



PIID Chair Annual Report June 2024

CHAIR: JULIEN BAHAIN

Chair Report

It takes a team to handle all the PIID duties. In April 2024, after three years as Corporate Administrator, Velvet Warrior passed the baton to Cara Hogan. Thank you Velvet. Welcome, Cara, and thank you for stepping up.

It has been an honour to serve as PIID Chair for three years and as a Trustee for the past six years. Through this experience, I have gained a deeper appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work that keeps our community thriving. While essential services like water, fire protection, road maintenance, and compound access are well-known, our governance system, the Piers Island Improvement District (PIID), is equally crucial.

In last year's Chair Report, I highlighted the vital role of our volunteers. Over the past six years as a Trustee, I have realized that our community's ability to volunteer and support each other is rooted in our self-governance. To use a mechanical analogy, the PIID is the engine, and our volunteers are the fuel that keeps our community moving forward. To remain effective, our engine must be maintained, updated, and relevant in 2024.

We recently communicated with our elected representative, Adam Olsen, regarding our inability to access provincial funding for infrastructure projects. If the provincial government could eliminate Improvement Districts and integrate them into municipalities or regional districts, they would. Recent examples include the City of Kelowna incorporating the South East Kelowna Irrigation District and the Glenmore Ellison Improvement District. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that the PIID demonstrates strong governance and operations to stay relevant in the decades to come. A recent UNDRR¹ report identified "weak governance" as a primary cause of government failures and includes lack of transparency, unclear processes, failed audits, or lack of funding. It is our collective duty to maintain our governance system and keep evolving as requirements change.

We sometimes hear concerns about change. As Trustees, we are on the front line to manage change in a way that supports the lifestyle we enjoy here. While we might long for the days of cheaper gas or fewer bureaucratic requirements, the reality is that we, as an Improvement District and a community, are part of, and interconnected with, a larger system.

I believe that when faced with an issue, the status quo is never an option if we want to maintain a thriving and diverse community on Piers Island. From young to old, working parents to retirees, seasonal to full-time residents. People from different walks of life and means bring unique perspectives and contributions. Change is not the threat; it has always been part of Piers Island. Without it, we would still be operating an old red fire hall, drinking from a wood stove tank, or struggling for parking in Swartz Bay without any fencing around it. The past five years have shown how rapidly the world can change, for better or worse. Climate change is a reality, and inflation affects people's ability to secure basic needs.

The question for our community is: How do we meaningfully and carefully change to ensure that the "Piers Island Way" endures? When issues come to the PIID, it is our duty as Trustees to assess them and find solutions that benefit the whole community. I envision an island where all can thrive. Not just the wealthy. Not just the commuters. An island that supports diverse

¹ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



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perspectives and contributions. Our strength lies in our diversity and our ability to live, work, and volunteer together.

Over the past few years, Trustees have worked on policies, careful capital planning, detailed budget reviews, best practices, and good governance to withstand audits and public scrutiny, ensuring we stay relevant and strong. This is an ongoing process.

In conclusion, I invite each of you to embrace change as a means to preserve the “Piers Island Way”. It is not the enemy. It is the solution. Let’s ensure our seniors can feed cookies to our kids, our teenagers can help with chores on roofs, and our neighbors can leave knowing their homes are cared for. This all stems from strong governance that enables us to self-administer.

Thank you.

Submitted by:
Julien Bahain
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PIID Buildings & Land Improvements Trustee