



Dear Residents and Ratepayers:

On September 12th a HIRRA motion to allow HIAC to build the long-planned Arts Centre on HIRRA-owned land was passed at the general membership meeting by a narrow margin. This motion was brought about because HIAC could not invest in a new building plan without first securing a site on which to develop a new proposal. The current board and staff inherited a HIAC Crown Land site and building proposal that give us pause, and with further investigation and reflection, HIAC came to feel the community deserved the opportunity to consider retaining its Arts Centre—a new public asset—on land it owns and controls. Why not pour these funds into “our” land rather than Crown Land and invest in ourselves? Still, the narrow margin of the most recent vote shows us that we are far from consensus and need to further explain our vision to the whole community. We understand that many people are still unclear as to what building the new Arts Centre on HIRRA-owned land would mean for the community.

Over the next few weeks we will try to communicate why we are asking to situate an Arts Centre on HIRRA-owned land and the benefits it will bring to the community. HIAC recognizes the community’s need for accurate information to make an informed decision on the location of the Arts Centre.

We will also investigate legitimate concerns that have been identified and explain how we propose to address them. We invite your feedback and criticism to help us identify the strengths and weaknesses of our proposal and work to bring you a new Arts Centre. We will reach out in print, online, and in person through information meetings like the one we held on September 4th and the one we have planned for October 5th, 3-8pm, at The Hall.

You will find below a précis of the information we have gathered so far, some answers to some of the questions that have been raised, and information about our open house and the next vote. We also encourage anyone with questions to write to hornbyislandartscouncil@gmail.com phone 250-335-2070 or make an appointment in person. Subscribe to our newsletter or check our webpage for updates: www.hornbyarts.com You can see flagging near the Hall that suggests where the Arts Centre could be located. We have maps and site plans on our webpage where we will also post a FAQ document and more materials.

At the October 10th HIRRA membership meeting there will be a motion and a vote on a specific site for the building. The project will only move forward as questions are answered, permits are received, and community support is earned.

After 20 years of planning, our aim is a community building, built for the whole community, on community land.

We thank you for your time and consideration and hope to earn your support.

Sincerely,

The Hornby Island Arts Council



Why is HIAC concerned about building on Crown Land?

For 20 years we have been envisioning an Arts Centre on Hornby. For the past 8, it has been sited on HIAC Crown Land. During final vetting of the proposal and plans the current HIAC board inherited from past boards, we became aware of enough flags to give us pause. These include:

- 1) A \$750,000+ total projected building cost, including investing \$250,000 in site preparation and servicing on a bare, undeveloped lot;
- 2) Crown Land economic restrictions that hamper the Arts Council's ability to earn revenue, obstruct artists from earning revenue in the space, and make charging admission for activities like workshops or festivals highly problematic. The Arts Council requires essential earned revenue to function and thrive sustainably or grow*;
- 3) A relatively dramatic transformation of the Sollans and Central Road corner through significant landscaping, tree-cutting, a new road through the HIAC Crown Land, and a location that put the building just before the Hall (heading towards Co-op) and immediately on the road.

*Any transparent commerce would require an annual Crown commercial lease rental fee of 5% or more of the total market value of the 5.8 HIAC acres in question (\$5,000–20,000 annually).

Why do we feel it is a better idea to build on HIRRA-owned land?

- 1) It makes best use of existing infrastructure (kitchen, dance floor, theatre, septic field, well).
- 2) The lowest possible environmental impact. Less trees cut down for new roads, build, septic etc.
- 3) A self-sustaining business plan that is more likely to attract further major grant funding to the project and HIRRA property that will free up HIAC privately-raised funds for more general HIRRA needs (Current Canadian Heritage initiatives support investment in community 'hubs').
- 4) Income for HIRRA receiving rent from HIAC instead of sending rent to government and a capital investment in community property that HIRRA controls.
- 5) A centrally located and easily accessible seismic mustering point in an emergency.

What are the concerns that must be addressed to pass Islands Trust approval, MOTI approval, and meet code?

- 1) Parking: we are consulting with experts and feel a solution is possible that will meet the Hall's needs and HIAC's needs and also our community's needs. This may include "trading" HIAC crown leased land for parking. Many things will change quickly with respect to parking and the modular school buildings going in across from the Hall. We recognize that the Preschool, Farmer's Market, Room to Grow, Print Shop, and playground and soccer field users all park at The Hall, and a larger plan is needed beyond simply meeting by-laws or HIAC's requirements.
- 2) Septic: we understand from experts that use of the existing field is possible with improvements to the system that HIAC will invest and that this deserves investigation and consideration. This saves us from creating another costly septic field 30m away.



- 3) Water: the well on Hall land is abundant.
- 4) Traffic: we are studying this carefully and are confident we will not increase traffic. The main entrance to the proposed Arts Centre will face HIAC Crown Land. Traffic is also all our concern and problem.
- 5) Permitting: the Official Community Plan reads favourably towards this kind of project regarding any applications for variance.
- 6) Governance: HIRRA is already landlord to the Credit Union, RCMP, and HITS Storage. These models work in HIRRA's favour and the HIAC relationship will not be different.
- 7) Aesthetics: the building must be built to code, and being an arts centre, will be a special and unique addition to our community's architecture that will also complement, not copy, The Hall.
- 8) Taxes: this build will not rely on tax-based funds in any way. HIRRA lands are not taxed. Numerous economic activities already take place at The Hall as they do at the Credit Union and Hornby's taxes are not influenced by them. There is a tax that Hornby has elected to have in order to maintain The Hall, but this project cannot access those funds. HIRRA will extract any new costs that result from the build from HIAC's assets.

We recognize that there is some confusion about what lands are in question. It is confusing!

- 1) HIAC Crown Land is undeveloped land without services and is between Joe King and The Hall.
- 2) HIRRA Crown Land holds the HIAC Trailer, the Teen Trailer, the Farmers' Market, and the Health Care Society and Clinic and has services.
- 3) HIRRA-owned lands include the "Savoie" plot with the Credit Union and RCMP as tenants, and "The Hall" plot with the Community Hall and outbuildings, and HITS storage as tenant.
- 4) HIAC is considering a possibility above the Hall on The Hall plot and at approximately the porta-potties across from the Credit Union on the Savoie plot.

Why the Rush?

In the spring of 2017, the previous board members, volunteers, and staff at HIAC secured \$175,000 in preliminary funding from Islands Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) based on the HIAC Crown Land site and build. One of the first tasks the new board and staff undertook at HIAC in the fall of 2017 was to begin a year-long process of retaining a fundable 30-year NRT Crown Land lease, the improvement of the initial 10-year Licence of Occupation that began in 2010. ICET would not fund any project without a secure site, and neither would any other granting agency. The process will be completed this fall with HIAC retaining its Crown Land.

ICET expected HIAC's final proposal in January 2018 and when the wait time for the Crown Land Lease process set in, HIAC secured a final extension of ICET's offer to the end of October, 2018. If we could not meet this deadline, with a secure site in hand and a final proposal, HIAC was informed it would need to re-apply to ICET again from the very start: it would lose its offer for the time being.

In addition to this deadline, a private funder set a condition upon approximately \$65,000 already invested into the project. These funds will be withdrawn if we cannot secure ICET funding



and/or move ahead with the project by year's end. So, the end of October is a \$240,000 deadline for HIAC (to combine with a further secure \$50,000 promised on breaking ground and approximately \$115,000 held from fundraising over the years to give us a \$400,000 project total—money in hand).

In this way, site approval and funding are now combined to see that HIAC secures a realistic building location ASAP or face the prospect of moving back to as little as \$165,000 or even \$115,000 for the project. The site must be known with sufficient time to allow us to make a realistic final proposal to ICET. Once ICET is secured, HIAC will then have a six month window to retain additional funders like Canadian Heritage and “break ground” (where breaking ground includes things like structural engineering review, etc.). If this community wants a public gallery or an arts centre—a community arts facility—we have to decide right now where the best location for this building is. Productive consensus is wanted.

We are holding an Open House on Friday October 5th from 3–8pm at the Hall. We will present our proposal on Wednesday October 10th at the HIRRA general membership meeting for vote. Additional opportunities to learn about the project are being developed and advertised now. We invite you to come and learn more so you can help us and the community find the best location for this long-desired home that so many have worked so hard to see become a reality.

We have never been this close before, and the time is now.