

Commons Council Notes of Zoom Meeting Aug 4, 2020, 7pm

Acknowledgement of FN Traditional Territory

We acknowledge we are on the land of the Hul'q'umi'num' speaking Snuneymuw'x First Nation. Deb appreciated the remarkable job of responding to the pandemic from many First Nations.

Welcome & Check-in

Present: Jinny Hayes, Don Smardon (co-facilitator), Doug Scott, Maya Ruggles, Andreas Kahre, Diane Streeter, Dave Lightly (co-facilitator), Melissa Nobels, Carol Fergusson, Mary Ann Richards, Louise Amuir (notes), Bob Andrew, Brenda Fowler, Deb Ferens, Mark Roch, K Louise Vincent

Anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings is coming up on August 6 and 9th. We're closer than ever to midnight on the "doomsday clock".

20 min Discussion – Council Mandate

While sorting out stuff for the new website, Jinny noticed that there was a Council Mandate on the old website but none in the Current (2019) *Field Guide*. Here's what's on the (old) website:

Council Mandate

The Council helps to secure and protect the Gabriola Commons and create, in a prudent and ethical manner and in perpetuity, a community commons for the people of Gabriola.

Those attending Council have a mutually shared responsibility to pursue the Commons goal and uphold the Gabriola Commons Charter & Principles.

Does the Council need a mandate? Does it make sense for Council to set goals and evaluate these periodically like teams do?

Some others have been pondering the purpose of Council and comments follow:

- Liking the Task Force model to look at this sort of thing.
- Agree that Council doesn't require a mandate, but it does have a role. It would be good to have a clear idea of that the Council's role is. The language of the existing description in the *Field Guide* is a little esoteric.
- Council seems to be the place where we attempt to reach consensus on items on which multiple teams have input.

- Originally, Council was not conceived to have a decision making role. It is where people can evaluate reported information, rather than make consensus decisions. Some do think that Council is a decision making body.
- There is now an understanding that Council can make decision by consensus when needed.
- Needs a description rather than a mandate.
- Two things under discussion: content for the website and clarifying the role of Council. There is no need to rush: a task force could work on this for a couple of months over the winter. As the new website will be very easy to change, we can take our time and do the examination of the description later.
- This is longer than a 20 minute discussion. How are decisions made? Should open up a conversation about structure and governance.
- Decisions are taken at the teams in the spheres of their particular mandates. They come to Council to tell other teams about projects, decisions, etc., and if other teams or the entire Commons are affected, then Council may make a decision after all teams have had input, ie, information is shared at Council via a team, gets input, goes back out to teams who want to say something about it and discussion ensues at a subsequent Council meeting.
- Council is so wide open that we should probably hand out the governance structure for people to be able to look at ahead of time. Need to come together again and tighten up the governance structure (see the *Field Guide*).

ACTION ITEM – Strike task force after AGM; Bob, Dave, Maya, Louise, & Mark volunteered. Teams to discuss and get input to them.

Team and Task Force Reports & Discussion

Labyrinth (Mark)

Small group of eager rock team, still waiting on stones and gravel.

Long Range Planning (Deb)

Remind people that 2020 is the 15th anniversary of the beginning of the Gabriola Commons. Every five years we do a community event, but due to COVID we won't be doing one this year. But do want to hold the 15 year anniversary on the theme, Stewarding the Commons Today and Tomorrow. Team is looking at our use of space on the Commons, maybe upstairs be the Stewardship Centre, sharing with others; the Covenant Team has also been discussing this: could organize our stewardship under ecological, agricultural and community purposes of the Commons rather than current team structure. Ideas to look at in times of transition, for example, Kim and Judith are working on the idea of more play space for kids and families; outdoor wild play and picnic areas, to create lingerers.

Linda St Clair has moved off the island and we appreciate the strength of her contributions to the Commons over many years; this should be acknowledged to her.

Q: Maya reminded us of the Intergenerational Land-Based proposal made a few months ago. She will send to Deb and to Notetaker. [ED Note: **These were attached to March 2020 Council Notes**]. Who holds these ideas? LRP? LTC? Not sure where it sits at the moment.

Covenant Team (K Louise)

Intensive review of the three main proposed covenant documents. Still in dialogue with Agricultural Land Commission (who must approve the proposed covenant before it can be attached to the Land Title) and The Land Conservancy of BC (a potential Covenant Holder). Team is energized, hoping to present the Stewardship Plan this autumn or early New Year. Whether we find a covenant holder or not, we are coming to closure. The support of the ALC is important as farming on this ALR land must not be restricted, so we are making this very clear in a Formal Referral application.

South Gardens (Doug)

Nothing much to report. Looking wonderful, people harvesting. No theft this year except 4 garlic stalks. Relieved. Sent mandate around, but it didn't open for some people. Doug will send it again: **see Attachment A**.

COVID Task Force (Jinny)

Group is: Bob, Deb, Jinny, Kim

1. Thanks to Kim and Bob for new sign at Main Entrance saying that the Commons outdoor spaces are open for use.

2. Phase 3 Review

Everything going smoothly to date, no recommendations for any changes to the current Commons Phase 3 Plan. Will have to re-address what Phase 3 will look like when the weather turns rainy and cold through the fall & winter.

3. Outdoor Use

- PHC has requested to spray paint grass for social distancing; will respond saying we have no objections to use of a biodegradable product such as Krylon, chalk, flour.
- Request to use juicer: agreed this will be OK. (Juicer is stored in outer cupboard; sanitized between users, COVID precautions to be maintained).
- Sunday Music/Sundaze substitute by Tim Gambrill; asked to use Timberframe last Sunday, did not, but will be playing in open grassy area this Sunday for whomever shows up, 2- 6 pm. Good Covid planning with suitable announcements.

4. Community Kitchen: Sat workbees lunches are currently happening with various individuals bringing soup from home, including portable plates & cutlery kit. Requests for CK use for workbee lunches or other users to continue to go through Kitchen Stewards.

5. Poetry Gabriola Society Proposal for Yurt (see under Poetry Yurt, below)

Their request contains a Covid Plan and 3 requests for Property Stewardship attention.

Actions:

- Trustees have sent a first response to PGS informing them that further Commons discussion required specifically by Trustees, PST, and COVID TF.
- TF response: General support for the proposal as PGS has submitted their COVID Plan and we trust that they will continue to follow that if the dance program proceeds. As TF is not prepared to revise Phase 3 Plan at this time, washroom use is still restricted and will not be open to more users in the near future.

Gabriola Arts Council (Carol and Mary Ann)

Understand Commons is still deliberating about use of the land and amenities for Cultivate Festival. GAC is going to go ahead with booking the acts and if the Commons isn't available, will look elsewhere. Happy to field questions.

Q. With COVID, are musicians booking? Yes, there is some increased availability of musicians. If we're still in Phase 3 in summer 2021, we'll have to have groups of less than 50. Booking with lots of hope, because no one knows what's going to happen.

Q. The Commons as a location for Cultivate: what are the concerns? Who's making the decisions? Report from Trustees may answer or start that conversation.

Finance (Maya)

Presented pertinent figures from Year End (March 31st, 2020). Note that some financial documents (eg, the Balance Sheet, Income Statements & Team Funds) cannot be attached to these Notes, but will be available when the Financial Statements are posted prior to the October AGM, and also on request to finance@gabriolacommons.ca. Operating budget (**Attachment B** below) is dead on from projected budget. Projects and teams have their own budgets (also attached).

Additional \$14K has been added to Restricted Capital Fund. Total restricted \$111,000 in account. Assets are reconciled. And all the money is attached to some team.

- Reservoir Funds Remaining as of August 1, 2020: \$5922.04; keeping track on a bi-weekly basis, want to avoid overspending this fund.
- 2019/2020 FY Operating budget:
 - Revenues: \$42,372.20
 - Expenses: \$22,118.95
 - Over: \$20,253.25
- Team/Project spreadsheet: We need to do some work tightening up some of the final numbers, but we can say that there's an additional \$14,805 to Capital reserve funds this year.
- **Request for teams' budgets and/or wish-lists**; Finance will compile a recommendation on possible allocation of capital funds

Do we want to buy a Commons Zoom account @ \$20/month CAD for up to 9 hosts and up to 100 participants; Finance has been meeting via Zoom, but is interrupted every 40 minutes. Jinny has a paid account and can assist as necessary.

Q. What's needed to complete the reservoir? A. The next pour is next Saturday at 8:30 am. Then we need gutters, power to pump house and poetry yurt and eventually timber frame. No exact figures.

Q. What can we tell the community? A. We collected \$42K. Basically \$8K short. There is \$5K in the fund. Probably need \$10K

Poetry Yurt (Andreas)

Proposed Dance program as Mara can't run afterschool dance classes at regular venue, she wants to use the yurt. Logistical questions:

1. Toilet available? Porta potty available?
2. Power not as critical – the eventual circuit will be good. Now just a couple of lights are needed.
3. Need Wifi as some kids will participate online, and they need to know what they'll be doing in the Fall. Current Commons Telus Wifi signal doesn't reach the Yurt (Telus on Gabriola is residential only due to slow speed. Wifi can be installed at PG expense (Note: Shaw will charge PG their commercial rate).

- COVID plan good: the other issues need to go through 1-2 other teams. Maybe a hotspot is the answer? Property Stewardship Team meeting tomorrow. Finance needs to look at this. Does STC need to be involved? Poetry Gabriola has an MOU already. **All teams should have a chance to weigh in on wifi question. Wifi is a critical part of the project. It would be helpful to have a response at September Council.**

Long term question. Are there health concerns on the Commons re: Wifi?

Poetry Yurt COVID Plan and Proposal (sent to Trustees)

Poetry Gabriola has been approached by the Mara Gold Theatre Society, a Gabriola-based Not-for-profit performing arts group, with a proposal for a joint project titled 'Poetry in Motion'. The goal is to support young Gabriola dancers who have lost access to activities like dance classes and physical training during the pandemic, by offering a **year-long series of workshops** that combine movement and poetry, and culminate in one or several performances. Poetry Gabriola is very enthusiastic about the project, and as we have recently implemented a COVID protocol for the yurt, believe that this can be done safely, and to the benefit of the community.

In order to proceed, Mara Brenner, the artistic director of the theatre company has identified three requirements, which PGS would be happy to facilitate, and which of course require the Commons' agreement and support, and we are writing to present our proposal.

1) Toilet facilities.

We are of course aware of the restriction on the use of the Commons' washrooms, and anticipate that these may continue for some time to come. There is, as you know, a portable toilet located to the North of the timber frame building. This was originally installed for the Mid-Week Market, and PGS is currently looking into the cost of taking over the rental and the cleaning expense. Unless the Commons would prefer a different arrangement, we would propose to limit the use of it to the youth participating in the project, as this would minimize the frequency of servicing.

2) Electricity.

As part of last year's infrastructure development, the extension cords supplying electricity to the yurt were replaced with proper conduit, which now terminates at the entrance. The only remaining step is to install an electrical panel that will allow safe power delivery to the yurt. PGS is of course prepared to share or cover the cost, and we have identified the location for the panel.

3) WiFi

Due to COVID restrictions, the number of youth physically present during workshops and rehearsals will be limited to six. This means that internet access will be critical to allow others to participate in the project. As you know, currently WiFi is available only at the main house, and as we understand it, the distance to the other buildings is too great to be reliably offset by a signal booster. Since there is now an electrical access point behind the goat barn, the physical infrastructure for a second WiFi station is in place, and a modem could be installed by Shaw within a week. PGS would be prepared to take on the cost of installation and pay for the service, with the understanding that in the future this could be shared with the kitchen, the goat barn and the sustainability centre, in a mutually beneficial addition to the existing MOU.

The one constraint we are operating under is the time line, as youth are returning to their fall schedule, which means that these items would have to be in place by the beginning of September at the latest, and approval in principle would need to be in place by August 15th. Poetry Gabriola is prepared to do as much of the work as needed, but of course it will require supervision from the Commons. We are submitting this proposal in the hope that the trustees will support it, and look forward to creating an opportunity for Gabriola youth to explore and learn new skills in a safe environment.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have. The designated yurt custodian is Melissa Nobels, as you know, but the entire board of Poetry Gabriola can be reached any time. Sincerely, Melissa Nobels, Andreas Kahre on behalf of the board of Poetry Gabriola Society

Trustees Report (Bob)

Trustees Report to Council – August 2020 (from July 21st and 31st meetings)

1. We are exploring ways to move beyond merely acknowledging that we live, work, and play on unceded land of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. We've begun bringing Indigenous voices, in the form of articles, websites and postings, etc., to our meetings. Here are the pieces introduced at our July meetings:

- <https://www.snuneymuxw.ca/governance>

- <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/seventh-generation-principle>

- *First Nations Traditional Values* by Floy C. Pepper/Creek and William A. White/Coast Salish. 1996

2. Filling roles previously held by Stuart: Linda will become our 4th signer once set up with the Credit Union; Don will be named as Secretary for Society Act purposes – Danielle, Linda and Don will share the Secretary responsibilities.

3. We discussed the PHC grant and how it relates to North Garden irrigation and proposed greenhouse expansion. Questions focus on process/lease terms, funding conditions, use and ownership. Our Trustee-PHC liaisons, David and Don, will bring questions to their next check-in with Brenda and Bodil. We'll continue to report back on this item as it unfolds.

4. We are proceeding with Sync for our new electronic file storage system. Data migration from Dropbox to Sync will happen soon. [Ed Note: www.sync.com/, a Toronto-based company]

5. We received a proposal from Poetry Gabriola, including 3 distinct requests regarding electrical and Wifi. We discussed some implications and are asking for feedback from Finance and Property teams before composing a formal response. We will also have to look at how to incorporate any changes into our MOU with PGS. {Ed Note: also Covid Task Force]

6. We did not have time to discuss the Communications Strategy documents from the COM team.

TRUSTEE CONTRIBUTION TO DISCUSSION OF CULTIVATE

Several concerns arose for us, including:

1. hard to reach consensus with Commons as a whole, partly because of organizational fatigue, reduced human capacity and energy, and the necessities of social distancing

2. hosting Cultivate on the Commons will commit many teams, not only the Trustees, to working with GAC in various ways (negotiating agreements, ground preparation and clean-

up, attending to water, energy and other needs, COVID and other safety protocol, etc.). We, the Commons, need to arrive at this decision together through consensus (at Council).

3. a sense that we are struggling to communicate well as a Commons, and a desire to be deliberate and wise about what we take on so that we can direct more of our (limited) resources to the Commons, to (re)build better relations, governance practices, and a resilient Commons.

4. the Trustee Team has responded to GAC: reserving requested dates, committing the Commons in no other ways, and describing the challenges we're facing. GAC has responded with respect and appreciation; they will be researching other locations, though the Commons is still their first choice. We'll continue to be in touch with GAC staff and board as things unfold, and report back to Commons Council. And, of course, GAC is welcome to attend Council anytime.

Q. South Gardens Irrigation project still under discussion? Brenda will fill in at her report.

Q. Has a formal declaration of appreciation gone to Linda St Clair? Not yet.

PHC (Brenda)

Busy trying to plan the Fall. Inside and social distancing not compatible. Red Cross sent PPE masks for volunteers, staff and some participants. Staff and volunteers are training on masks and gloves. Concerned we won't have enough PPE, but better than none at all. 10 people allowed at a time. Managed social distancing by tables and chairs. Might go to painting the areas in the future, see how it goes, we'll let you know if the request is going forward. We thought irrigation was off the table, but happy to re-open if wanted.

Communication Team report (Jinny)

1. As July report to Council was very brief, to follow up:

Everyone received three COM documents twice: Prior to July Council mtg and also attached to the Notes from that meeting. These are:

a) Commons Messaging Guidelines (*Talking about the Commons*) and

b) Communication Plan (*Building a Strong Commons Identity*). We await feedback from individuals and teams on these two guides; perhaps we should consider them OK unless we hear otherwise?

c) COM Mandate: Could we consider this OK as of tonight?

2. Given this mandate to promote communications between the Commons and the community and also within the Commons, we're hearing a number of concerns, such as:

- announcing Zoom Council meetings: where to advertise, early notice

- getting news out by using team reps
- Council notes not circulating widely
- fairly low readership of the Communiqué: 456 people subscribe, 216 opened the last issue. What to do?
- rumbles about our team needing to do more, better. I feel we're doing all we can with the resources at hand. It would be great to have more volunteers with a variety of skills to take on improvements (currently have 3 functioning members).

3. Website: Colleen McCarthy and Jinny have been working hard on the new site. For now, I would like to thank those of you who have been providing me with input and revisions of old content as I've requested it.

Websites are very different now than they were when our present one was written, people browse them differently, quickly, and want info in smaller "sound bites". So you will find that the new site will look and contain different images and ideas than the old one. We will possibly be going live this month and the site will NOT be perfect, we don't expect it to be. We DO expect lots of input about what you like and want and do not like and want, so feel free to keep me informed. ASAP.

Also, we continue to seek ideas about content and photos, so please get these to me at communications@gabriolacommons.ca.

- Mandate review: no objections.
 - Some teams not receiving info from reps; need to look at this in more detail. Need better communication on the Commons. Need more people and better resources. We all have a responsibility for good communication.
 - Website going live this month! Colleen is an amazing resource; glad we hired a professional. The new website is not going to be perfect because we want input!
- Q: Old and new available at same time? No, that would require everyone to set their browsers for both, or one or the other, so the new one will be "it" when it goes live, though everything from the old site has been saved and can be accessed if required.
Bookings will all be done differently and more completely on the new website.

Tool Library (Diane)

Have been open now for 6 weeks. Having a tool sale. Need \$2K for insurance.

Next 20 minute discussion. Maybe have a deeper discussion of selected team reports

Next Minute takers: Trustees

Appreciations – Deb appreciated how conscientious people are about COVID

Attachment A: South Gardens Mandate

Commons South Gardens Role and Responsibilities of Coordinating Committee

The Mandate of the South Commons Garden is:

- To uphold the vision of the Gabriola Commons and the Commons Charter
- To protect and steward the South Commons Community Garden, democratically and equitably, for the benefit and enjoyment of the community of gardeners
- To preserve the ecology of the Gabriola Commons
- To promote sustainable agricultural practices that relate to community gardening

To fulfil this mandate, the South Commons Garden and gardeners are served by a team of volunteers elected to the Coordinating Committee at the Annual General Meeting, generally held in November. Approximately eight Committee members are elected, and elected members normally serve for two years. To provide diversity the terms for approximately half the Committee members conclude each year, thereby ensuring that approximately half the Committee changes each year; and to provide continuity approximately half the Committee members continue to serve for the following year. Re-nomination and re-election are permitted.

The Committee meets approximately monthly to establish policies and plans for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the South Commons Garden, and these meetings are open to all member gardeners.

The Committee:

- Promotes an open, friendly and courteous community culture in which member rights and responsibilities are defined by, agreed to, understood, and respected by all members
- Coordinates and facilitates broad member involvement in sharing the responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the South Gardens
- Allocates plots to member gardeners in an equitable manner, in exchange for contributions from the member gardeners; plots are normally retained from year to year unless a gardener requests a different lot that happens to be vacant
- Allocates vacant plots to other residents of Gabriola who request an allotment
- Supports and mentors South Commons gardeners
- Promotes a successful community garden in which all allotments are cultivated, and both allotments and the common garden infrastructure are tidy and well maintained
- Provides a link to the broader Gabriola Commons that owns the land we nurture
- Supports rotation of Committee members to provide variety, diversity and broadly shared responsibility in caring for the gardens

Attachment B:

GABRIOLA COMMONS FOUNDATION - 2019-2020 FISCAL YEAR
Comparison to Budget - Operating

	Budget	Monthly budget	Apr19- Mar20 Actual
Revenue:			

CAFT	21,859.00			21,419.00
Canada Helps	1,751.86			2,473.00
Personal Donations	1,947.31			573.00
Other	<u>1,137.26</u>			<u>4,134.00</u>
	26,695.43	-	-	28,599.00

Interest revenue	243.93			317.90
PHC Hydro	2,676.00			2,710.00
PHC rent	9,600.00 #1			9,600.00
GST Rebate	1,202.15			1,145.30
Total available revenue	<u>40,417.51</u>	-	-	<u>42,372.20</u>

Operating Expenses

Other				400.00
Accounting & Legal	2,370.00			2,472.84
Advertising & Promotion	379.60			154.06
Bank charges	349.61			519.40
Dues	697.25			653.99
Insurance	5,907.40			6,451.56
Office	1,072.13			1,104.08
Internet and Telephone	1,191.25			1,095.50
Supplies	75.66			101.91
Utilities - Hydro	7,076.04			7,252.07
Utilities - Other		#2		124.16
GST expense	1,202.15			1,145.30
Repairs & Maintenance				644.08
Total Expenses	<u>20,321.09</u>	-	-	<u>22,118.95</u>
Over/Short	<u>20,096.42</u>			<u>20,253.25</u>

NOTES:

2. Garbage Collection/Water