

REPORT TO SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION
MEETING OF Thursday, May 15, 2025

SUBJECT **163 Drake Road – Phoenix Elementary School Property Expression of Interest**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To review responses to an Expression of Interest posted publicly for 163 Drake Road.

BACKGROUND

The Capital Regional District (CRD) assumed responsibility for the operation and maintenance for the buildings and land located at 163 Drake Road effective December 1, 2024, for a five-year term.

The property is a 2.82 ha / 6.97-acre lot consisting of a two-story house, portable classroom, playground, small garden and basketball court. The west end of the property is forested with an informal connection to the Drake Road Trail.

The portable building onsite was used by the Chuan Society effective Dec 2, 2024, to March 31, 2025. The lower floor of the main building and portable are planned to be used as a temporary maintenance facility following the recent approval of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) by the Islands Trust.

The Salt Spring Island (SSI) Local Community Commission (LCC) requested that staff post an Expression of Interest (EOI) for short-term rentals to occupy the upper floor of the main building for up to 12 months.

The lease and facility are funded through the parks and recreation service. Any longer-term use would need to be related to community programs, events or recreation. Depending on short- and long-term use requests, another service may need to be considered as the funding source.

The current zoning allows for a variety of principle uses including medical offices, recreation and a community hall. The current building code is more restrictive as it is considered an assembly building. If the building were to change to office use it would need to be assessed for code compliance and fire separation would likely be required if there were multiple occupants.

To best determine potential zoning or building code implications an Expression of Interest (EOI) was posted publicly for four weeks through the Salt Spring Exchange, Gulf Island Driftwood and social media. The EOI was also directly sent to potential user groups including those who had previously expressed an interest. In addition, an open house was held on April 3rd to promote awareness and gather interest from the public.

Two proposals were received prior to the close of the EOI on April 25th 2025. A proposal to support a community group of homeschool children ages kindergarten to grade three (Appendix A) and a proposal to support a community drop-in program including meal prep and yoga (Appendix B). A third proposal was received after the deadline (Appendix C) but did not meet the submission date or format requested in the EOI and has therefore been disqualified.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission authorize staff to enter a lease with Creek Song Learning Centre for the portion of the main building, playground and community gardens located at 163 Drake Road (PID 004-607-295) at a monthly rate of \$1,000 plus GST.

Alternative 2

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission refer the report back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial, Safety, Zoning, Building Code and Lease Implications

When assessing potential users for the site, consideration will need to be given to the service holding the land, building code and zoning to determine the current permitted uses of the building and land. SD64 has also included language in the lease requesting that the CRD prioritize organizations that demonstrate a direct benefit to children followed by local not for profit organizations.

The Decision-Making Framework referenced in the 2019 SSI Parks and Recreation Strategic plan should also be referenced when considering new facility and program proposals (Appendix C)

	Proposed Monthly Rent	Safety Improvements	Zoning Implications	Building Code Implications	Directly Benefits Youth
Creek Song Learning Centre	\$1,000	Temporary Fencing / Expansion and separation of existing parking	none	Fire Alarm, Fire Monitoring and Fire Safety Plan	Yes
Chuan Society	\$750	Temporary Fencing / Expansion and separation of existing parking	none	Fire Alarm, Fire Monitoring and Fire Safety Plan	No

Both applications are considered assembly use resulting in minimal implications.

CONCLUSION

The CRD is now leasing the property and buildings located at 163 Drake Road. There is an opportunity to license or sub-lease a portion of the building or property to one or more tenants and a public process is proposed to be completed to try ensuring the optimal use.

Two proposals were received in response to the EOI. Both proposals are from local not for profit groups and are considered permitted uses. The Chuan Society has previously occupied the portable onsite while the Creek Song Learning Centre's proposal directly benefits youth.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission authorize staff to enter a lease with Creek Song Learning Centre for a portion of the main building, playground and community gardens located at 163 Drake Road (PID 004-607-295) at a monthly rate of \$1,000 plus GST.

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Concurrence:	Stephen Henderson, Senior Manager, Real Estate, Southern Gulf Island Electoral Area and Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission

ATTACHMENT(S)

- Appendix A – Creek Song Learning Centre Proposal
- Appendix B – Chuan Society Proposal
- Appendix C – Salt Spring Chapter of the BCSPCA
- Appendix D – Decision Making Framework