

Susan Brice: You Stopped Listening

She promises voters she listens. Six times an owner spoke to Council first; six times she put her name to the notice. Drawn from her statements to voters and Saanich's own minutes and meeting recordings, 2005 to 2026.

What the record shows

1. Councillor Susan Brice promises voters "listening to the community" and calls herself a consensus-builder with an open mind [1][2]. In twenty-one years on Council, the record shows whom she hears.
2. Six times an owner or the owner's representative spoke to Council before a Section 57 notice was put on their title. Six times she put her name to the notice anyway [7]. She has moved or seconded ten of the twenty notices recorded since 2020, as many as any member of Council. She also voted for the notice on an owner who had just told Council he had paid a designer \$10,000 of a \$30,000 fee [7][32][24].
3. She told voters in 2022 that Council must support rental housing [3]. In 2024 she asked the Province to let Saanich refuse secondary and garden suites outside the Urban Containment Boundary [14]. When ten residents then asked Council to allow garden suites there, she voted against even a staff report [22].
4. In September 2022 Council directed staff to report on regular performance evaluations of the Chief Administrative Officer. She chairs the committee responsible for governance. The open record contains no report and no request from her for one [7][12]. She twice voted against a lobbyist registry that would tell residents who Council hears from [16][17].
5. On 938 Ambassador Avenue she asked, once, whether the owner could be heard. When staff said "life and safety," she stopped asking and voted to keep the notice [29][30][31].

In her own words

What she said	What she did
"I believe collegial decision making results in better outcomes at council." (2022) [3]	Moved or seconded ten Section 57 notices on residents' homes [7]
Council must support "a range of housing options... rental." (2022) [3]	Asked the Province to exempt Saanich from allowing secondary and garden suites outside the Urban Containment Boundary (May 13, 2024) [14]
Council "wants to save the municipality harmless for some kind of risk." (November 20, 2023) [25]	Seconded the notice on 4573 Prospect Lake Road after the owner described paying his fines, going to court, paying double permit fees and hiring engineers [25]

What she said	What she did
"Listening to the community." (2026) [2]	Dropped her own question about hearing the owner of 938 Ambassador Avenue when staff said "life and safety" (June 23, 2025) [29]
"Pretty straightforward." (July 14, 2025) [30]	Voted to keep the notice, citing a fire that no evidence put to Council that night described [30][31]
"I've got something to contribute... if the residents of Saanich feel I can still make a difference." (2026) [1]	No motion since 2017 on how a resident gets a notice removed or appeals a staff decision [7]

6. Each of those votes followed advice from the administration led by Chief Administrative Officer Brent Reems. If the advice was wrong, it was his. The votes were hers.

Owners and residents she did not hear

Date and property	What Council heard first	Her role
Feb 3, 2020, 5435 Kiowa Road	The tenant said contractors had advised that permits were not required for temporary buildings	Seconded
Oct 18, 2021, 4037 Lakehill Place	The owner said inspections would take place in the near future	Seconded
Jan 10, 2022, 4029 Glanford Avenue	The owner said a plumbing permit was in place, the work was underway when he bought the house, a contractor was drawing plans, and asked for time	Seconded
Nov 20, 2023, 3838 Epson Drive	The owner's designer said a full set of plans had been prepared	Seconded
Nov 20, 2023, 4573 Prospect Lake Road	The owner said he had paid his fines, gone to court, paid double permit fees, hired engineers and prepared plans to bring the house into compliance	Seconded
Jun 23 and Jul 14, 2025, 938 Ambassador Avenue	Counsel said the District had been told in April 2023 to deal with the owner through his lawyer, and that the notice was affecting the sale	Raised a way to hear the owner, dropped it, voted to confirm

7. At the same meeting as Lakehill Place, Council postponed the Locarno Lane notice to read that owner's correspondence. Listening was an option [7]. The owner of 67 Cadillac Avenue, whose notice she moved in January 2025, had bought the house after the complaint was made [7].
8. June 24, 2024: ten residents asked Council to allow garden suites as an option outside the Urban Containment Boundary, citing mortgage help, multi-generational living, farm workers and homes that cannot take a basement suite under the Building Code. Councillor Harper then moved only for a staff report on how it could be done. Councillor Brice voted against it, and it was defeated [22].

938 Ambassador Avenue

9. November 20, 2023: she seconded the notice, on a report endorsed by Reems, with no one present for the owner [20][28]. June 23, 2025: she voted to defer so the owner could be represented, and was the only member who asked whether Council could cancel and reissue the notice so he could be heard. Corporate Officer Angila Bains answered that staff recommended against removal because of contraventions that "impact life and safety on the property." She did not pursue it [21][29].
10. July 14, 2025: counsel told Council the District had been advised on April 6, 2023 to communicate through the owner's lawyer. Reems told Council the search "was lawfully conducted" and that he "certainly did not hear any specific details" of the injury [27]. She then described a fire in which people could not escape because permits were not obtained, the "very precarious position" that would leave Saanich in, and called the decision "pretty straightforward." No evidence of a fire or egress hazard was put to Council that night. The notice was confirmed nine to nothing [30][31].

Who she listened to instead

11. May 3, 2021: Reems told Council his housekeeping amendments made no consequential changes. She seconded the three readings and the adoption of Bylaw 9694, which extended occupancy inspection and entry authority to enforcement officers [33].
12. July 4, 2022: Harry Bains told Council finishing his work would cost \$300,000. Reems told Council the notice "is meant to incent following our process... and it gets removed for a small administrative fee." She voted with the unanimous Council to reaffirm the notice [35].

The coded language

13. Staff give Council keywords instead of facts, and Council votes on them [26]:

What staff told Council	What the record shows
The notice will "reduce Saanich's liability exposure" (October 31, 2023); removing it "may expose the District to liability" (July 14, 2025)	No legal opinion, claim or dollar figure for that liability was ever put to Council
"Without a notice on title, there is potential liability to the District" (Fairburn, Conway, Quadra, June 9, 2025)	The same liability line for three different properties, with nothing said about what the liability is or who would claim it
A notice "is meant to incent following our process... and it gets removed for a small administrative fee" (Reems, July 4, 2022)	Minutes earlier Council was told removal takes a building permit, plans, a completed project and a final inspection, and the owner said the work would cost \$300,000 [35]
"Internal GIS data shows that structures were added over time" (July 14, 2025)	Imagery, not inspection or records, used to date construction

What staff told Council	What the record shows
Contraventions "affecting life and safety" (June 23, 2025)	No life or safety finding about 938 Ambassador Avenue was put to Council that night or on July 14, 2025
The stairs "are a safety risk" and fail "previous versions of the Code" (Prospect Lake, November 20, 2023)	The Manager could not date the stair; the owner's inspector and, the owner said, the District's own inspector found it acceptable
"Unable to assess the safety or quality of the building... raising concerns about potential health and safety issues" (Fairburn, June 9, 2025)	A concern stated as a reason, with no assessment behind it
The search "was lawfully conducted" (Reems, July 14, 2025)	Its validity was then before the Provincial Court

14. The \$500 is the clearest case. On November 20, 2023 the Manager of Inspection Services told Council there were "no financial implications" and a "\$500 fee" to remove the notice on 938 Ambassador Avenue [34]. On July 14, 2025 staff confirmed removal costs \$500 [30]. Each time, staff stated the fee and left out the cost.
15. She voted on every line above: she seconded the 938 Ambassador Avenue notice, voted for the Fairburn, Conway and Quadra notices, and voted to confirm the notice on 938 Ambassador Avenue. At Prospect Lake she asked for the line between opinion and fact, was given the Manager's opinion, and seconded the notice [25][26]. The keywords came from the administration Brent Reems leads; the votes were hers.

Ten households: the hostage loop

16. The District investigates the owner, enforces against him, can prosecute him, registers the encumbrance on his title, and then decides, at the same Council table and on the advice of the same staff, whether it comes off. The only key is compliance as the District defines it: the owner is unlawfully forced to open his private dwelling to the same bylaw officers who built the case against him, pays for permits, consultants and whatever remedial work they then order, and pays the District \$500 at the end. Until he does, the notice stays on title and the sale of his home is affected. The only appeal from Council's refusal is to court, at his expense.
17. Creation. The October 31, 2023 report recommended the notice because it "will reduce Saanich's liability exposure on this file" [28].
18. The key. Council was told the notice comes off for a \$500 fee once the property is brought into compliance with all regulations [28][34], and on July 14, 2025 that the fee is collected "when all the conditions have been met" [30]. The \$500 is only the District's registration fee. The cost of a Section 57 notice is hundreds of thousands of dollars. For this house, the title ransom starts at \$100,000 in consulting fees for the building permit alone, with remedial work ordered inside the dwelling up to \$250,000. It is paid on top of the District's fines and on top of double permit fees, which the owner of 4573 Prospect

Lake Road told Council he paid [36]. A home renovation becomes an offence, and the owner is penalized twice: Harry Bains was fined and sent to collections, the owner of 4573 Prospect Lake Road paid his fines through the courts, and the owner of 938 Ambassador Avenue was prosecuted.

19. Who holds the key. Since Bylaw No. 9694 (2021), occupancy inspection and entry authority under the Zoning Bylaw extends to bylaw enforcement officers, not only building officials [33]. The October 31, 2023 report told Council the violation was confirmed "by the Bylaw Officer" [28]. A bylaw enforcement officer is not a building official under the Building Act.
20. The pressure. While the notice stands, the owner is penalized with the loss of the ordinary ability to sell, finance and insure his home. Counsel told Council on July 14, 2025 that the notice was affecting the sale of 938 Ambassador Avenue [31].
21. The review. Cancellation under section 58 is decided by the Council that imposed the notice, on staff advice. On June 23, 2025 the Corporate Officer told Council that staff recommended against removal because the contraventions "impact life and safety on the property" [29]. On July 14, 2025, when Councillor Chambers asked whether the owner could be given more time, Brent Reems answered that "the opportunity is tonight" [30]. Council confirmed the notice nine to nothing [31].
22. Two other owners were victimized by the same hostage loop. In 2022 Council registered a notice on 5390 Old West Saanich Road at a meeting the owner, Harry Bains, had not been notified of. He told Council on July 4, 2022 that he learned of it from the front page of the Saanich News, that his sale collapsed when his realtor warned him of a non-disclosure suit, that business licence and bylaw inspectors had fined him and sent him to collections, and that finishing the work would cost \$300,000. He asked whether he should bring someone to speak for him because he did not know where to begin. Staff told Council the key was a building permit, engineered plans, structural engineering, a completed project and a final inspection. Council reaffirmed the notice unanimously [35].
23. In 2023 the owner of 4573 Prospect Lake Road told Council he had paid his fines, gone to court, paid double permit fees, hired a designer, a geotechnical firm and two engineers, and met the District's inspector "every day." He told Council that inspector approved his stairs on February 23, 2023, that the Manager of Inspection Services overruled him, and that a retired inspector he hired found the stairs safe. The stair was existing and outside the scope of his work: he told Council it was in the house when he bought it in 2016 and was not part of his renovations, and Councillor Harper restated that on the record. The Manager of Inspection Services told Council the owner's building permit was still open and valid for two years, and that the stair could be corrected under it, and recommended the notice anyway. He told Council there is no correction for such a stair short of replacing it entirely. Councillor Harper told Council that other mechanisms, including

letters on the property file, had been used in the past instead of a notice. Council registered the notice, with only Councillor Harper opposed [36].

24. Her ten: 5435 Kiowa Road (2020); 1396 Mount Douglas Cross Road and 4037 Lakehill Place (2021); 1090 Lodge Avenue, 4029 Glanford Avenue and 960 Lakeview Avenue (2022); 3838 Epsom Drive, 4573 Prospect Lake Road and 938 Ambassador Avenue (2023); and, as mover, 67 Cadillac Avenue (2025) [7].

Governance and initiatives

25. CAO evaluation. On September 20, 2022 Council directed staff to report in the fourth quarter of 2022 on regular performance evaluations of the CAO [12]. Every set of Council and Committee of the Whole minutes from then to November 2025 contains no report, motion or discussion on it [7]. She chaired the Finance and Governance Standing Committee throughout, while enforcement costs and resident dissatisfaction rose [3][6][37][38].
26. Her own motions. In the 2018 to 2022 term she brought two notices of motion: \$250,000 toward a biodiversity and climate program (May 7, 2018, amended to add public consultation), whose strategy won a CAMA award in June 2025, and a staff update on a BC Lottery Corporation casino as a revenue source after Victoria had declined one (March 11, 2019, carried) [9][10][11]. In this term she brought three: a letter supporting BC Hydro time-of-use rates (carried, April 24, 2023), the suites exemption (carried with Councillor Plant opposed, May 13, 2024), and a staff check-in on small-scale multi-unit housing heights and proximity to major roads when eight homes had been completed under it; an amendment to wait two years failed three to six, with her opposed (September 15, 2025) [13][14][15]. None concerns bylaw enforcement, complaint handling or the Section 57 process.
27. Who Council listens to. She voted against a lobbyist registry in February 2023 (five to four) and against adding one to the strategic plan in May 2025 (one to seven), then for a UBCM request for a provincial opt-in registry in June 2025. The Province declined. Saanich has no registry [16][17][18][19].

Background

28. Before Saanich she taught elementary school, chaired the Greater Victoria School Board, served on Oak Bay council from 1980 and as Mayor of Oak Bay from 1985 to 1990, hosted a CFAX talk show and led the Better Business Bureau of Vancouver Island [3][4]. She was elected MLA for Saanich South in 2001 and served in cabinet, lost to David Cubberley in 2005, and was elected to Saanich Council later that year at the invitation of then-mayor Frank Leonard [1][4][5]. She has sat on the Capital Regional District board since 2005.
29. She has chaired Saanich's Finance and Governance and Planning, Transportation and Economic Development committees, the CRD Finance Committee and the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, and served as a director of BC Transit, the Greater

Victoria Harbour Authority and Destination Greater Victoria. In 2024 she sat on the CRD Core Area Liquid Waste Management Committee, the Regional Water Supply Commission and CREST. In 2026 she is Vice Chair of the Victoria Regional Harbour Authority [2][3][6].

Conflicts and overlapping roles

30. The minutes from 2017 to 2026 record no declaration of conflict of interest by her [7]. In 2025 Saanich paid CRD Water Services \$12,059,921; she sat on the Regional Water Supply Commission in 2024 [6][23]. In 2025 Saanich paid Destination Greater Victoria \$303,126; the District's council page lists her as its Saanich-appointed director [8][23]. One member of Council has for years chaired Saanich's finance committee and the CRD's while sitting on regional bodies Saanich funds.

About this review

31. The author, Christopher Caddell, owns 938 Ambassador Avenue and is in active litigation with the District of Saanich. This report is separate from that litigation. It is an independent analysis produced with a search engine built for the litigation, which indexes every open Saanich Council meeting since September 2017 (495 meetings and 12.2 million transcribed words) together with the District's agendas, minutes and financial statements. Every statement of fact is tied to a public record listed at the end.

Sources

- [1] Saanich News, "Longtime councillor seeks to build on 20-year legacy on Saanich council" (August 12, 2026).
- [2] District of Saanich, 2026 General Local Election Candidate Profile Guide; Victoria Buzz, September 2026.
- [3] Times Colonist, "Susan Brice - Saanich council candidate 2022".
- [4] Wikipedia, "Susan Brice".
- [5] Wikipedia, "David Cubberley" and "Saanich South".
- [6] District of Saanich, 2024 Annual Report, Saanich Council 2024 Appointments.
- [7] District of Saanich Council, Committee of the Whole, Special Council and Public Hearing minutes, September 2017 to July 13, 2026, as held in the minutes archive.
- [8] District of Saanich, Meet Your Council, Susan Brice (saanich.ca), accessed October 2, 2026.
- [9] Council minutes, May 7, 2018, Notice of Motion from Councillor Brice, Strategic Initiatives Fund.
- [10] Council minutes, March 11, 2019, BCLC Gaming Facility Expression of Interest.
- [11] Council minutes, June 23, 2025, 2025 CAMA Awards of Excellence.
- [12] Council minutes, September 20, 2022, Support for Chief Administrative Officer's Performance Evaluations (Mersereau / de Vries), carried.
- [13] Council minutes, April 24, 2023, BC Hydro Optional Residential Time of Use Rate.
- [14] Council minutes, May 13, 2024, Secondary and Garden Suites Outside the Urban Containment Boundary.
- [15] Special Council minutes, September 15, 2025, Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing.
- [16] Times Colonist, "Saanich nixes idea of lobbyist registry" (February 2023).

- [17] Council minutes, May 12, 2025, Strategic Plan, Lobby Register.
- [18] Council minutes, June 9, 2025, UBCM, Lobbyist Registration.
- [19] Union of BC Municipalities, 2025 EB95 Lobbyist Registration, Provincial Response.
- [20] Council minutes, November 20, 2023, 938 Ambassador Avenue, 3838 Epson Drive and 4573 Prospect Lake Road.
- [21] Council minutes, June 23, 2025, Request to Cancel Notice on Title, 938 Ambassador Avenue.
- [22] Council minutes, June 24, 2024, Public Input and Secondary Suites Outside the Urban Containment Boundary, pp. 6 to 14.
- [23] District of Saanich, 2025 Statement of Financial Information, Schedule of Payments to Suppliers, pp. 57 and 58.
- [24] Council meeting video transcript, June 9, 2025 (clip 1048, approx. 1438 to 1452 s).
- [25] Council meeting video transcript, November 20, 2023, 4573 Prospect Lake Road (approx. 1700 to 3320 s); Council minutes, November 20, 2023, pp. 2 to 3.
- [26] Council minutes: July 4, 2022; November 20, 2023; June 9, 2025 (1845 Fairburn Drive, 323 Conway Road, 4029 Quadra Street); June 23 and July 14, 2025; statements of the Manager of Inspection Services, the Corporate Officer and the Chief Administrative Officer as recorded.
- [27] Council meeting video transcript, July 14, 2025 (approx. 3380 to 3405 s and 3995 to 4080 s).
- [28] District of Saanich, Report to Council, Notice on Title - 938 Ambassador Avenue, October 31, 2023 (A. Bains; prepared by the Manager of Inspection Services; endorsed by the CAO).
- [29] Council meeting video transcript, June 23, 2025 (approx. 1053 to 1140 s).
- [30] Council meeting video transcript, July 14, 2025 (approx. 4075 to 4080 s, 4186 to 4200 s and 4311 to 4470 s).
- [31] Council minutes, July 14, 2025, Request to Cancel Notice on Title, 938 Ambassador Avenue.
- [32] Council minutes, June 9, 2025, 1845 Fairburn Drive, Recommendation of Notice on Title.
- [33] Council minutes, May 3, 2021 and June 21, 2021, Bylaw No. 9694; Report of B. Reems, Housekeeping Bylaw Amendments, May 7, 2021.
- [34] Council meeting video transcript, November 20, 2023 (approx. 171 to 310 s).
- [35] Council meeting video transcript and minutes, July 4, 2022, 5390 Old West Saanich Road (approx. 1150 to 3115 s).
- [36] Council meeting video transcript, November 20, 2023, 4573 Prospect Lake Road (approx. 1700 to 3320 s); Council minutes, November 20, 2023, pp. 2 to 3.
- [37] District of Saanich Financial Plans 2019 to 2026, Net Budget by Function, Bylaw and Parking Enforcement, net actuals 2021 and 2025.
- [38] BC Stats, 2024 Saanich Resident Pulse Survey, April 2025, mean scores for 2021 and 2024.