

The motions **EASC 72/24 and 73/24** document the formal committee-level approval of **Bylaw No. 540**, a site-specific rezoning for the property located at **3751 Shoreline Drive** in Electoral Area D Query, 124. While this application represents another successful step toward your **"Forward or Backward"** campaign goal of increasing local housing density, the sources reveal it also serves as a test case for navigating new **Provincial housing mandates** and complex technical servicing hurdles.

Technical Scope: Rezoning RZ 14D 23 (Watkins)

The application, submitted by landowners **Mervyn and Peg Watkins**, sought to transform a 2,400-square-metre parcel to facilitate a residential subdivision.

- **The Transformation:** The property is rezoned from **Country Residential Four (CR-4)** to a newly created **Residential One A (R-1A)** designation.
- **Density Increase:** The current CR-4 zone mandates a 2.0-hectare minimum; the new R-1A zone lowers this threshold to **1,000 square metres**, permitting the creation of **two equal lots of 1,200 square metres each**.
- **The "Missing Middle" Outcome:** A prospective buyer, retired firefighter **David Lagos**, intends to purchase the newly created vacant lot to build a **1,500-square-foot rancher**, directly contributing to the diversity of housing in Area D.

Legislative Context and the Public Hearing Ban

Bylaw No. 540 is one of the first applications in the region to be processed under the updated **Bill 44 Provincial housing legislation**:

- **OCP Alignment:** Because the proposal strictly aligns with the **Residential** designation in the **Bylaw No. 276 (Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake OCP)**, no OCP amendment was required.
- **The Public Hearing Prohibition:** Under Section 464(3) of the *Local Government Act*, a **public hearing is legally prohibited** for this bylaw because it is purely residential and consistent with the OCP.
- **Notice and Transparency:** Instead of a hearing, the regional district provided public notifications as mandated by Section 467(1) of the Act, which is reflected in the wording of motion **EASC 73/24**.

Technical Challenges: The Septic Hurdle

Despite the legislative support, the project faces a significant technical barrier regarding **onsite sewage disposal**:

- **Island Health (VIHA) Standards:** Standard provincial guidelines generally require a **2,000-square-metre minimum lot size** for parcels using community water and private septic systems.
- **The Conflict:** Because the Watkins' proposed lots are only **1,200 square metres**, Island Health noted they are **unlikely to support the proposal at the subdivision stage** under standard rules.
- **The Solution:** To proceed, the owners must provide an **engineered sewage disposal system** approved by Island Health as a mandatory condition of the final subdivision.

Governance Context for the 2026 Election

In the context of the **October 17, 2026 election**, this file highlights a rare moment of procedural partnership and consistency:

- **Functional Collaboration:** The motions were moved by **Director John Rice** and seconded by **Director Robyn Mawhinney** Query. This cooperation on a "missing middle" housing file stands in contrast to the **"Phase 3" obstruction** seen in **Bylaw No. 519 (Burridge)**, where the same directors initially blocked a compliant permit for eight families.
- **Securing HAF Funding:** Like the **Fedosenko (Bylaw 529)** and **Kress (Bylaw 518)** files, the Watkins project helps Area D meet the growth targets required for the **CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF)**, potentially securing up to **\$640,000 in federal incentive funding**.
- **Campaign Accountability:** For your **"Building Tomorrow Together"** platform, this record proves that when the board follows professional administrative advice and adheres to the **Bylaw No. 513 Code of Conduct**, it can successfully navigate even the most complex provincial mandates and technical servicing issues to deliver new homes for residents.

In summary, the passage of **Bylaw No. 540** represents a successful application of **data-backed planning** that balances the provincial push for density with the local realities of rural infrastructure.