



**Regarding:** Funding the Tla'amin longhouse build at Shelter Point Regional Park

November 19, 2018

To Hegus Clint Williams & the Tla'amin Executive Council,

My name is Cindy Babyn and I am the president of the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce. As part of our 2018 Texada Economic Development Action Plan community consultations, the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce met with Denise Smith of Tla'amin Nation and qathet Regional District (qRD) representatives at the Royal Canadian Legion on Texada Island. The Chamber's primary goal at that meeting was to begin discussions with Tla'amin Nation to determine if there were any Tla'amin Nation economic development goals on Texada that our Chamber could support.

In this meeting, the Chamber learned that Tla'amin is interested in having a rendition of a longhouse (not a fully traditional one) built at ly'som: Shelter Point Regional Park. I have seen the past archaeological study that indicated Shelter Point had many longhouses. The Chamber understood that Tla'amin Nation feels that a longhouse project could bring a potential economic benefit to Texada by increasing tourism. More importantly, though, a project such as this would increase local and visitor awareness of Tla'amin Nation's history on Texada.<sup>1</sup> The consultation also revealed a related interest to have an interpretive walking tour with signs depicting the historical Tla'amin village throughout the Park. I believe the Park should also have signage in the traditional name ly'som – as similar projects are being completed in Powell River.

During our consultation meeting with Tla'amin and the qRD, the Chamber asked qRD representatives how many of the capital projects currently in development were Tla'amin projects. The answer was, "none". Additionally, I'm not certain that the qRD is funding any major capital projects on Texada at this time.

I'm aware that Tla'amin Nation paid for and received two conceptual drawings and cost estimates for the longhouse by John Spick and Lacasse, MHA. I understand that Tla'amin feels that the qRD should pay for the construction of the longhouse because the qRD owns the Shelter Point Regional Park land. I'm proposing ways that I could be a part of making an effort to activate this project.

In my consultation with archaeologist Colleen Parsley, who completed a study of Shelter Point in 2013, I learned that there is a current permit request in process that would allow for any ground alterations (if required) for the longhouse build project to happen at Shelter Point. If approved in the next 6-8 weeks, this permit will be active until October 27, 2020. Under that permit, below ground work could be completed by that date under that permit. Above ground construction could be completed after that date. Therefore, now is an ideal time to secure project advancements and funding approvals from the qathet Regional District and other partners.



The draft 2018 Texada Official Community Plan has a General Objective: “To promote collaborative relationships with the Tla’amin Nation and encourage harmonized land use along jurisdictional boundaries.” As a related general policy: “Recognize First Nations history in the area and support the protection of archaeological resources under the provincial Heritage Conservation Act.” (p. 19, section 2.2 Land Use & Development)

### **The Texada Island Chamber of Commerce’s Proposed Roles:**

#### **1) To expand consultations, with a view to gaining support for the project, such as:**

- Meet with Tla’amin Executive Council to understand Tla’amin goals for this project
- Expand consultations on Texada with more residents and community organizations, in part by promoting a site visit tour by Colleen Parsley and a Tla’amin Nation representative to Chamber members, other Texada organizations, residents
- To seek the assistance and support of our qathet Regional District Director as she has managed other community-wide consultations and as she is a representative of the qRD who owns the Shelter Point Regional Park
- Make a presentation at a Texada Island Official Community Plan meeting
- In the future, once (and if) the qRD agrees they would like to go ahead with the project, to make requests on behalf of the Chamber to Texada businesses and individuals for cash or in-kind donations to support the build (e.g., the quarries, forestry, other businesses, etc.)
- The Chamber could promote land, water, history, and cultural tours that Tla’amin might like to activate on Texada, such as daily ticketed tours that might begin at this proposed architectural longhouse building at Shelter Point, or from any other place.
- Consulted Colleen Parsley, the archaeologist of the study at Iy’som, Shelter Point ✓
- Acquired a Letter of Support for this project from MLA Nicholas Simons ✓
- Acquired support from the Texada Arts, Culture & Tourism Society ✓
- Acquired support from the Texada Island Heritage Society, in principle ✓
- Acquired support from Powell River Tourism ✓
- Acquired a Letter of Support from Sunshine Coast Tourism ✓
- Wrote a Letter of Support from the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce, following a board motion approval to do so ✓

#### **2) To make a presentation to the qRD Directors at the Committee of the Whole**

- There is a meeting on December 13, 2018 or we could meet at a later date.
- The key request would be to ask the Directors to assign qathet Regional District staff to work on the project, and to allocate funding.
- One important point is that in October 2018, 3 new Directors were elected (of 5) to the qathet Regional District. Therefore, it is likely that 3 of them are unaware of any past discussions on this project idea.



**3) To make a presentation to the C3 Council (City of Powell River, Tla'amin Nation, and qathet Regional District)**

- On behalf of the Chamber, I could request to speak to the C3 Committee about this longhouse build project idea. It is my hope that Tla'amin Nation would be willing to do the same, at the same meeting to indicate Tla'amin Nation support.

**Questions for the Tla'amin Executive Council I hope to learn about in a meeting with you:**

1. Does the Tla'amin Executive Council still support this project?
2. Do you have a preference between the two architectural drawings?
3. What would be appropriate uses of the building? For your information, I have heard a range of ideas from Texada residents, such as:
  - An opportunity to learn about indigenous history at Shelter Point
  - A shady place to get out of the sun
  - A desire to have an 'open' building so that the view of the ocean can be unobstructed (rather than having a closed building)
  - A place to have music (like acoustic concerts)
  - A place to sell things (like a market)
  - A place to have weddings
4. In your memory, what has the qathet Regional District's role been in this project?
5. Are there other people, organizations, or Nations that we should be consulting with before asking the qRD to advance this project?
6. Would someone from Tla'amin be able to join Colleen Parsley in leading a Shelter Point site visit to help residents better understand traditional land use and a proposed appropriate location for the longhouse?
7. Would a Tla'amin representative be available to speak to the C3 Council and the qRD Committee of the Whole meetings about this project?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this?

I imagine that there may have been some disappointments that this project did not go forward before. As a Canadian citizen, it's my personal view that it's my duty to make efforts toward reconciliation when possible. My energy towards this project idea is being directed with this intention, in addition to my interest in improving the economic conditions and quality of life on Texada Island.



Together, I believe that we could make this architectural piece and interpretive boards a strong destination that could boost cultural knowledge of Tla'amin, tourism and the economy on Texada Island. I believe this longhouse building and interpretive boards could represent an opportunity for Tla'amin businesses in leading cultural tours. In the past couple of years, I'm aware that there have typically been up to 8,500 people visiting the Shelter Point Regional Park in the summer seasons. It may interest you to also consider that tourism from Vancouver Island may increase following the April 2019 launch of our 2-year BC Ferries pilot project, which will have direct ferry service from Comox to Texada on Wednesday and Saturday nights.

Sincerely,

Cindy Babyn  
President  
Texada Island Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Denise Smith, Tla'amin Nation  
Cc: Colleen Parsley, Archaeologist, Aquilla Archaeology  
Cc: Joseph Scott, Consultant who managed the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Action Plan project, and he is a Director of the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce  
Cc: Sandy McCormick, Director, Area D (Texada), qathet Regional District

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<sup>i</sup> Excerpt from the *"Archaeological Impact Assessment of DjSc-1, Shelter Point, Texada Island BC – Public Copy by Aquilla Archaeology"*...

p. 8: "Above ground habitation features are present in the form of house depressions and exposed midden mounds arranged in three avenues running parallel to the present shoreline. This area was clearly a village consisting of several longhouses and may represent the best preserved example of village cultural topography that survives on the south coast."

"A total of 279 lithic artifacts, 195 faunal remains, 15 historic artifacts and 4 samples were collected during this study. A hearth feature was identified in the evaluative unit located within the proposed development area and was dated to 840 +/-30 conventional radiocarbon years. Of the artifacts, several are considered diagnostic and include a small-medium leaf shaped, two ground faceted slate projectile points, microblades and microblade cores."

"The artifact assemblage suggests the Shelter Point site," was... "...occupied from at least 3300 years to just before Contact."