

November 24, 2008  
**For Immediate Release**

### **Applications now available**

Applications to register for a waitlist to purchase affordable housing units are now available. The complete registration package can be picked up at Municipal Hall, or downloaded from the website of the Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG), located at <http://www.bihousing.org>.

Tim Wake, affordable housing consultant and former general manager of the Whistler Housing Authority, introduced the applications at an open house, hosted by the AHWG and held last weekend at Cates Hill Chapel. He invited qualified residents of Bowen to take the time to fill out and submit the forms. Though there are currently no affordable housing units under construction, securing a spot on the waitlist is a good move, explained Wake.

For one thing, information submitted will help determine the needs and type of units needed by community residents. And, once affordable units are built, those on the list will have first chance at purchasing the non-market housing.

For the next three months, applications received will be ordered according to a system that gives points for years of residency on Bowen. This will give long-term residents and those with families a slight advantage. However, after February 24, applications will be accepted and added to the list on a first come first served basis.

Eligibility for the waitlist is explained fully in the guidelines that accompany application forms. Applicants must be residents, or full-time employees working for a local business, or retirees who lived on Bowen five out of six years prior to their retirement. Property owners are not eligible to apply, nor is anyone who has owned property previously up to five years from the date of application.

Applications must include pre-approval for a mortgage from a financial institution. That step can be taken right here on the island, explained Wendy Wanvig, who attended the meeting last week. Wanvig is a Financial Services Representative for First Credit Union. She said the credit union is eager to assist residents in meeting this requirement. Additionally, First Credit Union has agreed to cover the cost of legal fees associated with the registration of the mortgage, as well as the cost of an appraisal.

Applications will initially be processed by Wake, who has been contracted by the municipality to set up an arms-length housing corporation. However, once the corporation is established, it will be responsible for administering the waitlist.

Wake explained that the housing corporation will operate as a financially sustainable "lean and efficient" organization. Its role is to ensure that Bowen offers a diversity of housing types to meet the housing needs of residents with a wide range of ages, incomes, occupations and household types. In addition to creating the opportunity to purchase affordable housing units, the corporation also will have a mandate to ensure that the island's housing stock includes a sufficient number of rental units. A waitlist for that type of housing will be launched once a rental project is underway.

For more information about the application process please visit the Affordable Housing Working Group website at [www.bihousing.org](http://www.bihousing.org). Please email any questions to [contact@bihousing.org](mailto:contact@bihousing.org).