

Edith Watson

From: Manda Afochs Gillespie <afochs@mac.com>
Sent: Friday, January 25, 2019 10:54 AM
To: Email - administration@strathconard.ca
Cc: Brenda Leigh
Subject: RE: Letter of Support for Noba Anderson's Legal Defense

TO: SRD Chair & Board of Directors

Dear Esteemed Board of Directors:

May I start by thanking you for your service to the people and place of this region. As my husbands works in government management, I have some small inkling of the effort and care that goes into doing this kind of job well.

As a Cortes Island resident and property owner for only about three years, I have been left more than a little befuddled by the recent turn of events on Cortes Island. Just this fall, we had an election where Noba Anderson was returned by a significant majority to office. And while some of the politics that erupted during that time, seemed strangely un-neighbourly for a small island, I had assumed they would pass with the election. As I assumed we would also see our chance to finally get to vote for a Hall Tax and the craze around that would finally quiet down.

Nevertheless, what has happened since suggests that rather than this being the case, instead our tax payer money is going to investigate nearly every single charity organization doing meaningful work on the island (named in the recent laws suit are FOCl, CKTZ, SCCA, Cortes Island Museum, and it would seem implicates even a guy that supposedly collects the garbage) and more than a dozen neighbours accused of partaking in bribery. I know many, many of these people personally and I find it beyond ludicrous than any sane person would suggest that these people, by donating to an elderly man's help in times of tragedy, would ever—even by the most suspicious minds—be considered to have done so with the intent to receive kickbacks. Is it true that government money is being spent investigate such claims?

I do hope that at the very least the regional district is supporting Noba Anderson in obtaining a lawyer. Are you helping her find, procure and pay for legal counsel?

In my experience, such wild allegations are not unheard of in political situations. But when allowed to run amok or when a representative is left on his or her own to field such allegations and obtain appropriate counsel, they can end careers. This would, obviously, be devastating to our small island's sense of democracy. I also fear it would empower those who wish to abuse the democratic system by making ludicrous, yet expensive to defend, allegations against their representatives whenever they don't like the politics. Indeed, it makes every director more vulnerable which seems unfair considering the amount of selfless work and service already required in the position.

I must also inquire again about the truth of the allegations that our Hall Tax vote is being further delayed. Will we see this issue come to Cortes Island for a vote this spring? What more must the citizens of Cortes Island do to get our chance to show support for this issue? As a person who belongs to many organizations and interests which depend on having a community space to meet, I am deeply concerned by this issue and every week it is put off further diminishes the opportunity for my children to attend after school activities, for our family to partake in piano lessons, for our community kitchen to get up and running, for our seniors to meet and work together, and for the community to have chances to engage in fun or dialogue together. Not having a community space to gather tears out our community's spirit at a time when allegations against our neighbours means we most need chances to come together.

I sincerely hope that such ludicrous accusations are not a routine part of your work lives and that this is an anomaly that will be put to rest as gently as possible. And I pray that you will find a path forward to helping our island return to a place where it safe to be a good neighbour and to trust in the sanctity of the democratic vote.

Sincerely,

Manda Aufochs Gillespie
Cortes Island