



Floating Home

Association of BC



Newsletter Winter 2017

President's Message



By Kelly McCloskey

Greetings and Happy New Year fellow FHA members and floating home aficionados! I'm pleased to update you on what the FHA Board of Directors has been up to during the last quarter of 2016 and what's planned for early 2017.

Membership Survey

As you will recall, in response to the many issues raised at last year's AGM, the board undertook a comprehensive survey to affirm the issues of concern to members and prioritize them. Although we're still analyzing the survey results, here are some highlights:

- 107 individuals responded from 15 different locations/marinas (90% were float home dwellers and the balance were marina owners or others interested in the lifestyle).
- 48% of the respondents are moderately or very aware of FHA's activities while 33% are somewhat aware. Most attribute their reason for joining the association as wanting to "stay informed", "network with others in the community" or working to address "issues of collective concern".
- With respect to FHA's communication vehicles, the newsletter had the highest awareness and perceived value, followed by the website and then Facebook. The website of course was only recently renewed and launched in July and its popularity is rising.
- 84% of respondents were receptive to the notion that the current dues level of \$15 per year limits the activities the association can undertake on their behalf; however, they want to know what would be added before agreeing to a dues increase. We concur and no dues increase would be implemented until 2018 at the earliest.

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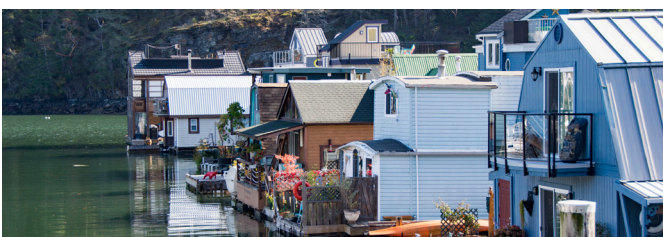


With respect to the issues of greatest import to the membership, concern was high across the range of issues listed in the survey with the lack of stable, long-term leases for marina owners and thus the lack of same for float home owners/renters at the top. The lack of public and government awareness



and support for float homes was next, followed by the risks and cost associated with the need to raise dike heights and dredge river silt and the lack of moorage available for floating homes in general. Other concerns noted included the rise in costs for owners and renters and the lack of mortgage and insurance options.

Although several members raised the question of tenant rights or rent controls (per the AGM discussion) the views expressed were pro and con and as such the Board is instead focusing on matters affecting affordability and sustainability of all members. This includes concerns related to moorage rates but also marina leases and other key cost drivers that lead to higher costs and uncertainty to our lifestyle.



Issue Management

Armed with increased clarity on our issues, several meetings of note this month include:

1. The Honourable Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. Key points for discussion include the lack of moorage availability and the lack of long-term leases. Recent indication that all water lot leases (on provincially managed waterways) will be on a 30-day rotating basis until efforts to clarify/resolve potential First Nations claims on the foreshore are dealt with, means owners and renters will experience difficulty in selling their properties and associated property values will fall.
2. The Honourable Carla Qualtrough of Delta, the only federal cabinet minister in BC with floating homes in her riding. Although organized by the Ladner Sediment Group, fellow FHA director John Roscoe and I will be following up on her commitment to seek Federal funding for a sustainable dredging program. Those affected by the recent low tides a few weeks back, know how important this initiative is.
3. Given that this is an election year, meetings are also being sought with provincial MLAs (and candidate MLAs), particularly those with floating home communities in their ridings.
4. FHA support has been offered to the developers of the recently announced float home community in Squamish BC. Given the trend of marina closures and reduction in float home moorage opportunities, approval by the District of Squamish Council is viewed as great news for current and future float home owners. The plan calls for 27 houses and four floating commercial units.



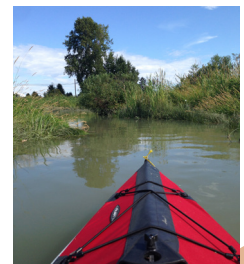
FHA Bylaws Review

Spurred by the introduction of a new Societies Act, which requires us to update our 1990 bylaws, directors Dave Coulter and Frank Archer are spearheading a bylaws review/update, which will be sent out to the membership for consideration and approval at the AGM. Key changes include setting a minimum (5) and maximum (7) directors, expanding to two year terms and staggering them so as to ensure continuity from year to year. See the report below for further details.

Lastly...

Due to personal reasons, Katherine Wilson informed the Board that she is unable to perform her duties as President and has resigned her executive position, although I'm pleased to report that she will continue as a Director at Large. As such, the Board voted me as President and agreed to leave the Vice-President position vacant at this time.

In addition to my commitment to serving you to the best of my ability, one of my goals is to visit and meet the residents of all 24+ float home communities in BC. Having visited 12 to date—which tells you a lot about the kind of vacations Sandy and I like to take—I can say that although each community is as different and unique as you can imagine, they are generally populated with similar folk; real, *salt of the water* type people!





Website Update

By Sandy McKellar, FHA secretary



Have you had a chance to visit our new website?



After many years of operation, when the FHA website came up for hosting renewal last year we lacked the passwords to access the account, and as such, the site disappeared. We took advantage of this unfortunate situation to create a new site, with a new URL that we hope is more informative than the old one.

Our old URL was www.floatinghomepacific.ca which created some confusion for visitors to both our website and our Facebook page who assumed that we represented the whole Pacific Northwest. To remedy the situation, we took on the working name **Floating Home Association of BC** with the URL www.floatinghomesBC.ca, clarifying our jurisdiction and membership area. We updated our Facebook page at the same time. Although our

legal registered name continues to be Floating Home Association Pacific, you will see us using the working name in day-to-day operations.

We launched the new site in July of 2016. Researching other floating home association pages, we created a site architecture geared toward providing the greatest value and interest for both members and others who have an interest in the lifestyle.

The new site is building in traffic momentum. To date, we've had 730 site visitors, with a total of 1,050 visits to the site. More than half of our site visitors are coming from within Canada, and of those, 85% are from within BC.

The most popular pages are those in the "Resources" section (Maps and Marinas, Real Estate, Links & Contacts), followed by our "Did you know" blog style section.

How "techy" are our visitors? Here's how they viewed the site:

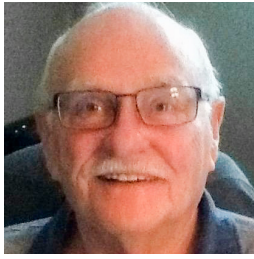
Desktop or laptop 72%

Smart phone 18%

Tablet 10%

The site is far from complete, and we are adding new content all the time. Stop in for a visit!





Dredging and Sediment

By John Roscoe, FHA director
Chair, Ladner Sediment Group



When we asked stakeholders in our recent survey to identify priority topics of concern, one of the most frequently mentioned issues was sediment and dredging. Although not an issue for all of BC's floating homes, along the Fraser River there are many homes that experience the uncomfortable sensation of grounding.



The Ladner Sediment Group (LSG) represents stakeholders along the Fraser River in Delta and it works with neighboring river communities if and when appropriate. A purely volunteer organization, the LSG represents a broad range of enterprises including fisheries, fish processing, marine parts and service, ship building and repair, restaurants, yacht clubs, condominiums private land owners and (of course) float home marinas and float home owners.

As LSG chair, my role is to bring attention to the issues arising from sediment and establish a sustainable dredging program to ensure Delta's river channels can continue to provide a broad range of environmental, social and economic benefits in perpetuity.

Our group worked diligently toward a successful dredging program that took place in the summer of 2015, but once is not enough. Failure to maintain the channels puts the health and welfare of Delta residents at risk of dike failures, flooding and the associated loss of economic activity.

As such, we have been actively seeking funding and partnership with all three levels of government to establish an annual maintenance program. In a proposal submitted to Delta MP Carla Qualtrough, we recommended a cost sharing breakdown of 60% Federal, 30% BC Provincial and 10% Municipal government.

In July of 2016 we met with representatives of the Corporation of Delta, Port Metro Vancouver, MP Hon. Carla Qualtrough, and MLA Vicki Huntington where we agreed to a draft proposal outlining our request for sustainable dredging of the Fraser River channels within the Ladner region. A follow-up meeting with Ms. Qualtrough is scheduled shortly.

Our efforts to secure government support for dredging refers to navigable channels only, and will not provide sediment removal from beneath individual homes. However, healthy, deep channels will aide in drawing sediment out from the shoreline and does have a positive longterm impact on floating homes. Furthermore, the LSG approach will be a precedent for other communities with dredging needs to follow.

If you would like to know more about the Ladner Sediment Group, I invite you to visit our website at <http://ladnersedimentgroup.wixsite.com/home>



The Societies Act and FHA By-laws

By Dave Coulter, FHA treasurer



On November 28, 2016, the new Societies Act (which replaces the old Society Act) came into effect in British Columbia. In 2009 the Ministry of Finance commenced to solicit general input on issues under the current Society Act. In 2011 a discussion paper solicited public comment on specific proposals for reform. The paper maintained the basic framework of the old Society Act, but updated and supplemented that law with new rules and procedures from other corporate legislation.



Proposed new provisions will enhance flexibility for societies by providing them with more internal governance options such as proxy voting, holding of general meetings, creation of classes of members while removing current restrictions on the exercise of directors' authority. All of these matters will now be subject to the bylaws of the society and in effect the society will be able to structure itself in a way that meets its particular needs.

Pre-existing societies will be required to "transition" to the new system by inputting their constitution and bylaws into an electronic data base at the corporate registry.

The current FHA executive has reviewed the new proposed bylaws put forward to Societies and has

agreed to modifications that will be presented to members at the 2017 Annual General Meeting for approval and adoption. However it will be the recommendation of the executive that only essential amendments or revisions will be put forward in the final resolution.

These changes include setting the number of directors to a minimum of five and a maximum of seven, changing the term a director serves from one year to two years with a first election of four directors for two years, and three directors for one year, thereafter all elections for two years after the terms have expired. Directors will determine executive assignments at the next official board of directors meeting rather than the membership voting or appointing them to positions at the AGM. A member will be required to have been in good standing in the previous membership year in order for their name stand for election or appointment to the board or to be appointed by the directors to fill a vacancy. A director who misses two or more consecutive board meetings may be removed from the board the discretion of the remaining board members.

A full set of bylaws will be sent out to membership in early 2017 to allow for review in advance of the annual general meeting.





Communications Update

By Sandy McKellar, FHA secretary



Journalists, writers and the public are fascinated by the romance of floating homes.

Last year Windfall Films produced the television series *My Floating Home*, carried by HGTV in



Canada and the US. The series was a resounding success, not just in North America but in English speaking countries around the world. In fact, the producers did so well with the concept that they are currently in production on season two! If you are embarking on building a new floating home, perhaps you could be their next star - contact me if you want to know more.

For those who missed the show, or didn't have access to HGTV, the entire series is available for online viewing, and we have the link on our website under the Words and Pictures tab.



Something Good Magazine, a Delta publication, ran a story called "Home Sweet Float Home" in their June 2016 edition. Check our website under Words and Pictures for details on these articles and more.

We do our best to track all the news and interest

articles about floating homes, both in BC and around the world, and post items to our Facebook page.

Since launching our Facebook page in February of 2015 we have 251 people who have liked our page, and our posts often reach 500+ people through post-likes and shares.

Facebook allows us to engage with other floating home associations such as Fisherman's Wharf in Victoria, the Toronto Float Homes, the Seattle Floating Home Association and more. Sharing and exchanging information provides a fabulous networking opportunity

We know that not everyone is a Facebook fan, and as such, we've linked our Facebook posts to our website so that you can follow the latest stories and updates without your own FB account. To see all our posts, go to the Facebook Feeds dropdown in the Resources section of our website.

If you see stories or updates about floating homes please share them with me, by email or on our Facebook page. We'd love to hear from you.



Several magazine articles also featured the floating lifestyle last year. We were pleased to see versions of author Laura Goldstein's story "At Home on the Water" featured in both SOAR Magazine (Pacific Coastal Airlines October/November issue) and Boulevard Victoria (August/September issue).