

December 28, 2021

Strathcona Regional District

Attn: Mr. Leitch, CAO
SRD Board of Directors

To Whom It May Concern,

We would like to have the following issues addressed at your next board meeting.

This complaint is in regards to Quadra's Elected Official and Director, Mr. Jim Abram and his public statements in our local paper, The Discovery Islander, under the 'Regional Directors Report'.

It would appear that Mr. Abram is making a habit of stating incorrect information in regards to his misinterpretation of PHO Order. This is apparent by his prior public statement regarding Ferry travel and now about the upcoming Community Public Hearings in Jan/22.

Mr. Abram has informed the residents that no travel by ferry or entry to public meetings would be possible without proof of full vaccine status. Both of these statements have been proven to be inaccurate according to BC Ferries, Transport Canada/ Marine Safety, The Deputy Ministers Office of Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and SRD Management. (**note: backup emails are available*)

The first incident was in August of this year when Mr. Abram strongly advised island residents that they would not be able to travel by Ferry unless we had proof of complete vaccination. His bold statement/threat was quickly disputed by Transport Canada as ferry services are considered part of the highway system for our islands and are exempt from the vaccine mandate. BC Ferries also confirmed that this was incorrect as their service is considered essential..

We shared the emails from BC Ferries and Transport Canada in our paper in an attempt to notify everyone of the correct information. Mr. Abram has never really announced his mistake. He did comment that a simple phone call could of cleared it up, instead of making it public in the paper. He continues to claim that when the vaccines mandates were announced, he immediately contacted a friend high up in BC Ferries to see if they were going to enforce the restrictions and that (in his words) "*his comments to me were that it looked like it was true at the time*" Instead of informing people about something based on it 'looking like it might be true', it would of been wiser to spend a little more time to have it verified as being actually true before sharing it. Especially on such a controversial matter.

Unfortunately, once again we find ourselves having to publicly address Mr. Abrams incorrect statements in regards to his meeting restrictions for the upcoming Community Public Hearings. This was by done by sharing contradictory information received from Mr. Apolonio with the Deputy Ministers office and Ms. Starkey with the SRD.

Recently, Mr. Abram informed Quadra residents that vaccination cards will be required at the door of the Community Centre where the scheduled SRD Community Public Hearings will take place. Apparently Security has been hired to check vaccine status in order to gain entry into the meetings. We were all warned that they will also be policing the only way into the building. He claims this is to prevent the staff of the Community Centre from getting assaulted and to keep them out of harms way. *From who?* Isn't this gathering supposed to be a 'civil' Community Public Hearing in which 'everyone' in the community is welcome to attend and participate? Because it sounds like Mr. Abram has already decided that *ALL* are not welcomed.

The residents of Quadra deserve proper unbiased leadership that respects all residents as equal members of the community. Not someone whose actions clearly represent a division based on what appears to be, one's 'vaccine status'.

Thank goodness for professionals! Especially those that are quite knowledgeable of the PHO Order, like Mr. Apolonio and Ms. Starkey. They both quickly confirmed that vaccine status is not required to attend Gov. meetings regardless of where they are taking place, contrary to Mr. Abrams beliefs. They were also unaware that Security was going to be present at the meetings. The SRD apparently did not authorize this service, nor was it required. Which is surprising as Mr. Abram is now claiming that it was actually the SRD who '*wholly owns the building*' that wanted extra precaution to be exercised at the meetings.

Our Elected Official has recently enlightened us about local Gov. being allowed to exceed the requirements in the 'Order' if they feel it is warranted for safety. Is this true? Is Mr. Abram in a position to override the PHO when he feels it is necessary? Not sure how someone who clearly doesn't appear to have adequate knowledge of the PHO is permitted to make alterations to the Order, as he sees fit, in his attempt to 'protect the public in his area'.

Our Director has recently reminded us all that his philosophy has always been '*Local Control, of Local Issues.*' He also claims that 'he' will continue to protect all that is good about Quadra. Maybe this is the problem. Now that there are many new residents on Quadra, many would prefer that the citizens are given more input on what needs to be 'protected' and what changes will best suit the community as a whole. Right now it appears that Mr. Abram is dictating (to all of us and the SRD Board) what he believes '*his*' (sorry) '*our*' island wants and/or needs. The current situation has residents voicing their concerns about Mr. Abram using his position for his own agenda and that his unwillingness to accept criticism or having his actions questioned are causing concern and creating trust issues.

Because of this, the SRD Board of Directors and Mr. Leitch may find Quadra residents choosing to address their concerns and questions, etc. to you directly, from now on. Like this letter.

Who is responsible for the conduct of local Elected Officials?

Due to Mr. Abrams continual feeding of inaccurate information to the public of Quadra Island, we are requesting that the contents of his 'Report' be proof read prior to publishing, by someone his superior from now on. Especially on those topics that also involves the SRD.

Hopefully if this is practiced it will prevent our 'Elected Official' from sounding unprofessional and help eliminate further disinformation being given. It should not be the responsibility of Quadra Island residents to ensure what Mr. Abram is claiming or reporting to us is correct.

Perhaps someone from the SRD should read our local paper. The 'Letter to the Editor' section often includes how the citizens of Quadra are responding to Mr. Abrams articles that he has published under 'The Regional Directors Report'. The Editor has recently titled everything that pertains to the Meetings as 'Island Forum', which also provides a good insight of what is being said. It is always interesting to see what Jim's reply will be towards anyone that is disagreeing or questioning his statements. We are pretty confident that he will certainly have a response for us after correcting him again and submitting this letter of complaint.

All issues of The Discovery Islander are available on line through (www.discoveryislander.ca).

Thank you for your time in reviewing and addressing these critical issues.

Kind Regards,

K. Horton
B. Girdlestone

Concerned Quadra Island Residents