront, a 300-foot strip of forest along North Road, and more.

The alternative to making a deal with Weldwood, members argued, is the subdivision of all the land into 20-acre lots, which could be clear-cut and possibly divided again. Option 7 would guarantee that the centre of the island remain forest, protecting water, animal habitat, and public access.

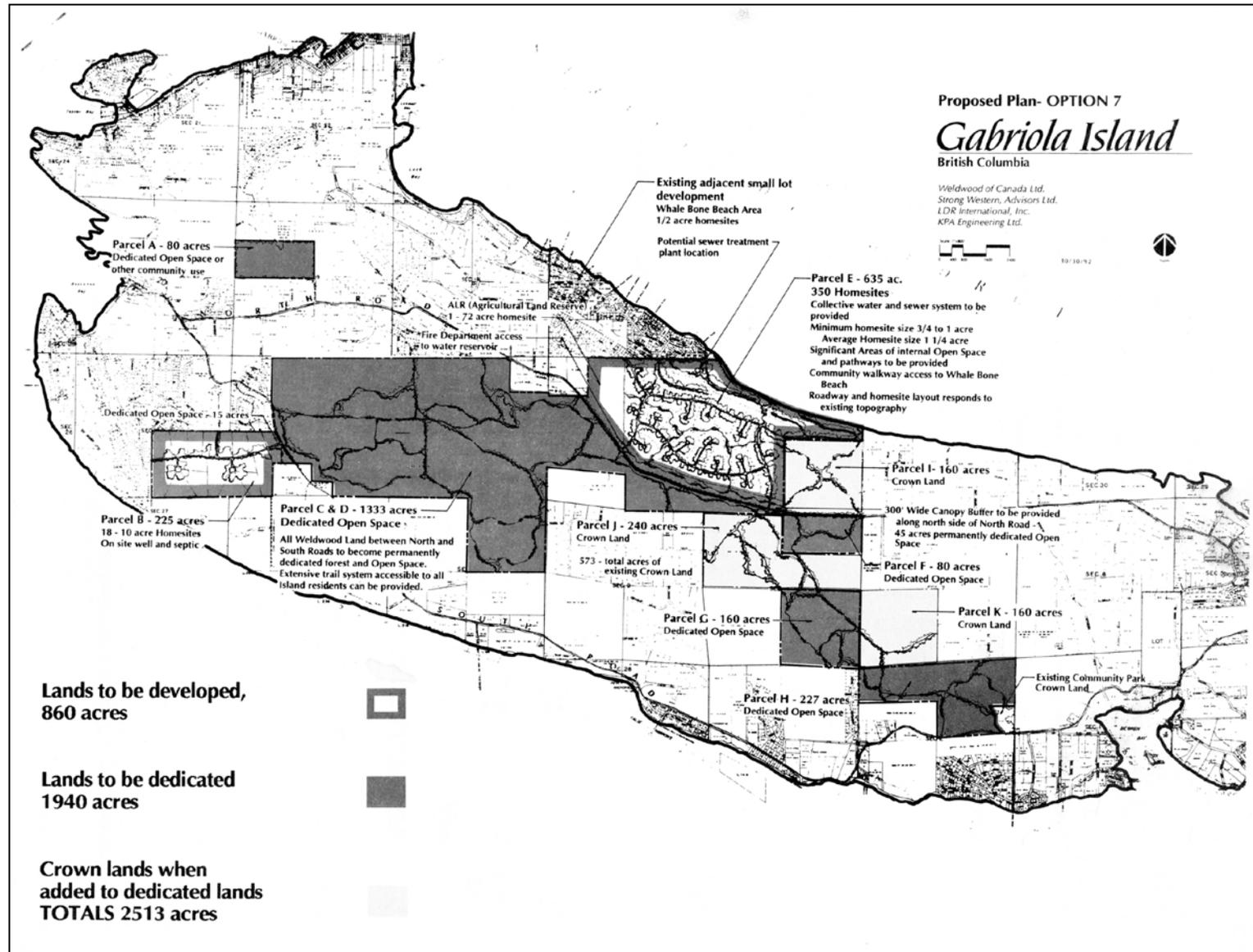
...Some people suggested that the Committee approach the Provincial Government and ask for loans or tax incentives to purchase the land. The Committee agreed that to purchase the land directly would be ideal, but that the



government wouldn't move unless islanders make a strong financial commitment....

Finally, The Big Plan

...Finally...the community...heard a proposal from Weldwood. Numerous questions were raised with regard to Gabriola's water supply....The Regional District requirement to prove water is 330 gallons per day. This is the estimated daily use per well....We have a recharge period of 100 days (June, July, August) during which time we draw from our stored collective supply. The [Ministry of Environment and Parks] Groundwater Review estimates Gabriola's supply at 80 million US gallons....In 1992, we have a population of approximately 2800...a total of approximately 1650 wells using 68% of storage....In addition, we have 1200 undeveloped lots with no legislation to license well drilling, allowing a possible total of 2580 wells in the future with 117% use versus storage. The Groundwater Review considers 76% use versus storage as critical. Weldwood's proposed 350 new homes would increase use by over 1 million



gallons or 14% of the total storage, bringing current use to 82% and potential use to 131%. This is an overdraw of 31%.

November 1992

Our community plan?...irrelevant

Hank (not Frank) Sirlin

...Islanders face a tough decision on the Weldwood proposal. It is a fortunate accident that one aspect of the scheme is consistent with what islanders want—most of the land will not be developed. The trade-off is almost 400 house lots....The Trust has attempted to preserve the rural character of the island with large lot (5 acre) development. The Weldwood plan is urban development.

Although they describe it as a “large lot” subdivision, they are all long, narrow, or cul-de-sac lots, similar to the small lot development of the past.

...The Committee [OCPRC] says the Weldwood proposal is not a precedent. However, if Weldwood’s arguments are accepted now, what basis is there for denying similar proposals in the future? The proposal represents roughly a 20% increase in island population....The essential break with the past is the awareness that urban development requires public water and sewer systems. The former are relatively inexpensive and easy to install. Sewer systems are much more complicated and expensive....It should be obvious that most of the future population (minimum 10,000) will also require water and sewer systems. These will remove the cap on population growth....The Weldwood subdivision is a reflection of the past and a projection of the future.

Rural? Not really

Gisele Rudischer

...Rural qualities and regulations have worked in most areas of Gabriola, even

small lot areas, because we are 43% undeveloped. As these lots become occupied, what were acceptable sights and sounds to our nearest neighbours are now an imposition on the resident next door. What were trails are becoming fenced yards. Wells that produced an abundant supply of water are decreasing. Sewage standards that worked with sparse density are proving inadequate. Our eroding rural lifestyle, especially in small lot neighbourhoods is the result of increased population.

The trend toward urbanization (to bring town conditions to the country) is evidenced by the inclusion of urban solutions to water and sewage in the Weldwood proposal....

January 1993

There is a limit

Hank Sirlin

...They claim over 7 acres per house, while 10% of their lots have 50-foot frontage. Anyway you slice it, it’s urban development.

...It is easy to translate a Community Forest vision (or a number of alternatives) into reality. We adopt our Community Plan, which states forests in perpetuity, (or permanent watershed, and/or greenbelts, etc.). Then we zone the land consistent with the Plan. The Trust would finally fulfil its mandate—to preserve and protect.

The plan—is it fair

Gisele Rudischer

[in response to the above]...If the community were to reject the Weldwood proposal and no compensation in the way of development rights were offered, I doubt the designation of the upland areas of Gabriola as conservation areas would go unchallenged by Weldwood and remain as it currently stands in the plan.

...The exclusion of the large sandbar [in the draft OCP] containing a wide variety of marine life situated on the foreshore of the proposed Weldwood development (the only

pristine sandbar remaining on Gabriola Island), along with omission of other wetlands on private land is either a testament to this committee's lack of expertise, or worse, to an intentional discriminatory inclusion of land in this designation. That this pristine sandbar on the Weldwood Foreshore has been omitted and other sandbars such as Taylor and Pilot Bay or False Narrows are included although they are already designated makes one wonder on what criteria designations were made.

May 1993

Editorial

June Harrison

...Weldwood is upset that there has been a change in the Trust's recommendation regarding its wishes for a large subdivision. 368 lots is what they want and they are quite firm that they deserve to receive everything that had asked for right from the very beginning when discussions were taking place away from public ears and view.

Personally, I could live with Weldwood following the rules that apply to everyone else. Let them subdivide into 20-acre lots, gaining 10 lots, which is what they would gain. There are plenty of people looking for large acreage (if 20 is large these days) and the assumption and claim that there would be pressure to subdivide that 20 acres is exactly that—an assumption. If such would also be the case, let our children and grandchildren deal with that one. We should have our say now, and I think the future generation of young people will take just as good care of the island as we have.

We should never have been drawn into a protocol agreement with Weldwood. The trouble started there.

June 1993

What's going on?

Gisele Rudischer

...On May 7, the local Trust Committee resolved to deliver to Weldwood draft bylaws that provide for no more than 280 lots. ...If the decision to allow no more than 280 lots was based on a 10-acre density, we must presume this was reached by considering all the Weldwood land (2800 acres) and averaging.... In the past we have allowed developers to average to the minimum lot size allowed under the current plan (4 acres). The base figure used in the averaging has been the entire holding, the subdivided land, and the ceded land. Rather than considering the Weldwood lands in the manner previously used we [the APC] are proposing using as a base figure only 560-acre residential area and not the total acreage. This results in a minimum average lot size of 2 acres and not the 10-acre minimum average lot size the community wishes to achieve. We propose, with these draft bylaws, the creation of a new zone called R-4 that allows for a 2-acre minimum acre lot size. This sets a legal precedent that more than doubles the current density allowed....Is this what we want?

...Furthermore, these draft instruments propose the creation of a new water zone, W-7, or Water Recreation. The purpose of this zone is to provide for public recreational use of the shoreline area. Of the permitted uses in this zone, all but one, allowing navigational aids, are already permitted....The public was not consulted in this decision to create this new zone. In fact, it was never mentioned. There are many questions with regards to these proposed bylaw amendments that we have no opportunity to pose.

Who will mind the forest?

June Harrison

...Weldwood has been given treatment that no other islander would receive. About 20 years ago when Gabriola Wildwood Estates tried to subdivide all of Santa Bay at False Narrows into about 240 lots with the sewage pumped into False Narrows (sound familiar?), at least they had to make their application like everyone else. Massive public hearings took place chaired by the then Minister of Municipal Affairs, Dan Campbell. The result—Wildwood lost their Land Use Contract (regional then) and it was all over. They subdivided into lots, cleaned up, left the island, and were heard of no more. But at least it was all up front and the public knew every step that was being taken.

July 1993

No lawsuits planned—ever

June Harrison

...For months and months, our elected Trustees and the Islands Trust as well as former members (unelected) of a review committee have claimed that they cannot comment on various aspects of Weldwood's deliberations for fear of being taken to court...However, Mr. Herb Auerbach, in conversation with the *Shingle* editor... was quite emphatic in his claim that "we have no intention of suing anyone...ever. We never have had or will...the documents we have agreed to go on in perpetuity, they endure, Weldwood has never said it would sue anybody".

APC says no to Weldwood

June Harrison

...The Weldwood application calls for what amounts to nothing more than monster houses—maximum home size 5000 square feet; maximum coverage 10%; and maximum height 30 feet.

...Commission member Susan Yates supported the Weldwood application claiming that gaining "the forest" was vital to her concerns in this application. All the other commissioners were opposed for a variety of reasons. Commissioner Yates also opposed 5000 square foot houses. Paul Grignon advocated rejection of the application because of the density (greatly exceeding the 140 lots currently allowed on the whole property) and the upper limit of 280 lots proposed by Trustee Best and supported by the Trust Committee.... Paul's interest is in an alternative not placed before the Advisory Committee for discussion. "Secondary treatment with marine outfall is outdated and inappropriate," he stated. He also "strongly disagrees with Weldwood retaining private water rights to any dedicated land".

There's no free forest *June Harrison*

...It appears through questionnaires returned...that "the survey results clearly showed that Gabiolans continue to be opposed to any scheme that might generate some financial exposure through tax increases or other mandatory levies".

...Regardless of the outcome of the Weldwood application and/or the people involved in Option XXI's deliberations² to try to raise the millions necessary to attempt to buy the land from Weldwood, it is a fact that there will be no free forest. A vast tract of land in the thousands of acres needs careful management and management takes money.

² Option XXI was a proposal of Ruitenbeck and Grignon that a non-profit company be formed to buy the land for \$10-million to be paid over five years. If payment was not made within that time, the land was to be rezoned and returned to Weldwood. It was hoped that some of the money could be raised by grants from government and international agencies.

Weldwood’s application, outlining the land as a park area carries implications beyond gaining a “forest”. Moreover, Weldwood’s intention to retain 400 acres or more for the sole purpose for three years of well drilling could alter the whole value of the forest land. What if the result of such drilling and heavy demand on the watershed...the supply of water to down land residents and to possible residents in a new and large subdivision diminishes?

September 1993

What is going on? Trust cancels Gabriola hearings on Weldwood rezoning

David Swanson

...In the middle of a controversial rezoning application, the Islands Trust says it has been informed of “possible third party involvement...”) in the preparation of an independent study report”.... In a press release dated September 23, the Trust cancelled a public hearing scheduled for October 4 on Gabriola regarding the Weldwood proposal.

...The Weldwood lands represent roughly one-fifth of Gabriola. Under present zoning, Weldwood can subdivide 140 lots. The American-owned forest company wishes to more than double the number of lots it is able to sell on Gabriola in exchange for land that it offers for restricted use by the public. These ceded lands would not be available to the public for community water. Wells drilled in these “community” lands would be exclusively for the Weldwood development.

As part of the proposal, Weldwood agreed to pay an independent consultant to determine if there is sufficient water for their proposed 366-lot development.

Piteau Associates of Vancouver were selected.... An August 11 memo from Herb Auerbach of Strong Western to Andrew Holmes of Piteau...contains two pages of

changes [to a draft report] recommended by Auerbach.

...Auerbach identifies one section of the report that describes salt-water intrusion into groundwater in the region. He describes this section as “confusing and negative”. The final copy deletes [...the four paragraphs] including references to deep drill holes that “encountered high pressure saline water”.

...The Piteau report presents two significantly different recommendations from a 1992 report...prepared for the Trust earlier in the negotiations....[It] recommended no drilling of test wells below sea-level...[and] called for continuous pump tests for 100 days because there is insufficient good quality information about the area in question. Piteau recommends 3 to 7 days.

...When reached for comment, Auerbach downplayed his memo to Piteau Associates. “I have nothing to say,” he said. “You’ve got the draft. You’ve got my memo. You’ve got the final report. We don’t think there’s anything unsavoury about it.”

The Islands Trust refused comment until the [requested] Trust Council’s Executive Committee investigation is completed.

Comments

Herb Auerbach

...In order to deal with these recommendations [from the 1992 report], it was agreed to engage a hydrologist of the Island’s Trust selection who would design the drill test specifications.... In order to explain the test procedures and why one could have confidence in the results, [Piteau] will give a talk on water on the Weldwood lands at the Community Hall.

November 1993

Rushing to make a deal?

The message seems to be “let’s make a deal...NOW”...for the one team of candidates [for the LTC election] while the other team maintains “we the people of Gabriola are in charge of the island—let’s take it easy and make a sound decision...”

[It was pointed out] that out of the four Trust Committee meetings dealing with local business, only ten were held on Gabriola...

...Rudischer pointed out that the way the Islands Trust is headed with its current planning, Gabriola Island could be stopped from becoming a municipality³ [ED: “...be stopped from becoming”...could become?], sometime in the future...”the Trust is moving towards more governance”. She added: “...bad decisions get made when we negotiate under the threat of a ‘deadline’...I want a decision based on knowledge.”

The team of Julian Guntensperger and Susan Yates want to move right away to make a deal with Weldwood. Guntensperger has a background in real estate, having served as Senior Vice-President of Marathon Realty and “worked with Herb [Auerbach] years ago”.

[...the matter of the Nanaimo First Nation filing notice of their interest, and who “put the Band up to it” was brought up]....

All-candidates meeting gives choices...

David Swanson

About 150 Gabriola voters were given clear choices by the ...Trust candidates at the all-candidates meeting.

Guntensperger and Yates, who run on a slate with Regional District incumbent

³ A referendum in Nov. 2004 rejected the option by 87%. IT trustees (Malcolmson & Rudisher) and the RDN Director (Lund) were against Gabriola becoming a municipality.

Lockwood, repeatedly stated that the key issue in this election is to elect candidates who will make a deal on the Weldwood lands....

Eastick [and Rudischer who took up the same theme] said the Weldwood proposal was still lacking important details and that it didn’t make sense to say yes in advance to an incomplete document.

...In contrast, Regional District candidates Joyce Lockwood and Ruth Loomis agreed on many regional district issues....

December 1993

Letters to the editor

Although a model of democracy in the conventional sense, the recent elections...have the potential of doing more harm to genuine democracy—the building of consensus—than might appear....

...the voter turnout was very low, just 53%...

...When people are hurt and ostracized for holding different views, then there’s clearly some power behind the politics. And when people grow fearful of participating as a result, then the spirit of democracy dies. Whether by accident or design, many Gabriolans have effectively been chilled into an accommodation with the Weldwood plan that is, overall, destructive of our community’s social fabric.... *Christopher Plant*

It goes on and on

Peter Eastick

Weldwood has ceased logging on Gabriola and wants to develop its property. A legacy...of Sacred legislation and Islands Trust mismanagement has resulted in a land-use Gordian knot that cannot be unravelled without provincial assistance....

...When just when is the *Gabriola Times* going to cease and desist from the (issue after issue) condemnation of the Gabriola

Electors Action Group (GEAG). In their latest tabloid, the editor and publisher seem to be completely obsessed with that community-minded group which, it so happens, ceased to exist after May 8, 1993. I wish they could get it into their thick skulls that GEAG came into being for the express purpose only of making absolutely sure that, in accordance of Bylaw #1, APC members were elected by the community. Nothing more, nothing less....

...Incidentally, I notice that the tabloid has started “sniping” at the *Gabriola* SOUNDER. I wonder how far they dare to go with that because I cannot imagine that Sue and Bill deCarteret taking that nonsense that you and your *Shingle* have been subjected to over the past two years....

January 1994

Full disclosure must be made— Trust cancels Weldwood hearing

David Swanson

Following a marathon public information meeting January 20, the Islands Trust cancelled the public hearings for the Weldwood rezoning application scheduled for February 3.

By the time the information meeting ended [many questions unanswered]...and it was also clear that what Weldwood...referred to as the “intent” of the agreement, with its complex set of covenants and escrow clauses was contradicted by the wording...[of the bylaws].

[Discussion over projected increase in ferry traffic and disagreement over the figures]

...Again and again, Weldwood’s water expert Dakin was asked to explain why he had departed so significantly from the Altemueller [Ministry of Environment and Parks] recommendations about water testing...Dakin said that it was not necessary to drill during the ...dry period because he

was confident using data from surrounding wells. He did not identify where these wells are located... Auerbach explained that Dakin will drill on Site G and Site H [ED: the current Kensington Treaty Land south of North Road]...and pipe water from the south to north-end subdivision if Weldwood can find enough in the south end sites.

...Gabriola lawyer John Ewert stated he was a critic of the Weldwood proposal....He noted that there is nothing in the covenant that requires Weldwood to stick to its timetable. He also noted that the wording is such that the proposal may allow double the number of lots than the 366 so often mentioned.

...Rudischer and [Trust lawyer] Bulolzer disagree about the potential for the Condominium Act to supersede local bylaws. Rudischer claimed the Regional District’s Approving Officer had read the proposed bylaws and stated that over double the number of dwellings could be constructed as strata units....

Pau Grignon, who described himself as a supporter of the concept of the Weldwood deal, agreed with many of Rudischer’s points. “A very slippery and small detail in the covenant allows [Weldwood] to search for water in the ‘dedicated’ land. ...How is it that the land will be deeded to the community when the community has absolutely no control over it?”...

...With so many questions unanswered...it was no surprise that the Trust decided to cancel the bylaw hearings February 3....

March 1994

Misinformed zealots

Susan Yates & Julian Guntensperger

While we [the Trustees] commend you [the *Shingle*] on your diligence in keeping the Weldwood matter in the public eye, we are disturbed at your lack of objectivity and

your failure to give credit where credit is due. During our electoral campaign, we stated clearly and consistently that we favoured openness in government. We promised to be open and forthright in our dealings and we have kept our promise....

The very first Resolution Without Meeting (RWM), a few days after taking our oath of office, directed that the Public Hearing scheduled for December 20 be deferred until February 3, a full 7 weeks later. This was not done in response to public pressure or “intense lobbying” as has been claimed. We received a total of two telephone calls on the subject and heard one objection repeated by five members of the public at a LTC meeting.

We made our decision...so that we...might be more fully informed.

Early in our mandate, we also passed RWM #21-93 authorizing a public information meeting on January 20. Again, this had nothing to do with political pressure or lobbying.... ...The APC would have preferred to render their advice after this information meeting.... ...It was a difficult deadline for them to meet but they did.

By the time the information meeting was held, we had decided that there were too many loose ends and not enough information to warrant approval of the Weldwood application and passage of the relevant bylaws. [We cancelled the meeting].

The other item that gave us some concern was the matter of the three confidential RWMs. We had been made aware of their existence before our election.... As soon as we became aware of the content of these RWMs and [discovered Bylaw 108], we directed our staff to make them public.

...I really do not know what you expect from us. It seems that every time we do something with which you [do not] agree,

you find it necessary to attribute bad motives or see some sinister plot and claim we knuckled under and are reacting reluctantly in the face of pressure from you or those who share your view.

...We will make a decision on the basis of all the facts and advice available to us and especially using our own best judgement. That is what we were elected to do.

EDITOR OF THE *Shingle*: Please point out when I ever implied “base motives” or see some “sinister plot”? ...You have made numerous accusations and substantiation is required....

April 1994

Lets examine other ideas

Gisele Rudischer

...The concept of enhanced density for land is the main issue in both the application and the Plan review but the order in which we do these is important. In doing the application first, we are not only deciding that enhanced density land swaps are desirable in concept, but we are in effect, letting the Weldwood deal determine how the concept itself is considered. If the Weldwood application is processed under the current OCP and is adopted prior to the review, we are considering it only within the context of the Weldwood deal and not as it affects the 3000 acres of R1 land not owned by Weldwood.

It is incorrect to assume the only way we can protect land from development is through community ownership. There has been no opportunity to discuss other ways in which this could be done to reach a compromise all of us could benefit from. We have only considered the options as presented by Weldwood....

August 1994

The straight goods...by Mr. Auerbach

...[a presenter to the RDN Board] requested that the Board not lower Area B water standards to accommodate the Weldwood application. ...The standards suggested by the Islands Trust staff are, in fact, higher than both the current standard on Gabriola...and the standard for the Regional District.

If Weldwood's application for rezoning were approved, any developer of the Weldwood land would have to provide a community water system that provides for 2000 litres per household per day for inside use only....

...Is [the] concern really to save water or... [is it] about standards for fear of the population increasing? ...[if so] increasing water standards is not going to do it. There are many now living on Gabriola...that have no water at all. The population...will have to be limited by zoning and the zoning proposal for the Weldwood land will, by nature of the Dedicated Lands and Land Use Covenant, limit in perpetuity the population on Weldwood's 2800 acres of land to no more than 386 homesites or one per 7.8 acres.

...this is not a developer driven proposal. This is a proposal by a land owner who can currently sell its land to anywhere from 30 to 140 individual owners without dedicating one square inch to the island but who would prefer to sell its land in a manner that would benefit Gabriolan islanders and the Regional District.

...I trust you will give this letter as much space as you have given Mr. Aitken's remarks. [ED: it was printed in full]

September 1994

There's cause for anger

Gisele Rudischer

...This chronology of events should illustrate why.

[ED: all of the following is abbreviated]

Sept. '91: Trustees meet with Strong Western to discuss Weldwood development plans.

Jan. '92: Trustee says we have not met with Weldwood. Community plan draft goes to Victoria.

Feb. '92: Forestry Committee formed by Trustee to administer "gifted lands".

Mar. '92: Rumoured deal for 350 lots on Whalebone for gift of land.

Apr. '92: Trustees say we are fettered and cannot discuss Weldwood. No public Trust Committee meetings for over one year.

May '92: Trustees disassociate themselves from Weldwood questionnaire.

June '92: Trust Committee holds confidential meeting on Hornby Island. Decides to enter into process agreement to negotiate Weldwood deal. Minutes kept secret for two years.

July '92: Petition signed by 1200 asking for an OCP before Weldwood ignored. Public told "we are comprehensively planning". No discussion allowed. Draft OCP available in September.

Aug. '92: Public told by Trust that a process agreement with Weldwood is signed and is "a one shot" deal. Won't apply to other landowners. Studies will be done.

Sept. '92: Draft OCP will be available in October.

Oct. '92: Option 7 presented by Review Committee—350 lots on Whalebone and 18 lots on Parcel B. Review Committee told by Weldwood water for development will come from development site or dedicated lands.

Nov. '92: Public told water will come from 5 wells on development site but no new studies completed. Draft OCP will be available in December.

Dec. '92: Weldwood submits draft application but it is unavailable to the public.

Jan. '93: Review Committee recommends accepting 368 lots.

Feb. '93: Trust and Weldwood meet in Vancouver. Comprehensive Planning designation shows Weldwood not a one shot deal...will apply to other landowners.

Mar. '93: Public told no meetings were held because there was no business. Five private meetings are held in Parksville, Vancouver, Gabriola from June '92 to Feb. '93. Trust passes procedure bylaw to allow waiving of one year wait between applications. First, second, and third reading done in a meeting closed to the public.

Apr. '93: Neighbourhood meetings reject “comprehensive planning”.

May '93: APC says more time needed to study consultant's report. APC election called after citizens petition to uphold a bylaw for an elected APC. Trust resolves to allow Weldwood application for no more than 280 lots with no water from the dedicated lands. Personal attacks against critics of the Weldwood deal begin in [*Gabriola Times*] and continue until Nov. '93.

June '93: Trust receives application for 386 lots.

July '93: APC recommends the Trust not accept the application.

Aug. '93: The Weldwood application amended and accepted by the Trust. Gives first reading.

Sept. '93: Public hearing postponed.

Oct. '93: Public hearing scheduled the 4th cancelled, and again on the 22nd. APC unanimously defer report until documentation is complete.

Nov. '93: Weldwood application amended. Trust election. Trust gives first reading to new Weldwood bylaws. Trustees passes meeting procedure bylaw allowing them to exclude anyone from a meeting if in their opinion it is in the public interest.

Dec. '93: New Trustees sworn in. Public meeting scheduled for the 20th postponed. Personal attacks in local paper end and the paper folds [*Gabriola Times*].

Jan. '94: APC recommends unanimously to reject Weldwood bylaws. Public meeting scheduled for February 3 cancelled on grounds the new Trustees desire to have an informed electorate.

Feb. '94: Trustee says Weldwood is on hold.

Mar. '94: Trustees accuse members of the public of libel, deformation, and hate literature. Trust rejects Weldwood bylaws.

May '94: Trust hires consultant to advise on process for plan review.

June '94: Steps taken to eliminate elected APCs.

Jul. '94: Trustee forwards letter by the developer critical of the RDN Director Submission to Deputy Inspector of Municipalities outlining irregularities of application process prompts an end to amending Weldwood application. Videotaping only allowed by agents of the Trust.

Aug. '94: Trust receives consultant's report recommending the Weldwood application be held until the OCP. Recommendation rejected. In a resolution without meeting, one-year waiting period for new application is waived. Trustees report suggests public input part of public meetings should be discontinued.

...Could it be that the agenda “the forest at any cost” has driven this process at the expense of everything else?

Credibility questioned June Harrison

...Despite claims by Mr. Herb Auerbach that our local Member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Dale Lovick, “thinks it’s a great deal”, Mr. Lovick was quick to set the record straight.

[In a faxed response to Mr. Auerbach, the MLA says]: “I have emphasized on more than one occasion that I would not enter the debate on this issue, preferring to defer to the wishes of those who live on the island, and I have also emphasized that my involvement would be strictly to do with process—whether it was fair and being conducted properly.”

October 1994

Let’s start again Frants Attorp

...Two of the seven people on Gabriola’s APC appeared to use the October meeting as a political forum to denounce those who refuse to endorse the Weldwood concept.

...a second motion [after a first on density swaps was defeated] recommending that the Islands Trust establish a separate APC to deal with the Weldwood lands...[and that this] would provide “constructive advice rather than destructive advice” [was also defeated] ...one member saying, “...a separate APC would simply “give the Trustees the advice they want”.

...One member of the audience...indicated she would heckle the Chairperson if she continued to allow APC members to “defame” each other. [The Chairperson had earlier moved] ...that the entire APC should “step down and go to the back row and shut up”.

November 1994

Clear-cutting—another view J.S. Tyhurst

...In 1994, the Provincial Government passed four bills dealing with forestry and forest lands in BC. Together, they represent major changes in the management and designation of forest lands and in standards and practices of logging. Two of these bills are of immediate relevance to our situation.

...Section 16 of the Forest Land Reserve Act deals with subdivision of forest reserve land. It states that a “parcel, all or part of which is private forest reserve or land other than Crown land must not be subdivided unless such is approved by the Forest Land Commission”. While this section does not make it mandatory that such an application for subdivision be referred to a local authority, Section 27 provides for such local consideration by referral to “(a) local government; (b) a first nation; (c) and organization recognized by the Commission as representing a community of interest that may be affected by the application”.

...Over 50% of the Weldwood lands on Gabriola are thus now in the Forest Land Reserve. They cannot be removed except by approval of the Forest Land Commission (which does not yet exist) and by the local government. ...In effect, for the time being, the Weldwood lands are frozen in the Reserve....

...We do not have to say “yes” to Weldwood to avoid clear-cutting....

No clear-cutting allowed June Harrison

...MLA Krog is credited with having put together this new act and accolades have been generously given to Mr. Krog as a result of his tireless work.

[Following are responses to the *Shingle’s* questions to MLA Krog]:

Q: Removal of land from the Forest Land Reserve. Would it be easy...?

A: [it] could only take place on a technical basis.... Also, if there was strong community opposition—that would be an important factor.... Section 27...was put in for that very purpose. Land in the Forest Land Reserve (as is Weldwood forest land) cannot be subdivided.

Q: ...How firm is the mandate of the Commission? ...We have a community plan that allows a certain amount of development...?

A: All bets are off on the subdividing of Forest Land.

Q: What about the possibility and danger of clear-cutting?

A: No!. They cannot clear-cut...

It's one big scam *Ike MacKay*

In 1991, forest companies were in trouble. ...information...showed they had been making huge profits [and] harvesting unsustainably high volumes....

—Denuding the land

...inadequate reforestation [has] left serious problems for future generations.

—B&M to the rescue

...the companies hired Burson and Marsteller, the world's biggest PR firm, to handle damage control....

—now on Gabriola

Burson and Marsteller wasn't the only PR firm hired by Weldwood. After a name change from "Strong Western Real Estate Ventures", to the more socially correct "Strong Western Advisors", Herb Auerbach moved on to Gabriola.

He began carefully soliciting support...The "deal" even in 1992 was known to be 350 lots for a large chunk of land. ...

—Control of information

The (now defunct) *Gabriola Times* appeared to be on-side. The *Gabriola SOUNDER*, although billing themselves as a middle-of-the-road paper, also appeared on-side ...the editorial cartooning in the paper has regularly mocked, criticized, and or vilified people who are opposed to Weldwood...

—Government support

Both Trustees have always been in favour of the "deal", as were the planners and executive in Victoria. Information was withheld from the public, and secret meetings were held off-island... Certain Weldwood opponents were accused of "letters and articles that are filled with misinformation, misleading and unfounded statements, and malicious comments and personal attacks...". No examples were or have been supplied.

—Where are the reports

Numerous key independent reports have been ignored...

—"Friendly" organization

"Heartlands", "Share our Forests", and "The Forest Alliance"...despite well-meaning members who are concerned about Gabriola..., the fact remains that without Weldwood there would be no "Heartlands". This organization was set up to manage the Weldwood lands and has been the main support group for the cause since 1992.

—More density

[Mr. Auerbach] has convinced people that you control density by increasing density. He has done this by focusing on what the community loses in the deal. A classic example occurs...when his team urged the OCPRC..."to focus on the amount of open space the island would be getting, rather than look at the number of units proposed".

—*Fear and confusion*

Here are some of the classic slogans of fear, to encourage us to hurry up and close the deal, or some dire result will occur...

—*Discredit & isolate*

The PR onslaught against opponents of the Weldwood’s proposed subdivision has been relentless. Originally, islanders who opposed Weldwood were portrayed by the now defunct *Gabriola Times* as ...“GEAG”, or radical members of a dark and undesirable group”. Now, the SOUNDER is labelling opponents as a group guilty of “unnecessary and vicious attempts at character assassination of their neighbours”....

—*Don’t answer questions*

Opposition is constantly referred to as a small but vocal minority (despite evidence to the contrary). Request for information are deemed “confrontational” and “obstructive”....

—*What does Weldwood want*

Weldwood only wants one thing—rezoning....

—*Higher taxes*

Higher taxes, overcrowded ferries and schools, water shortages and the headaches of further developers will be just around the corner.

—*Trust wants?*

Power.... Are these two people qualified to carry out these “deals” properly...? The answer is, of course not....

—*The lawyer said*

Trust lawyer...said, “A paramount concern of the Trust Committee was retention of forest cover by whatever means”....

—*Thanks to Bill 56*

Thanks to Bill 56 (Private Forest Land Reserve), the maximum number of building lots is 61 (or 55, depending on the calculator) in 20-acre parcels. The rest of

the land (roughly 1570 acres) is frozen in large acreages that can only be used for managed forestry.

—*Cannot clear-cut*

[reference to the intent of the Forest Land Reserve Bill]

—*Confused*

So, if you are one of the many islanders who is “confused “and concerned at how divided and bitter our island has been become over the Weldwood issue, don’t be alarmed. The confusion and divisiveness has been carefully orchestrated. ...Say no the Weldwood application and yes for maintenance of our community plan, the forestlands, and the island’s rural lifestyle.

ED: On December 31, 2004, West Fraser Timber became North America’s third largest lumber producer and Canada’s largest plywood producer with its acquisition of Weldwood of Canada from International Paper.

January 1995

Islanders say NO to deal Frants Attorp

The longest public hearings in the history of the Islands Trust and on Gabriola Island drew to a close at 3 a.m. Monday, January 16 [ED: having started on Friday], at the Gabriola Community Hall.

Long before that time, however, it became clear that the vast majority of Gabriolans do not want to accept the deal that has been offered by Weldwood of Canada.

The hearing, which was packed with emotion-filled speeches and technical arguments, received 270 verbal submissions from 151 island residents. Opposition to the deal was roughly two to one, with 53 speaking in favour of the proposed bylaws and 98 speaking against.

In addition to the verbal submissions, the Trust received about 100 personalized letters from both sides, as well as over 870 form letters (some with specific comments) from residents who are opposed to the bylaws.

[ED: According to the report of the planner, Tony Quinn, the figures were “written”: 88 for, 942 against; “spoken”: 44 for, 102 against.]

As the meeting progressed, two distinct visions of Gabriola emerged. On one side were those who wanted to receive the forest land in the centre of the island.... On the other side were those willing to accept more risk in order to ensure slow growth and to preserve the rural character of the island through the community plan.

Many opponents, including three ex-trustees requested that the bylaws go no further and that the community return to the review of the community plan...

...Water was an important theme throughout much of the meeting.... Also, of great concern was the absence of unbiased information from the Islands Trust. People expressed frustration at the way information had been manipulated by the media and distaste regarding the smear campaign that has marked the entire process.

In general, people in the two camps appeared to respect each other’s opinions. However, there was a strong undercurrent of bad feelings...fuelled largely by fear, anger, and desperation. One young man who supported the deal with great reluctance spoke for many when he stated: “I feel like I’m being blackmailed”....

...The Islands Trustees are not bound by the results of the public hearing. They have the legislative authority to pass or reject the bylaws regardless of public opinion....

There is protection if we want it

June Harrison

The image of a “clear-cut”... a vast desolate landscape with big tree stumps dotting the surface is awful. ...But there is protection against clear-cutting on Weldwood’s Forest Land Reserve. The bulk of the so-called dedicated (nothing has been dedicated to date) lands are in the Forest Land Reserve.

MLA Dave Lovick explains: “The last question remaining concerns whether there is anything to prevent the owner of private managed forest land (the classification under which the “dedicated” Weldwood lands fall from clear-cutting.... The answer, thank goodness is yes. ...Clear-cutting will not be allowed on sites with community watersheds.

Letters to the editor

...In the last SOUNDER edition, the following quote from Dale Lovick appeared. When he referred to the question of clear-cutting Weldwood’s FLR, Lovick wrote: “...there is protection against this”. In an accompanying front-page story, in the paragraph directly alongside this quote, Sue deCarteret reaches precisely the opposite conclusion when she states that it is not the case that the land will be protected....

David Swanson

After reading the “*Unofficial, Illegitimate, Gabriola Taxpayer’s Newsletter*”, I am compelled to address Ike MacKay’s latest editorial which once again dishes up some very spurious information regarding the call for a Community Plan and Forest Land Reserve Protection.

Yes, under the newly declared FLR Act (which includes dedicated lands) they cannot be subdivided. But there are several ways in which they could be removed from FLR status after further logging and subdivided. And he also cleverly fails to

mention that a Community Plan has no jurisdiction on Forest Reserve Lands....

...Once again, MacKay and his small clique of cronies prove they have little in their rhetoric but that which turns their eyes Brickyard brown....

G. Robinson

Read into the Public Hearing record... and received with icy silence.

What islanders said

...365 lots is just too much to swallow. I, like many others expected it to be reduced.

Gail Lund

...I strongly object to water being moved across the island to a monster home development miles away.

no name

...I have never wanted the land to become a park... I would rather that Weldwood...than Heartlands or any other local group with no experience, a very small active membership and less than \$400 in the bank, pay for the replanting and management required.

no name

...More people, not logging, is the main threat to my way of life.

no name

...I am confident that you will listen to the people and not pass these bylaws.

no name

...This letter is to voice my wholehearted support for Bylaws 133, 134, 135, and 136 and the Weldwood deal in principle.

Jim Phillipoff

...I am strongly against what seems to be your high handed proposals to enact these bylaws before you have updated the community plan—if indeed it needs updating.

Don Chamberlain

...By ensuring the urbanization [of Gabriola] you will effectively determine what the community plan will look like.

no name

...I have now come to think that it's probably best for Gabriola that the Weldwood deal be approved.

...[Nevertheless] I was shocked at the

personal and obscene attacks on the honesty of [an anti-Weldwood speaker].

Dr. John Garson

...Nanaimo authorities have made it quite clear we cannot be supplied [with water] from them.

no name

...Speakers...brushed aside the implications upon ferry transportation which would be involved should the addition of 1000 plus people come to pass.

no name

...It's most unfortunate that one Trustee has said, "if you don't like the island, you can leave."

Jeremy Baker

February 1995

Letters to the editor

Responsible for all consequences

...As you [Minister of Municipal Affairs] are aware, bylaws 133, 134, 135, and 136 have been passed by the local Gabriola Island Trustees... I am writing to strongly condemn these actions....

The above bylaws concern what is popularly known as the "Weldwood deal" here on Gabriola. This deal arose in controversy, continued over the last several years amid widespread and bitter division among islanders, and was recently rejected by a display of public opposition unprecedented in Islands Trust history....

...The substance of the "deal" itself—...—concerns me less than the question of democratic public participation by islanders in the affairs of their local government. Let me remind you of some of the specific instances where the democratic process has been ignored.

1. ...a petition signed by over 1200 Gabriolans calling for a moratorium on further development until the official community plan had been ... reviewed [was] ignored.

2. ...an ad hoc committee dubbed the Official Community Plan Review Committee was hastily and arbitrarily convened by the local Island Trust officials, with no public input....
3. In none of the negotiations with Weldwood has there been an independent financial analysis of the value of the Weldwood properties....
4. Perhaps the most important, at the time when negotiations...began, Gabriolans were expected to start the process to review their OCP. ...the review process was unilaterally abandoned by the Islands Trust...and remains on hold.
5. ...the Islands Trust...saw fit to ignore the recommendations [of the APC].
6. In 1994, with division and acrimony rife over the Weldwood issue, the Islands Trust finally decided to hire an independent consultant to advise them on how to proceed with the Weldwood deal. ...[The recommendation] that the Trustees proceed first with the OCP review...was—incredibly—ignored.
7. Finally, in January of this year, at a public hearing of the bylaws that had been postponed six times, an overwhelming number of islanders participated in the hearings, and in no uncertain manner—almost 90% (*sic*)—indicated their opposition to these bylaws.....
Christopher Plant

Still uncertain—read on

...in a nutshell. *R.E. McKechnie*

...Acceptance of [the Weldwood] deal necessitated the creation and approval of Bylaws 133–6.

Although initially the deal appealed to many islanders, as more information became available, serious concerns arose. Many

were concerned our water-short island couldn't support additional dwellings. Many were concerned that a 366-unit subdivision would do much to destroy precious rural values. Only a small minority felt that matters such as water, sewage, ferry, fire-protection, schools, finances (taxes), erosion of community values etc. had been properly addressed.

An even more significant problem, which soon became apparent, is that the new bylaws open the door for other major landowners to make similar deals—trading amenities for increased zoning density. Gabriola will become even more urbanized in future....

...A third, and very upsetting aspect of this whole affair is that our Trustees approved the bylaws in the face of strong opposition from the community. At the longest public hearing in Trust history, islanders spoke, wrote, and petitioned 10 to 1 against the bylaws and for a proper review of the Community Plan. Despite this, the four bylaws were approved by our local Trustees....

March 1995

Water study needed *Frants Attorp*

...said David Coombe, Chief Environmental Health Officer....[in response to suggestion that lack of information about water is sufficiently serious to request moratorium on development]...“such a step would take a fair amount of political will. It would have to be in conjunction with the Islands Trust, the Ministry of Environment, and Municipal Affairs...I don't know if it would be legally possible.”

May 1995

Which is the true story? *Frants Attorp*

...Prior to last January's public hearing, Trust lawyer...told the public that Bylaw 133, which allows for bonus density transfers, is specific to the Weldwood lands. ...[However]...in a news article, Trustees "readily admit they are pursuing amenity planning independent of Weldwood"...saying it is the best option for the island, and asserting that Bylaw 133 is "the only way to control growth".

August 1995

Weldwood buyers bulk at deal *June Harrison*

...Why should a prospective purchaser of the Weldwood subdividable lands go along with dedication of almost 2000 acres to the Community when there is money to be made from logging the land? [asked Mr. Herb Auerbach]

...now that the Province² has established a \$60-million fund to purchase and preserve lands, the island should be lobbying to have the Weldwood lands put aside through Government backing.

...Heartlands has, however, made it clear that they plan to log the "dedicated" land, if named the trustee for the area.

Logging will take place *Gisele Rudischer*

...I was most pleased to hear the Federal Government⁴ has allocated \$60-million dollars to acquire parkland in the Gulf Islands. It would be great to get a park that doesn't cost us in density, but to expect the government to spend \$10-million on Gabriola to buy the entire Weldwood lands is unrealistic.

Why not lobby the Minister to buy the portion of the Weldwood lands with value as a park (Parcel E—600 acres with 5400 linear feet of waterfront)... The biggest to the environment and rural character of these islands is development. Why log 600 acres to allow 368 lots on one of the nicest parcels of waterfront in return for preservation of land already protected from development.

...What about the threat of logging? Who's kidding who here? Whether the land is owned by a private logging company or Heartlands, it will be logged. At issue is the type of logging that occurs. If the effort expended trying to acquire the land were put to lobbying for the Gulf Islands to be designated a "low intensity" logging area, logging wouldn't be an issue. ...I've seen to what length some will go to preserve our "heartland" and feel confident...we could ensure the "watershed" is not destroyed....

October 1995

Editorial *June Harrison*

...past growth has been going on without due process according to Plan guidelines and we have been governed by RWMs for far too long....

December 1995

Heartlands wants to manage lands *Frants Attorp*

...only a small fraction of [members] turned out at the Community Hall...for the annual general meeting of Heartlands Conservancy Society, the organization that aspires to own and manage vast tracts of land on Gabriola.

...Heartlands member...made a motion, in light of the recent Court decision on Galiano Island, that Island Trustees be asked to investigate the possibility of down zoning all R1 lands on Gabriola (including the Weldwood lands) to reduce their residential

⁴ ED: PMHL was a joint Federal/Provincial program.

potential ...[would eliminate the] need for density swaps. [The counter argument was] that down zoning would eliminate any possibility of doing a density trade and...logging will continue.

...[the] motion to send a letter...was approved with votes of opposition coming from only two of the approximately twenty members present.

Grignon’s optimal plan

June Harrison

...Mr. Paul Grignon writes...to Deputy Minister, Mr. Tom Gunton. ... “I am writing to present what I believe would be an ideal compromise and a workable plan in light of the opposition from some quarters to the 368 lot density of the rezoning. It reduces the bonus-density-for-conservation deal struck with the Islands Trust to 180 lots and makes up the shortfall with public money.”

...This sudden turnaround from 368 lots to 180 lots may well add to the confusion when Gabriolans have been told again and again that the deal must go through.

Mr. Herb Auerbach of Strong Western and...Weldwood were kept in the picture and copies of the Grignon [Heartlands] plan were also sent to local MLAs and the RDN.

January 1996

We are not alone

Islanders...can take some small comfort in knowing that there is befuddlement all around. [The] Chair of the APC [in its role as the Steering Committee advising on the OCP]...sent a very lengthy list of questions and stated positions to City Spaces [consultants appointed by the LTC].

...”APC members feel confused about their roles...[and] about the process and substance of the Plan”

... “We want to get there, and don’t [want?] the process to get in the way.”

Sandy Frances Duncan

February–May 1996

Historical notes

J.S. Tyhurst

...[extensive and academic in style, but mostly not included here for lack of space] ...”[Events] knowledge of which is essential for an understanding of the overall pattern to which people were then and are now trying to respond. For Gabriola, these events include the following:

- increasing public awareness of development pressures...led the Provincial Government to introduce legislation establishing Regional Districts throughout BC (1965). The RDN was incorporated in 1967
- 10-acre freeze [moratorium prohibiting further subdivision under 10 acres] on the Gulf Islands until their OCPs were in place except for Gabriola (1969)
- establishment of Gabriola as a separate planning area with its own Advisory Planning Commission (APC) (1970). [The APC was appointed by the Regional Director].
- [...adoption of a five-acre subdivision limit on Gabriola (1971) without a public hearing...] Mounting dissatisfaction with the Gabriola APC and its apparent pro-development philosophy
- the bitter controversy...over the development plans of Gabriola Wildwood Estates (1971–4). The RDN Board eventually rejected Wildwood’s proposal, but Wildwood appealed to the Minister to have this over-ruled. A change in government in 1972
- ...the founding of the Islands Trust (1972-4)...

- the securing of an elected APC for Gabriola Island (1972)...[this electoral process in selecting members was abandoned by the LTC in the late-‘80s]
- the passing of Gabriola’s first and existing Official Community Plan and related land-use bylaws (1978–80)
- the plans of the forest companies to subdivide and develop their forest lands (1972 and 1985 to date)...
- ...Forest Land Reserve Act (1994)....

Throughout this complicated history...one consistent theme stands out. The continuing determination of people of this community, whatever their viewpoint, to be directly involved in deciding what would happen to their physical environment and way of life, and an expectation that officeholders should be directly accountable for what they did and how they did.

April 1996

The deep six for Bylaw 133

Frants Attorp

...Just weeks after urging the Minister of Municipal Affairs “as a high priority” to approve Bylaw 133, Island Trustees...have passed a resolution to “proceed no further” [saying] it would be “inappropriate” at this stage of the community plan review to amend the community plan “so extensively”.

...The question now is: if Bylaw 133 was “inappropriate” during a review, why does the same not hold true for Bylaw 134 [which] ...involves extensive amendments to Gabriola’s existing community plan?

What is the argument about?

J.S. Tyhurst

The controversy on Gabriola is not just about the Weldwood deal, amenity zoning, or the conduct of the OCPRC, as critical as these issues are.... It is about the way the Trustees and the Islands Trust deal and

decide these and other issues.... ...the incumbent Trustees won the election but, as was pointed out shortly after the election and was demonstrated later, they did not have a mandate. ...Moreover, it seems reasonable to suggest that if the public had had the same understanding of the issues and had had the same interest at the time of the election as was shown at the time of the Public Hearing, the Trustees could well have lost the election....

June 1996

A hall full of harmony

North, South, East, West of Gabriola, that is almost three hundred people poured into the Community Hall...to participate in one of the most historic meetings to be held on Gabriola.... The meeting? The one to talk about the possibility of acquiring 1700 acres as parkland from Weldwood.... This ambitious project was discussed at length with Mel Turner of BC Parks (Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy). ...At the meeting numerous Island organizations came to the mike to announce unequivocal support.....

October 1996

Letter from Strong Western to Dale Lovick, MLA

...we [Weldwood] have no choice but to conclude a sale to others unless a commitment from the government (PHML or FRBC) can be received forthwith....

Letter to the editor

...I attended most of Saturday’s meeting [Sept. 14 to consider draft OCP] and found it boisterous at times but always civil. People listening respectfully ..exclaiming ..clapping ..hooting ..and even interrupting. ...Democracy in action. ...Not “Bully Boys” [as alleged in a letter] Sheila Haniszewska

December 1996

Land changes hands

...Mr. Herb Auerbach announced...that 2800 acres of land on Gabriola Island has been purchased by Kensington Properties who then resold approximately 1800 acres to a variety of buyers.

...Kensington entered into a purchase agreement with Weldwood in March 1996 and had offered to sell a portion of these lands to the community through the Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy Fund or through Forest Renewal BC. The province “failed to arrange funding and as a result there was no proposal to acquire these lands...”.

...Auerbach remains hopeful that a good portion of the unsold 2000 acres on Gabriola can still revert in some form of park system.

Sale of land—logging begins

June Harrison

...About 600 acres of it [the Weldwood land] has been bought by Mike Jenks and logging began...on Monday.

...Mike Jenks has logged in various parts of the province. There is evidence that the logging he carried out at Qualicum Beach is a model of careful, thoughtful work. Now, he is involved in the equally careful work on the island.

...There will be a system of trails...the central area will not be closed off from the public’s enjoyment.

...In about a month, the *Shingle* will go with its trusted camera to view the operation and will then report if this is indeed “showcase logging”. ...We will wait and will even place a small but respectable bet that this operator, spoken highly of by Heartlands members some moons ago, will work to maintain a reputation well-established in the logging industry.

March 1997

Tough talk—No action *Valerie Houle*

...Former Premier, Mike Harcourt, said in 1993: “our government is committed to changing the way we manage our forests through tough enforcement of environmentally sound forest practices”....

Forest Minister Petter introduced the Forest Practices Code Act in 1994 saying, “the Act puts the force of the law into changing the way we will manage our forests by establishing...heavy fines”.

Two weeks later, Petter and Environment Minister Sihota jointly released proposed standards and draft regulations under the Act saying, “we are proud to be part of the change to the way we will manage our forests through tough enforcement”.

Today, Section 216 of the new Forest Practices Code Act gives the Cabinet the power to regulate logging practices on privately owned forest land. But, forests in the Trust area are falling, while Clark’s Cabinet forms the will to follow up their tough talk with action.

Until then, its business as usual in the Gulf.

POST SCRIPT

The Province, Feb. 22, 1998

...Environmentalists have opened a new front in the war in the woods. “The goal is to force the government to bring in laws to control logging on private land,” said David Boyd, executive director of the Sierra Legal Defence Fund.... Environmentalists fear many of the islands along BC’s coast, where forest lands are in private hands, will be stripped of trees because there are no rules governing logging privately owned land. The main target is former Prince George logger Mike Jenks, who is logging some of

the most high profile real estate, including an island used by the Queen and Prince Phillip as a retreat on visits to Canada.

...He's been thumbing his nose at those opposed to his logging for the past year, doing it in the environmentalists' back yard—on islands like Gabriola and Denman where old hippies and New Age healers outnumber loggers and fishermen.

To activists like Boyd and many residents of the islands where Jenks is logging, he is evil incarnate. “Mike Jenks is going to cut down all the trees,” Boyd said. “I've seen his logging for myself. He has a bad reputation for buying up big pieces..and making it ugly.

Jenks says he has 60 people working for him on the coast and in the interior in his logging operations. The trees he cuts on the coast keep another [425 people working at a Nanaimo mill and in Richmond]. “These trees mean hundreds of jobs,” Jenks said.

...“I've been buying property and logging it for years,” Jenks said. “I find property with enough timber to make it worthwhile. I buy it, I log it and develop the land. It's what I do. They're not going to stop me.”

He's currently logging 680 hectares that he and his partners bought on Gabriola Island in December 1996 and started logging almost immediately. Jenks insists that he's doing nothing illegal and is, in fact, making the property more attractive by thinning out the trees to create a park-like setting.

...Jenks says the environmentalists created the opportunities he's exploiting on the islands with their demands and protests.

“They tormented the big logging companies with protests and blockades until they got out,” Jenks said.

...After local residents [on Gabriola] refused to support the [Weldwood proposal], rejecting it as “blacktop urbanization”, Jenks and his partners moved in, picked up the 940 hectare property and is logging it all.

“We blew it,” said painter, journalist, and Gabriola Island resident Paul Grignon:

“They were going to hand us most of the land on a platter and we bickered ourselves out of everything.” ♦

GLOSSARY

1 acre = about the amount an ox can plough in a day $\approx 70 \times 70$ yards

10 acres $\approx 200 \times 200$ metres

1 hectare (ha) = 100×100 m ≈ 2.47 acres

100 ha = 1 square kilometre

Total area of Gabriola is roughly 5075 ha, 19.6 sq. miles, 12,540 acres

AGM = annual general meeting

APC = Advisory Planning Commission. Originally appointed by the RDN Director; later elected and reporting to the LTC; nowadays appointed by the LTC

City Spaces = consultants hired by the Trust to review the OCP

Commissioner = member of the APC

CORE = Commission of Resources and Environment

Director = elected member of the RDN

Executive = Executive Committee of the Islands Trust elected by the Trust Council

FLR = Forest Land Reserve

FRBC = Forest Renewal BC

GAPC = Gabriola APC (usually nowadays just called the APC)

GEAG = Gabriola Electors' Action Group

Islands Trust = established by the Islands Trust Act to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of residents of the trust area and British Columbia generally

LTC = local Trust Committee of the Islands Trust. Two members are elected locally and a third member, not from the same island, is appointed by the Trust Council

MLA = Member of the Legislative Assembly

NGO = non-government organization

NNG = Noticeably No Group (a group against passage of Bylaws 133–6)

OCP = Official Community Plan

OCPRC = Official Community Plan Review Committee

PMHL = Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy

PR = public relations

Public Hearing = legislated forum allowing public to comment on bylaws being formulated by the LTC

RDN = Regional District of Nanaimo

RWM = resolution without meeting (an LTC procedure)

Steering Committee = for the review of the OCP, role filled by the APC and City Spaces

Strong Western = Strong Western Advisors (president Herb Auerbach, representing Weldwood)

Trust = Islands Trust

Trust Council = members of all LTCs

Trustees = members of the LTC

Weldwood lands (Option 7); dedicated lands are underlined

Parcel A 80 acres, behind the school, clear-cut, zoned Forest

Parcel B 225 acres, between Pat Burns and the Golf Course, Dole Road, zoned Resource

Parcel C&D 1335 acres, 707-acre park (forestry/wilderness recreation) and private Forest, clear-cut

Parcel E 635 acres, the *Kensington Treaty Land* north of North Road, zoned Resource

Parcel F 80 acres, south side of North Road across from the Nature Reserve, zoned Forest, logged

Parcel G 160 acres, *Kensington Treaty Land*, north of top of Lackehaven, not clear-cut, zoned Forest

Parcel H 227 acres, partly *Kensington Treaty Land*, north of Gravel Pit and Church on South Road

Crown Land and existing Community Parks

Parcel I 140 acres, Sul'hween X'pey Nature Reserve, selectively hand-logged in distant past

Parcel J 240 acres, *Kensington Treaty Land* across North Road from Parcel E, clear-cut, zoned Forest

Parcel K 160 acres, east of Parcel G, north of Parcel H, young to mature forest, zoned Forest

Community Park 15 acres, petroglyphs behind the Church.