

Questions & Answers arising from the September 4th
Hornby Island Arts Council Town Hall presentation on locating a
Gallery next to The Community Hall on Hornby Island.

*7-9pm, 65+ people in attendance at The Community Hall, Hornby Island
(all leather chairs used and then some).*

*Names have been removed to remain focused on the subject.
Thanks to Cornelia Hoogland for recording the Q & A.*

*Each number represents a question/statement from the audience on the night.
Our answers on the night and upon further reflection are below.
So, these are not a verbatim representation or, “minutes” that follow.*

1) What are the differences between placing this Gallery on HIRRA-owned land and HIAC Crown Land?

-Placing the Gallery on HIRRA-owned land will allow our collective resources to be maximized and improved. This includes septic, electricity, parking, planning, cost-savings (more Gallery and more improvement to the Hall hub) and synergistic coordination of events like flowing between a dance performance in the Hall and an installation, from a film screening at the Hall to a reception. Our Official Community Plan encourages this direction in development—utilizing and sharing existing infrastructure—when development is wanted.

-A Gallery on HIRRA-owned land will have far less economic restrictions than a Gallery on Crown Land.

-A Gallery on HIRRA-owned land will require far fewer trees to come down, far less landscaping, and will comparatively minimize ecological impact.

-A Gallery on HIRRA-owned land would clearly be a community asset for our entire community to embrace and make their own.

-HIAC could derive better support from a closer relationship with HIRRA include new streams of revenue from CVRD sourced taxes that currently leave the island to fund cultural activities and institutions in town.

-A more independent Arts Centre on HIAC Crown Land will require its own costly septic, electrical, parking, treeing, landscaping, etc.

-A HIAC Crown Land build will likely involve greater duplication of community services through increased independence. There will be greater pressure for a crown building to have food services capacity, etc.

-HIAC's crown land is less suitable for development with a significant slope and will require far greater ecological transformation. More funds will be lost in site preparation, roads, etc.

1) How will HIAC address parking needs?

-HIAC is still pursuing its Crown Land application which is in its final phase. HIAC's Crown Land could provide the perfect parking area and entrance to the new Gallery. The entrance would not face Central Road, but could face towards HIAC's Crown Land.

- Siting a building behind the Hall would place it between the septic field and the well, within easy parking access placed within 100 meters of the building on HIAC Crown Land.
- Additionally, as HIAC is bringing \$400,000 to the project, these funds could be used to help address and plan for parking and traffic as a global issue for the Hall and environs.
- Finally, the success of the Gallery project can be used to leverage funds from larger sources like Canadian Heritage who can help address long-term planning for the entire Hall lot with substantial resources. We are in touch with this funder, and they are interested and supportive.

2) What are the kinds of concerns that Islands Trust will have for the project?

-Beyond the typical concerns, Public Use lots like the Hall under 1 hectare need to apply for a variance if they wish to cover more than 15% of their lots with structures. HIRRA and HIAC would need to make an argument for allowing a variance as the Hall already likely occupies about 15%. However, Islands Trust has given us reason to believe that such a request, as it follows our Official Community Plan explicitly and suggests the least impact on forested land, would be approved.

3) Hasn't this been tried before?

- Presently we have the capacity, staff, the board, the funding, and the community support and visibility to get this project completed, overcoming past obstacles like septic and parking that are manageable. We are all ready to look again before taking another route.
- Issues like variance applications, septic, and parking: if we want this as a community, we feel we can overcome these technical barriers. What is important is whether or not the community wants this in the present moment. If the community does want this, HIAC feels confident that all of the required details can be met.

4) The septic cannot handle more use. Septic lines cannot cross property lines.

-According to the credentialed engineer, Ron McMurtrie, who created and monitors the Hall's system, this not an informed position. Quite the opposite: the engineer is confident a simple solution is possible.

-With an adequate appropriate holding tank and current technology to monitor and distribute sewage at a rate that will not over-burden the system, experts have assured us this is not a problem.

-A Gallery will not produce grease waste as kitchen use does, and grease waste is an important concern that can also be accommodated with planning (though we are not proposing a kitchen).

-We are not proposing crossing property lines. However, were we to cross from the HIRRA-owned RCMP/Credit Union lot over to the Hall lot with a septic line, we have also been assured by experts who file these applications that this is not a complicated application process for a variance. Amalgamating both of the HIRRA owned properties would not be essential to accomplish this.

5) Traffic is already a concern and the HIAC Crown Land would be better with less environmental impact.

-It is difficult to be certain that a Gallery located on HIAC Crown Land—next to the Hall—will have less of an impact traffic patterns than an HIRRA-owned option next to The Hall.

-A development on HIAC Crown Land will have a comparatively greater environmental impact by far.

-In fact, this opportunity and the funds and further leveraged funds would create space to better plan traffic and parking, potentially creating solutions that would see a much improved global plan for the Hall and new Gallery where parking was eased, traffic improved, and overall safety improved.

-By placing a road through HIAC crown land to HIRRA crown land where the HIAC trailer is, it is possible to create a new access point to the market, credit union, HIAC trailer, Hall, and to the new Gallery to ease traffic.

-As the entrance to the HIAC Gallery would not be facing the entrance to the Hall or facing Central Road, but would rather be on the opposite side where new parking will go on HIAC Crown Land, it's also possible that parking at the entrance of the Hall will not be further stressed.

-The community is concerned about traffic at this point. We may very well see a crosswalk go in this fall for the school kids. We may also see a three-way stop go in, or speed bumps. Everyone is looking for a solution, and this project could help accelerate finding ways to plan for traffic.

6) What are the tax implications for our community?

-HIRRA lands are presently tax-exempt.

-If a Gallery created a tax problem for HIRRA, in all likelihood, HIRRA would expect HIAC to pay for that tax. HIAC would do so.

-This question also relates to HIAC creating a commercial space. The Hall is consistently used for commercial activities. Activities at The Hall already frequently require entrance fees, or, involve sales of goods. HIAC has moved to run a Public Gallery at the Gallery in the Woods, and that is what it is proposing for the Hornby Gallery. This will not be a commercial gallery. What this means is that artists will be paid to exhibit, and they will retain, as they do now, 100% of their sales. There will be more installations where works are not for sale, there will be a permanent collection where works are not for sale, and HIAC will not be invested in selling work in a commercial sense. This model is much closer to an Art Museum. With HIRRA's support, HIAC may consider a gift shop and/or art supply store to help underwrite basic operations expenses, but HIAC is a charitable non-profit society. It is not looking to become a commercial venture.

7) What size will the building be?

-At \$200/sq foot, \$400,000 buys about 2,000 sq feet. 2,000 sq feet is about the size of the main Hall room. We are hopeful that an office and storage space can be accommodated along with washrooms.

-Funding will constrain the building more than any variance application.

8) Can the island support and use this space year-round? Is it justifiable?

-We are absolutely confident the community will use this space year-round.

- Based on the local turn-out and support for all our programming, we know we have a core local scene that is interested that simply cannot fit into our present gallery. This scene is local including people of various ages who live here all year long.
- The winter events we have begun to build would make great use of the new space. The Film Fest has no room in which people may mingle for example.
- Visiting artists will want to have shows in the excellent space we will create, and they will want to come all year-round.
- A pleasurable and special public space will be much easier with volunteers.
- Workshops through the winter will need space in which to happen.
- Educational activities for youth and children will be easy to program, with classes visiting each exhibit.
- This space will be an essential mustering point in emergencies.
- For winter fairs and markets when there is not enough room for stalls, people will simply saunter over to the Gallery.
- We have forced the public to encounter art for brief easily-missed moments in time at The Hall, or in inappropriately confined spaces like personal studios or at the HIAC trailer. That we give them a space for large works of all mediums is entirely appropriate and long over-due. Artists are chomping at the bit to rise to the challenge, and these are only the ones on our island: Denman Artists would love to come over if they had a place for proper exhibition. So would artists from other places entirely.

9) We are an artist community already. We should not be scared. Hornby is already on the map. Let's welcome people and artists in particular. The HIAC Crown Land geography is not well suited to development, it is not welcoming, and it is not the right thing. Looking at work and selling work are different things. This is about experiencing art, not just buying it, whether or not you can buy it and whether or not the work is even for sale. Art is at the centre of our community, and when that is lost, then we are truly lost. (Applause)

-We tend to agree.

10) The urban sprawl near the market, including the RCMP and Credit Union is terrible. Put the Gallery there and move the RCMP.

-Actually, we would love to better be able to consider this. However, the RCMP provides HIRRA with significant and essential income, over \$10,000 a year.

-It would be very difficult to move the RCMP.

-It is unlikely that the project can wait until this is accomplished.

-The RCMP owns their building, and it would be very problematic for HIRRA to order them to move it.

-Aesthetically and functionally, orienting the Gallery towards the RCMP from where the market porta-potty is located does not give the Gallery the kind of profile our designers like to see. It involves the second most-trees coming doing in different possibilities, it involves more complicated water and sewage management, and it will not easily promote the same kind of synergistic possibilities that a location above the Hall would.

-However, we do feel it is still a better option than HIAC Crown Land. If this option were taken, it could be over a decade before the aesthetic concerns could be addressed.

11) Why are you calling this a Gallery when what is wanted is something more multi-disciplinary and multi-media like and Arts Centre?

-There is no reason to assume what can and cannot happen in the Gallery. If Centre seems more accommodating as a name, more inclusive, we will go with Centre.

-We are recognizing that within the Hall environs, there is already the capacity for dance, film, theatre: a wide variety of performance and art. What is missing is public dedicated space for large work and durational exhibition and installation.

-We are establishing a gallery so that large and small works of all media can be experienced for durational exhibition in a neutral environment that an artist has the power to transform and is not over-burned with financially: the conditions that require selling works.

-A four day booking at the Hall becomes an expensive 3 day exhibition when set-up, take-down, and clean-up are factored in, along with promotion and reception. A Gallery will be better situated to respect a set of work by supporting exhibitions through funding, reception, and promotion: services that The Hall cannot offer but that HIAC does for free as part of its operations and mandate. It will be the Gallery's mission to support its exhibitions and exhibitors of all art mediums: exclusive and dedicated focus.

-There is still room to expand through new phases of this project to support other cultural groups on the island. The Spark can provide a wet space for creation at the Old Firehall; HITS may desire more functional storage or a black-box Theatre, etc.

-This phase, a Gallery, is an achievable demonstration of where we are headed. We need to take a phased first-step approach to get to a hub that supports all art forms.

12) What will happen on HIAC Crown Land if there is no gallery there?

-Parking for the gallery on HIRRA-owned land.

-A sculpture walk.

-An outdoor performance location with good acoustics (lower ferry traffic noise than our present location).

-Storage for our archival master works and permanent collection.

-Small studios with composting toilets for use by artists-in-residence (who would be housed elsewhere—not on Crown land).

-Fogo Island presents an interesting example of a decentralized arts infrastructure project where not everything has to be kept in one big Centre: we can do these kinds of things: a botanical gardens/end of the sculpture walk outdoor oasis.

13) This gallery would reflect a complete change in Hornby's self-image. It is surprising that artists feel that The Hall is no longer adequate to meet their needs, that they cannot make due with their own galleries. They are asking for too much. This will be part of making Hornby a destination resort.

-Artists report to us that they are not satisfied with the booking possibilities in The Hall, where 4 days comprises a normal show at The Hall. 4 days does not allow enough time for a rewarding installation experience—where a space is transformed completely, and it certainly does not leave enough time for the public to visit and re-visit a space.

-Because of the costs and labour associated with renting the Hall, artists are forced to take a commercial route to recoup their effort and expenses. Therefore, the art takes a more commercial form and is constrained. A gallery that does not take commissions and provides a long exhibition period and supports artists financially and with promotion and reception encourages artists to invest in works that are public in the widest sense.

-People who visit Hornby who want to experience art are not the same as people who are coming to party.

-Not all of our artists can afford to build their own galleries. Not all of them can afford the time off paid work to book and staff the Hall.

-Hornby's self-image is one of an artist colony (among other representations). How is it possible we do not have a public art gallery already?

14) You have been working at this for many years, with many versions. You have just retained the interest of Michael McNamara after losing it in the past. Michael helped build the Hall after all. This is an excellent team that is doing its due diligence.

-We appreciate what a big ask this is. We wouldn't be looking at this option if we didn't feel it was an incredible opportunity in the balance.

15) A Gallery is not going to drive up taxes. Blaming tax increases and increases in land prices on the shoulders of artists who can barely afford to live here is annoying. 2000 sq feet is not much to ask for: the people who are driving up land prices are building much larger and unreasonable structures. Let's not hope to prevent artists from succeeding.

16) No one likes seeing trees come down, but a place for our artists is long over-due. It is necessary, and this is how we live together and solve our problems together. This will help reduce our dependence on summer months. This is an opening of doors to more cultural focus and winter life.

17) The speed of this process concerns me.

-In the spring we held a meeting with the representatives from the HIRRA Exec, The Hall Committee, The Hornby Festival, The Theatre Society, and HICEEC (Blues was unable attend, but sent a letter of support) to discuss looking at options on HIRRA land. Afterwards, HIRRA passed a motion to allow HIAC to explore situating a Gallery on HIRRA land. Over three months passed, with the help of HIRRA, HIAC was able to identify potential sites. It is only logical that HIAC is now bringing those sites to the HIRRA membership for vote. HIAC has advertised its exploration and the vote in multiple ways. HIAC has met with the HIRRA Executive multiple times. HIAC has consulted with Islands Trust, with expert builders, with HICEEC, and HIAC continues to engage as many institutions and individuals as possible and will continue to do so.

-HIRRA will always retain control of the outcome. At consecutive meetings, the HIRRA membership will learn of the designs of the proposed Gallery and will vote on these matters. The public and institutions will have many opportunities to provide more input and feedback.

-This vote is only about permission to pursue locating the Gallery on HIRRA-owned land. What that Gallery will look like? We are not voting on this yet. HIAC cannot afford to invest in a

design unless a site is possible and secure. HIRRA will vote on a preliminary design at the next meeting, October 10th.

-According to those who built The Hall, the process of approving the building involved several consecutive HIRRA meetings, about 4 or 5 in total. Based on this history, we are right on track for taking a pace that does not waste time, but that provides enough to do appropriate consultation.

These were are the questions that came up that night.

Again, these representations are not verbatim and are subjective re-presentations.