

Dear Sechelt Mayor and Council,

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

On December 4th 2024, we presented a request to the Mayor and Council of the District of Sechelt to consider establishing an outrigger canoe storage area and hand launch at one of the Beach Access areas operated by the District of Sechelt. This request was made on behalf of the Sechelt Branch of the Gibsons Paddle Club to ensure that members of our club could continue to engage in recreational paddling on Sechelt Inlet and to provide opportunities for other members of the community to join us and learn to paddle.

Our interest in approaching council came from our urgent need at the time to vacate our location at the Lighthouse Properties but also a genuine desire to create a paddling hub in Sechelt that would model a healthy lifestyle, advance paddle sports, and create opportunities for sport and recreation without the infrastructure costs of a building. Many things have been in motion since that request, and we are writing today with an update on our club and canoe status.

Since the presentation, we met several times with Mayor Henderson and the Manager of the Lighthouse Properties and thankfully we were able to work out a temporary agreement and sign a lease for another year (January 2025 to December 2025). This lease allows us to keep our canoes on the West side of the property (see recent photo below) and launch directly into the inlet. We are paying a monthly rate of \$150.00 to store and launch our canoes and are very grateful that this rate has remained the same as what we paid previously to Harbour Air. Our only concern at this time is that there is no renewal clause within our agreement. We intend to ask the manager if we can renew the lease for a longer period of time, and will likely begin our discussions again this summer so that we (hopefully) can stay on for as long as possible.



This brings us back to our initial request. We would still like to examine the feasibility of the District of Sechelt (DoS) reserving a small section of public land for a paddling centre where our club could have continued access. Many small crafts are left at virtually every beach access within the District of Sechelt but our proposal is to neatly store our canoes and use them several times per week throughout the year. These canoes and the dollies that launch them would be maintained by the club at no cost to the DoS. We feel that this is an important use of public land and beach access and look to the Town of Gibsons as the model we aspire to. In Gibsons, our canoe club has ongoing access to a section of land that is owned by the Town of Gibsons and is able to store many outrigger canoes and use the marina boat launch at no cost. We do recognize that waterfront is at a premium, however we contend that a not-for-profit club such as the Sechelt Branch of the Gibsons Paddle Club affords more people access to the water and constructive recreational opportunities at an affordable cost (less than admission to the aquatic centre or gym) and that this proposal would make excellent use of this valuable resource.

We have a deep appreciation for the beautiful land and water we are privileged to reside on and would very much like to see ourselves in a recreational partnership with the District of Sechelt. To this end, we hope that we can continue to work with the Corporate Officer and Staff at the District of Sechelt to find a public location, that can become a paddle hub for Sechelt.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret MacDonald and Gordon Dockstader  
Directors of the Sechelt Branch of the Gibsons Paddle Club  
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