



Regarding:

- 1) Update to the qRD following the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce Meeting with Tla'amin Executive Council regarding the proposed Tla'amin Longhouse build at Shelter Point;
- 2) Keeping the qRD apprised of Chamber activities regarding this proposed idea

January 30, 2019

To qathet Regional District Directors, Matt O'Halloran (qRD), and Patrick Deveraux (qRD),

In follow-up to the 2018 Texada Economic Development Action Plan consultations, the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce (Cindy Babyn, President and Joseph Scott, Director) met with Hegus Clint Williams and the Tla'amin Executive Council on Monday, January 21, 2019. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to hear from the Council about the Tla'amin perspective on the history of the project, wishes for going ahead, and a bit more about their historical and present-day experiences on Texada Island.

The Chamber had prepared a number of questions in advance and participants were successful in addressing each one together during this meeting. Note that Sandy McCormick was cc'd on this letter and was aware of these questions. I've prepared a short summary of the discussion as Joseph Scott and I remember it. Answers are expressed in italics:

1. **Does the Tla'amin Executive Council still support this project?** *Yes*
2. **Do you have a preference between the two architectural drawings?** *Yes. The open concept building is preferred (cedar poles, about 3 on each side with a roof and a fire pit).*
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.** *Good. We would also like interpretive boards there such as, for example, the one we have in our Council building that explains our history.*
 - **A shady place to get out of the sun.** *Good*
 - **A desire to have an 'open' building so that the view of the ocean can be unobstructed (rather than having a closed building).** *Good*
 - **A place to have music (like acoustic concerts).** *Good*
 - **A place to sell things (like a market).** *Good. The longhouse will not be 'that big' so not many market tables would fit inside. Hegus Williams suggested that any additional tables could be placed outside the longhouse as well.*
 - **A place to have weddings.** *Good. A longhouse has several uses, including a place for celebrations, and weddings are celebrations – as long as it's a happy marriage!*



4. **In your memory, what has the qathet Regional District's role been in this project?** *The Regional District allocated \$60,000 to the longhouse build project before but then the project did not go ahead. Hegus Williams explained that by saying that, Tla'amin did not intend to lay blame on the Regional District. He expanded by saying that their Nation was quite busy in the days leading up to treaty implementation.*

5. **Are there other people, organizations, or Nations that we should be consulting with before asking the qRD to advance this project?** *The Chamber explained that we had received support from the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce, the Texada, Arts, Culture & Tourism organization, the Texada Island Heritage Society (in principle), Powell River Tourism, Sunshine Coast Tourism, and Nicholas Simons. Tla'amin Council explained that the K'òmoks First Nation and other coastal nations would not need to be consulted on this particular 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?** *Yes. The Tla'amin Cultural Manager would be the right person to participate in that tour.*

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?** *Yes. Hegus Clint Williams would like to present at that meeting with the Chamber.*

8. **Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this?** *Hegus Williams and the Council generally expressed an overall positive feeling that there was a new effort to move this project forward again.*

2) Keeping the qathet Regional District apprised of the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce activities on this project:

I have kept the qRD, including the Texada Regional District Director, apprised of advances the Chamber has undertaken on this project idea. I was dismayed at the Friday, January 25, 2019 Chamber Dinner Forum, that our Texada RD Director said to me, to our Chamber members, and to guests, that it was inappropriate for me to go and consult with everyone else on this project idea and not talk to the owners of the Shelter Point Regional Park – the qathet Regional District. In case Sandy McCormick was expressing other qRD Directors' and staff frustrations with Chamber activities on this proposal, I am outlining the Chamber's past activities and communications to involve the qRD in the process.



2) Recent Involvement with Sandy McCormick, qRD Director, Texada and qRD staff

As best as I can remember and outline it, this is the recent history on this project.

1. **May 29, 2018:** Sandy McCormick, Laura Rodden, and Julia Dykstra of the qRD met in person with the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce and Denise Smith of Tla'amin Nation, during a consultation on the Texada Economic Development Action Plan 2018 consultations. The longhouse idea was the major topic discussed at that meeting.
2. **September, 4th week, 2018:** Prior to the Chamber Dinner Forum on the last Friday of September, I called Sandy McCormick to ask her if she could provide me with the history about why the qRD had not gone ahead with the longhouse build in the past. She told me that she thought it might have been due to past staffing levels at the Regional District.
3. **September 28, 2018 Chamber Dinner Forum:** As president, I had prepared Chairperson notes for the Chamber Vice President (VP) to read at the Chamber Dinner Forum as I was away and could not chair the Forum. Notes included information on the progress of consultations about the longhouse proposal idea. Although the Chamber board voted to proceed with making efforts toward the longhouse (the VP had missed that meeting), it was at this time that I then learned that our Chamber Vice President was opposed to the longhouse because he preferred a gazebo. It was the first time I had heard anyone raise the gazebo idea. Sandy McCormick was present at that Forum. Upon my return to Texada, I called Sandy McCormick to ask her if she knew about the gazebo idea. She explained what she knew of it to me. She also stated that the longhouse was not a new idea and that she had spoken about it in 2015 to the C3 Committee.
4. **October 1, 2018:** Sandy McCormick advised me to send the letter of support for the longhouse to qRD staff person Matt O'Halloran, which I appreciated because I hadn't done that research yet, and she suggested that I ask to make a presentation at the Committee of the Whole so that all qRD Directors could be made aware.
5. **October 17, 2018:** Following Chamber board approval to do so, the Chamber submitted a letter of support for the longhouse to Matt O'Halloran, qRD. I cc'd Sandy McCormick and Denise Smith of Tla'amin Nation. The letter listed other organizations and individuals who supported the project to that date, so that the qRD could be aware that it wasn't just the Chamber expressing support for the qRD to review this longhouse proposal. I elected to make an initial outreach to local and regional Culture, Tourism, Arts and Heritage organizations as I thought these would be natural community partners to have on board to make such a project successful. In addition to the letter, and with Tla'amin permission, I provided the qRD with the Tla'amin-commissioned concept drawings and budgets that had been provided to me by the Tla'amin Nation.



6. **November 5, 2018:** I spoke with Matt O'Halloran by phone and then I received an email from Michelle Jones, Legislative Assistant of the qRD. She asked if I would like to appear as a delegation. My answer was yes but I said that a meeting with Tla'amin Executive Council was required first and I was having some difficulty securing that date. Michelle and I had many back and forth emails, from this date through December to look at a rescheduling date.
7. **November 19, 2018:** The Chamber wrote a letter to the Tla'amin Executive Council after Denise Smith of Tla'amin recommended that we ask to meet with them to discuss more aspects of a possible longhouse project at Shelter Point. In that letter I chose not to articulate that the Texada Regional Director declined my invitation to attend the Tla'amin Executive Council meeting with the Chamber. Instead, I made reference to including her at a later point by stating that the Chamber could seek her assistance on managing wider community consultations (as she has managed these before, and as the qRD owns the Park). Note the Chamber's intention to work closely with the owners of the Shelter Point Regional Park.
8. **December 5, 2018:** Michelle Jones invited me to appear at the qRD meeting on December 13. I replied that I could not appear as I had not yet secured a date with Tla'amin Executive Council. I cc'd Sandy McCormick on this email. My intention was still to speak with the qRD on behalf of the Chamber and this project idea.
9. **December 6, 2018:** I informed Michelle Jones, qRD, by email that I had secured a date to meet with Tla'amin Executive Council later in December (after the Dec 13 qRD meeting). I cc'd Sandy McCormick on this email. Michelle informed me that the schedule for upcoming meetings was going to the board for approvals but that on this day she had one proposed for Thursday, February 14th when the Chamber could appear as a delegation. She invited me to touch base with her again in January about that date. I cc'd Sandy McCormick on my response to her, which included informing Michelle that I would get back to her after the January Chamber board meeting and January 28 Chamber Dinner Forum meeting. I have not yet confirmed for a possible February 14 meeting but this letter, submitted in January, re-confirms my request to appear, now that the Chamber has met with Tla'amin Executive Council last week.
10. **December 7, 2018:** Michelle indicated to me that I should be aware that the Regional District budget would be set on March 31, 2019. Sandy McCormick was cc'd on this email.
11. **January 21, 2019:** The Texada Island Chamber of Commerce met with Tla'amin Executive Council. No qRD representative was present, as the invitation had been declined. I wanted a qRD representative to attend the Tla'amin Executive Council meeting with me. By phone, I had invited Sandy McCormick to attend that meeting. In that conversation, she declined. She said that it was too early and that I didn't have full community support. I also asked a qRD staff person by phone if it would be appropriate for a qRD staff person to attend that meeting. I believe it was Matt O'Halloran though I'm sorry that I'm not 100% sure if it was him who I spoke with about it. The person explained that RD staff are very busy and they don't participate in meetings that they have not been asked to attend by directors, so that they can focus on existing approved projects. I understood.



On a positive note, in that conversation with Sandy, she recommended that I make a presentation to the Official Community Plan meeting as a delegation, which I hadn't thought of, so I thought that aspect was a very positive suggestion. (Following the Chamber board meeting last week, and mention of it to the members at the Chamber Dinner Forum last week, this week I have now submitted a Chamber request to appear as a delegation at the OCP meeting to discuss the longhouse proposal.)

I felt it was important to meet with Tla'amin Nation Executive Council before speaking as a delegation to the qRD, C3, the Texada Island OCP Committee, and holding a general community meeting on Texada, so that I could more confidently understand the proposed idea and comprehend more aspects of the Tla'amin wishes for the project. That was a recommendation made to me by Denise Smith of Tla'amin Nation as she herself had not worked on that project in the past when it was first in consideration and she did not have all of the details about what had happened before.

The Chamber had been scheduled to meet with Tla'amin a couple of times before the New Year but due to several factors (including that one of the scheduled dates ended up being on the day of the 5-hour total Sunshine Coast electrical grid shutdown) we couldn't meet until Monday, January 21, 2019. I wanted an opportunity to discuss that very positive meeting with Tla'amin to our Chamber board at our board meeting last week and at our Chamber Dinner Forum last Friday, January 26, 2019 before reporting back to the qRD. This letter is being delivered to the qRD 4 days after the Dinner Forum, and there has been a weekend within that time period.

I acknowledge that I made an error in not copying Patrick Deveraux, qRD Manager of Operational Services on my past letter and emails to the qRD, because I didn't know that I should until mid-January 2019, when the Shelter Point Caretakers suggested that I do. I thought that was an excellent idea and I will forward Patrick my past letters that I cc'd Sandy McCormick on.

12. January 25, 2019: Sandy McCormick was present as the qathet Regional District Director at our Chamber Dinner Forum. She listened to the very positive longhouse proposal update that I gave to our Chamber members and observed that the Chamber shared the Tla'amin-commissioned longhouse design plans with members and guests. She listened to Chamber members ask questions about this proposal and some of them put forward ideas. I advised everyone that I am not an archaeologist and I can't get into detailed answers about what position would be best for the placement of a longhouse (people had been excited to share their ideas) and on other points (like design) I said that all of these things could be discussed at a community meeting. Sandy then made her own comment, which was to launch a public accusation at me that it was inappropriate that I had been talking to everyone else except the qRD – the owners of the Shelter Point Regional Park.



After Sandy McCormick said this, I felt that I had been put into an extremely awkward position of having to express to Chamber members and guests that I felt what she had said was inaccurate and I listed just a couple of reasons for that to them (select points outlined in this letter). I had to close the topic by saying – you have heard what your qRD Director has had to say and you have heard what I have had to say and you will have to decide what you want to believe. It is unfortunate that I had to leave it like that. The Chamber made numerous sincere efforts to speak with the qRD about this, has stated that we would like to speak to the qRD committee after meeting with Tla’amin Nation, and has apprised the qRD Director and staff of ongoing efforts. This is why I have now dedicated additional time in this letter to outlining all the dates, conversations, and emails I have made and included her on to demonstrate that I feel she made an inaccurate statement. Although the qRD Director made some very positive suggestions on how to proceed I’m now not certain whether the Texada qRD Director has made an impression on the community that she may either be against the project proposal or against the Chamber’s actions—a public Texada community organization doing volunteer work to put forth an idea regarding enhancing a cherished public space for our residents and visitors.

Next Steps Proposed

Apology and Clarification: The qathet Regional District may wish to clarify its position and consider apologizing about the accusation made at the Texada Island Chamber Dinner Forum if they can agree that the Chamber has kept our qRD Director and staff informed on the subject of the longhouse proposal idea since our initial consultation with them in May 2018. We feel that the qRD is aware that the Chamber has made it clear that our organization wants to speak to the qRD committee at an appropriate meeting once a meeting with the Tla’amin Executive Council could be completed. No inference should have been or should continue to be made that the Chamber has demonstrated that it wants to speak with everyone about the longhouse proposal at Shelter Point Regional Park—except the qathet Regional District, the owners of the land—because that is not true. Nobody at the Chamber is paid. All the activity that has been done has been made on volunteer time. Please keep that in mind.

qRD Committee of the Whole, or another level of meeting with the qRD directors and staff: On behalf of the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce, I would like to re-state that the Chamber would like to appear as a delegation to whichever appropriate meeting you suggest at the qRD on the topic of the proposed longhouse at Shelter Point. I would like to suggest that a Tla’amin Nation representative be asked to appear at the same meeting to indicate their support for the project.

C3 Meeting: On behalf of the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce, I would like to appear as a delegation at a C3 meeting on this topic. I would like to suggest that a Tla’amin Nation representative be asked to appear at the same meeting to indicate their support for the project. Hegus Clint Williams expressed that he would like to be the person who appears at that meeting.



Shelter Point Regional Park Cultural Site Visit Tour: Following the meeting that the Chamber had with the Tla'amin Executive Council, I spoke with Colleen Parsley, who had completed Phase 1 of the archaeological project at Shelter Point in 2013. I informed her that Tla'amin Nation had indicated that they recommended that their Cultural Manager co-lead a proposed Texada Island community-at-large cultural site visit tour of the Regional Park with her. Colleen indicated to me that she is planning to come back to Shelter Point in the spring or early summer but that she was unsure of a more specific date. Of course, it would be excellent if qRD staff and directors could be present for this as well. I mentioned this at our board meeting last week and at our Chamber Dinner Forum last week. Sandy McCormick was present at that Dinner Forum.

Texada Island Community Meeting-at-large: Tla'amin expressed that indigenous cultural education of Shelter Point's historical use by their Nation would most likely be a key activity that could enhance Texada Island resident support for a longhouse proposal (e.g., a cultural site tour before a community meeting). At some point, the qathet Regional District may wish to be the lead in organizing community consultations about this, rather than the Chamber. This could be an excellent topic of discussion between us.

There is positive momentum built towards this proposed idea. Momentum certainly is no guarantee of activation, success, or available budget. However, the Chamber proceeded with an idea that consistent step-by-step efforts and consultations made could be one possible path to determining whether the proposed longhouse idea is wanted and feasible or whether it is not. The Chamber would like to work with the qRD on this exploration as has been demonstrated by including the qRD in past communications.

To reiterate, the main reasons the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce and Tla'amin Nation like the idea of a longhouse and interpretive boards at Shelter Point Regional Park is that it could:

- enhance the Regional Park
- be a fabulous architectural piece
- boost local and visitor cultural knowledge of Tla'amin and enhance relations
- increase tourism
- improve the economy on Texada Island.
- Some Texada residents have expressed additional ideas, as outlined on page one of this letter. With more consultation we may learn of other reasons that local residents would like a longhouse on the Regional Park land. There are also concerns, questions, opposing, and different ideas that we should all have the opportunity to hear about.



Please let me know if the Texada Island Chamber of Commerce can be scheduled to appear as a delegation at an appropriate meeting such as the Committee of the Whole and the C3 meeting before the next qRD budget is set.

Sincerely,

Cindy Babyn
President
Texada Island Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Sandy McCormick, qathet RD, Regional District Director, Texada
Cc: Patrick Deveraux, qathet RD, Manager of Operational Services (Parks, Facilities & Operations)
Cc: Michelle Jones, qathet RD, Legislative Assistant
Cc: Hegus Clint Williams, Tla'amin Nation
Cc: Rod Allan, Chief Administrative Officer, Tla'amin Nation
Cc: Denise Smith, Legislator, Tla'amin Nation
Cc: Colleen Parsley, Archaeologist, Aquilla Archaeology
Cc: Joseph Scott, Director, Texada Island Chamber of Commerce