

Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)

www.gabriolacommons.ca

Notes of Meeting of January 4, 2022 - Zoom Meeting

Facilitator: Lino Vella Gregory for Bookings

Recorder: Judith Roux for Sharing the Commons Team

Also Present: Jinny Hayes, K. Louise Vincent, Deb Ferens, Maya Ruggles, Bob Andrew, Don Smardon, Shelagh Huston, David Lightly, Heather Menzies, Brenda Joy, Nancy Hetherington-Peirce, Brenda Fowler.

AGENDA

Welcome & Agenda Adjustment (Lino)

Lino made a few Zoom participation suggestions.

Acknowledgements: Omitted by mistake.

Follow-up from previous meeting

- On-going collaboration with Gabriola Arts Council on Cultivate 2022 (Liaison team: Bob Andrew, Doug Scott, Heather Menzies, Carol Fergusson (GAC))
 - Holding Commons Council by Zoom during COVID - Alternatives unsatisfactory.
- Decision: continue with Zoom, reviewing each month.

Items to Carry Forward to Teams for next Council Meeting

1. Bring further thoughts on a stewardship model for caring for the Commons
2. Team input to Communications Team about the Logo and finding a Canadian Website hosting service
- 3.

January Discussion Topic:

Stewardship Covenant Transition Plan (Deb Ferens for the Covenant Team)

The draft proposal is attached.

Brief introduction to the framework of the Covenant: The Gabriola Commons, a place of natural beauty and agricultural potential, embraced by and cared for by the whole community, has been the focus of a dedicated group working over 10 years on writing a legal **covenant** to protect it in all its facets. The Draft Covenant outlines the 3 areas of protection:

ecological significance, a working agricultural landscape and multi-purpose community benefit.

To access the Gabriola Commons Draft Covenant:

<https://www.gabriolacommons.ca/governance/>

Or select "Governance" at top of Commons webpage and scroll down to the Covenant

Attached to the Covenant are two key documents:

1. a **Baseline Report**, an extensive description of the ecological and agricultural features and structures
2. a **Stewardship Agreement**, defining the **care** of all aspects of the weaving together of land and community. It is important to recognize the intention in the words: "care for " rather than "use". This is about creating reciprocal relationships with the land and people central to decision-making.

Several stages are included in the Stewardship Agreement:

- the creation of a **Covenant Stewardship Team** committing to **create a mandate** (based on the template included in the Covenant). and future development of a **3 year Stewardship Plan** as stewards of the Commons.

The first **Stewardship Plan**, based on values (see copy on website) will contain the steps toward the development of a **Stewardship Centre**, intended as a welcoming "hub" open to all community individuals and organizations wanting to participate.

It was suggested to include community input at a helpful point in the process. The first step toward presenting the Covenant began with a 20-minute presentation to Commons Council in Spring, 2021.

Introducing a Stewardship Covenant Transition Plan for the Commons

Task Group:

In June, 2021 a Task group (including the Covenant Team (COV), the Long Range Planning Team (LRP) and the Learning Opportunities Team (LOT) brought together a Commons Stewardship Proposal based on the 3 perspectives of the Covenant (ecological, agricultural and community focus). From this Task group is emerging a **Transition Plan** guiding the Commons toward a model based on stewardship, including the concept of a **Commons Stewarding Centre** and the inclusion of an **Elder Space**, recognizing and developing our relationship with the Snuneymuxw First Nation and offering a potential for further land-based learning.

Acknowledgements:

Guided by an ethic of care, we commit to healing our relations with First Nations. We acknowledge that our relationship with Snuneymuxw First Nation and this land is integral to the fulfillment of our Commons Covenant and the actualization of a Stewardship Plan.

The Task Group honours the founders of the Commons, including the Amazing Grace Ecological Society (AGES), for their initial purchase of the Gabriola Commons. The generosity of many continues to contribute to the vibrancy of the Gabriola Commons: a place where land and people meet.

Summary: Information about the current Draft Covenant

- The **Covenant** outlines the 3 areas of protection: ecological significance, a working agricultural landscape and multi-purpose community benefit.
- The Covenant includes a **Baseline Report** and **Stewardship Agreement** which includes a Stewardship Plan Template.
- The Covenant has been approved by the Agricultural Land Commission for registration.
- The Covenant Team is working with TLC (The Land Conservancy) in Victoria on the prospect of TLC being the Covenant Holder.
- The first **Stewardship Plan** may be required as part of registering the Covenant on title.
- The Covenant Team continues its work on following through with a Covenant Holder and any other details to ensure that the Covenant is registered on title.

Steps toward creating a Stewardship Plan

- Initiate the creation of a **Covenant Stewardship Team** (including creating a **mandate** for the Team)
- Develop a **3 year Stewardship Plan** with clear language and action based on the **Stewardship Template** as included in the Covenant
- Include in the first Stewardship Plan steps toward the development of a **Stewardship Centre**, intended to welcome community; support diversity, equity and inclusion; and facilitate deep learning, relationship-building and collaboration.

These steps would also explore how the Gabriola Commons can play an active role in supporting a journey of Truth and Reconciliation on Gabriola Island. A Stewardship Centre and Elder Space has the potential to open up opportunities for discussion, creating the conditions for further land-based learning and collaboration.

Further items for consideration:

- Timeline and costs
- Communication, community collaboration, consultation and learning
- Organizational changes associated with the Covenant and Stewardship Plan

Discussion: lively discussion followed:

- on the nature of the Stewardship Plan: How does it differ from the Covenant Stewardship

Team's mandate? Response: the two are very closely aligned. The template for the Plan exists and is in the Covenant. This helps to translate the plan into working documents. The Stewardship mandate is to implement the plan.

- What do we need to do now? Response: We need to invite Commons members to take part in the Stewardship Team. The Agricultural Land Commission has given its approval of the draft Covenant. We have a responsibility to move on.

- How to make participation happen?

- Is the transition planning an opportunity to "pull" the Commons through a paradigm shift? Response: we are holding space for new relationships with the community, with "buy-in" from all. The Transition Group's role will be to facilitate the Stewardship Team into existence.

- Council is central to seeing the Stewardship Plan take shape. Once we have a mandate it will spark action-oriented stewardship.

- There is an opportunity here to re-inspire people with the understanding that the Commons model is very different from the standard business model and that the relationship to the land is critical.

- "Things that are sitting around for a long time can rot." Response: It takes a long time to grow a tree. Its strength is in the slowness of its growth. Time is required for creating the relationships to land and each other. The paradigm shift referred to has been worked on at the Commons for over 10 years. It took this time to learn to write the Covenant. Heather's book refers to the centuries-long tradition of commons in the world.

This is clearly a subject to return to! Come to the February Council with your thoughts!

5. Team Reports

Cultivate Festival Liaison Group (Bob Andrew)

- Planning is moving forward well.
- Deb added that the Trustees have been developing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Gabriola Arts Council on the 2022 Cultivate Festival.
 - the financial section of the 2021 MoU has gone to the Finance Committee for review
 - Finance Team has been in communication with the Liaison Group and GAC, updating the financial section of the MoU from 2021 and assessing the financial details of the space to be used this summer.
 - Liaison Group and GAC will provide any other changes in space use required for the 2022 event. (Heather Menzies has joined Doug Scott and Bob Andrew in the Liaison Group).

Final draft of the 2022 agreement will be reviewed by the Trustees and shared with teams and Council before signing with GAC.

Property Stewardship Team (Bob Andrew)

- Developing a plan for the second floor of the Timberframe.
- Been working in the beautiful new walkway, removal of the hedge; Design Group is part of PST.
- Pipes did not freeze!
- Suggested that workbees be conducted with better distancing Singular projects, no lunches
- Thanks to Lino for great work getting the Workshop organized and spiffed up.

Covenant Team (K. Louise Vincent)

- Meetings coming up:
 - the Stewardship Transition Work Group is meeting at 12:30 on Wednesday Jan. 19 to review the next steps.
 - the Covenant Team is meeting to prepare for a meeting with The Land Conservancy on Friday Jan. 21 at 2 pm
 - the meeting with TLC and the COV Team on Tuesday, Jan. 25 at 9:30
 - Thursday Feb. 3 at 1:30 to debrief the meeting with TLC.
- Up-coming in Spring: a review of documentation in each of the Commons polygons to update the Baseline report; date TBA.

Transition Group (K. Louise Vincent)

Group will meet on January 19 at 12.30 to address next steps from this evening's discussion of Stewardship.

Bookings (Maya Ruggles)

Contact Bookings for current information about booking the Commons:

bookings@gabriolacommons.ca.

Communications (Jinny Hayes)

- Mary Wilson has recently joined the COM Team, so a meeting of the threesome will be held next week. Also, Erin Mancor has volunteered to do our FaceBook posts.
- Rackcards: Still not printed or even drafted.
- Revisit the Logo which Council charged us to do after two years' trial. Tabled for next meeting; all input welcome.
- SiteGround service for the website will be due in 1.5 years: get more info to help team input on whether to stick with this (a US-based multinational).
- Budget: Did review and submitted to Maya.
- Sounder articles: No action.
- Our Commons was the featured member in the October issue of Land Trust Alliance's electronic newsletter. Please see:
 - <https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?u=25cdf5f4bc131477dcf71611c&id=74a44b815f>
- Next meeting: Jan 12 at 1 pm on Zoom

Covid Task Group (Jinny Hayes)

- will meet Jan 10 at 4.30 to discuss implications of any new Public Health Orders related to Omicron, etc.

Trustees (Dave Lightly)

- have had one handover meeting between old and new Trustees
- have organized their roles (see website); Dave is new Secretary.

Farm Team Judith Roux

Last summer's squash is still being prepared for the workbee soup chefs. Thanks to Dave Arnell.

The Kitchen Garden is still yielding beets. Planning for the spring includes improvements to the soil with deliveries of manure by Heather.

- *Saturday workbees* are still continuing (except for days of heavy snow). The much-appreciated soup lunches are suspended temporarily due to the Covid Omicron variant.

North Gardens still has space for those interested in an allotment for the coming year. Contact Patrick (rouxmackay@gmail.com). Huge appreciation for Neil Ballash's long years of care for the North Gardens.

South Gardens (Brenda Joy)

- Fall registration for allotments is a new approach, allowing potential gardeners to work through the winter
- all plots are assigned except two and there are 2 people wait-listed.

Finance (Maya Ruggles)

- Five members: Suzi, Don, Deb, Maya, Mary (new Treasurer)
- Currently reviewing procedures
- Insurance has gone up, mostly because the property value has increased; options are being looked at.

Learning Opportunities Team (Maya Ruggles)

1. LOT is collaborating with the Intergenerational Land-based Learning research team (GES/SFU) to organize and support a Canoe Steaming event on the Commons
 - date TBA; aiming for a weekday in late Feb or early March
 - Beau Wagner is currently carving this canoe at the Gabriola Elementary School; steaming the canoe is an important, sacred part of creating a traditional canoe, which offers a rich opportunity to learn about Indigenous, Snuneymuxw traditional culture
 - LOT's role is to support this event by: being the connection with the broader Gabriola Commons and take care of the Commons-related tasks such as booking space, contacting teams, and reporting at Council; paying attention, as we participate in planning/attending this event, to

what we can learn and apply to the other events we're planning ('Settler Grief' and 'Commons Book')

- LOT will be in touch, specifically with PST, Bookings, Trustees/Finance and Council
- LOT gratefully invites curiosity from other teams/groups about this event

2. LOT is exploring other collaborations for learning events through 2022/2023

- 3 examples:
 - Land Acknowledgements
 - Working in Truth towards Reconciliations: a 2-part series on Settler Grief, Anti-racism, and Allyship
 - Discussion series on Fair, Free & Alive: the Insurgent Power of the Commons
- as planning continues, LOT will be in touch with various teams, and report at Council each month
- LOT gratefully invites curiosity and gifts from other teams/groups about these events

3. If you are interested in joining the Learning Opportunities Team, please email learning@gabriolacommons.ca.

Next meetings of LOT are Jan 12th at 10:30 am and February 9th (we're planning to make our meetings the second Wed of each month at 10:30am).

6. Affiliate Reports

People for e a Health Community (Brenda Fowler)

- there are Covid Vaccination Clinics this week & next
- Spirit Festival Dinner went well despite need to change pick-ups and deliveries at the last minute
- Seniors' programs are cancelled to the end of January (so boosters will have time to work)
- Grocery Program needs volunteers
- Jan 6 there will be a remembrance for all who died during the last calendar year; organized by Home Hospice Group.
- Yesterday, there were only 18 children at school

7. Additional Items Arising

Late inclusion from Judith: Please shop at Nesters' this month to help the Commons build picnic tables for the community to use when summer finally happens.

8. Closing (Lino)

Next CCC meeting: February 1, 2022 at 7 pm. by Zoom

Next Council Facilitator: Lino Vella Gregory, facilitating for 2nd month (linoveegee@hotmail.com)

Next Note Taker: Process Team (peace@gabriolacommons.ca OR dlightly@shaw.ca)

Previous suggestion: Agenda to show the e.address of Note Taker for continuity

Remarks and Appreciations:

Appreciation of Lino's willingness to continue facilitating for the February Council

ATTACHMENT

Proposal: Introducing a Stewardship Covenant Transition Plan for the Commons Oct 21, 2021 DRAFT

Task Group:

Covenant Team (COV), Learning Opportunities Team (LOT), Long Range Planning (LRP)

Acknowledgements:

Guided by an ethic of care, we commit to healing our relations with First Nations. We acknowledge that our relationship with Snuneymuwx First Nation and this land is an integral thread to be interwoven with the Common's transition into a Stewardship Plan.

The Task Group honours the founders of the Commons, including the Amazing Grace Ecological Society (AGES), for their initial purchase of the Gabriola Commons. The generosity of many continues to contribute to the vibrancy of the Gabriola Commons: a place where land and people meet.

Background:

- > Conservation covenants are traditionally used to protect agricultural and ecological values on land. Covenants are registered on title and run with the land even as a property changes ownership. It is in the public interest to protect, preserve and steward the land as a community commons.
- > The pending Covenant will place another layer of protection on the land that upholds the vision and practice of stewardship to stand the test of time. The Covenant document includes a Stewardship Agreement and Baseline Report.
- > The Covenant outlines the 3 areas of protection: ecological significance, a working agricultural landscape and multi-purpose community benefit.
- > The Baseline Report outlines an inventory of the entire physical property's ecological biodiversity to be protected: soils, waterways and forests; gardens, orchards and areas with agricultural potential; and the multipurpose buildings and amenities that serve the community for recreational, cultural and educational purposes. The Baseline Report is a key reference document of background information about the land and facilities.
- > The Stewardship Agreement outlines a commitment to adhere to the Covenant provisions with a Stewardship Plan. It is a significant contribution toward environmental and agricultural protection.
- > A Stewardship Plan contains detailed stewardship tasks that achieve the ecological, agricultural and social goals through community stewardship and participation. It serves to strengthen community values that sustain connection to the Land.

> The Covenant is approved by the Agricultural Land Commission for registration. Upon registration, the Stewardship Agreement as part of the Covenant, will be a permanent and legal document integral to the Commons legacy. This legacy is rooted in historical and contemporary legitimacy as realized by centuries of common land around the globe existing outside predominant cultural values of colonial relationship and ownership.

> After more than a decade of expansive development and community use, it is time for the Commons to transition into the implementation of a Stewardship Plan that upholds the protection of the Land and its amenities in a relationship of sustainability, respect and care.

Rationale of a Stewardship Plan:

> Property ownership is the dominant society view of land as a commodity. If the community *owns* the land, the relationship is framed as a monetized, possessive and a human centered sense of rights over the property. If the community *uses* the land, the user is the active agent and the land is largely dormant and shapeless.

> The Commons is a place where *land and people meet* rather than *own* and *use*. It is the reciprocal relationship between the land and people in which the main and abiding interest is to hold the land undiminished and to share responsibility for the benefits it bestows.

> Coming together with the lens on the land as described above, we practice trust and find community working together to transcend conflicting tensions inherent in balancing the ecological, agricultural and cultural values of the land.

> This proposal highlights Land Stewardship of the Gabriola Commons as formalized by the Covenant and the Stewardship Agreement.

> This will require the creation of the first Stewardship Team and Plan as introduced in the Covenant and Stewardship Agreement.

> The Stewardship Agreement and Plan guides the usages and practices of stewarding a community commons in accordance with the provisions stated in the Covenant and Baseline Report. The goal is the care of rather than use of the Land. This will move the Commons out of a landlord management model and lighten the administrative weight of these responsibilities.

> The values inherent in the Stewardship Plan describe the actions necessary to implement the long term vision and daily care of the Land. The Stewardship Plan forwards best practices around care, resiliency and co-creative culture.

> The stewardship of the Commons moves beyond the Stewardship Team to inform and lead community in the vision and stewardship of the Commons by the larger community.

> The Stewardship Plan creates conditions for learning and practicing how to steward. This realizes the leadership, commitment and vision integral to a Commons situated in both a local community and a global context.

Steps toward a Stewardship Plan:

> Initiate the creation of a Covenant Stewardship Team

> Develop a 3 year Stewardship Plan with clear language and action based on the Stewardship Template as included in the Covenant.

> Include in the first Stewardship Plan steps toward the development of a Stewardship Centre, the intention of which would be to welcome community; support diversity, equity and inclusion; facilitate deep learning, relationship building and collaboration. These steps would also explore how the Gabriola Commons can play an active role in supporting a journey of Truth and Reconciliation on Gabriola Island.

Grounded in a commitment to walk the path of Truth and Reconciliation, we propose preparing the space so that it feels welcoming for Snuneymuxw First Nations, the First Stewards of this land. A Stewardship Centre and Elder Space has the potential to open up opportunities for discussion, creating the conditions for further land-based learning and collaboration.

Items to consider with the transition:

> Timeline and costs

> Communication, community collaboration, consultation and learning

> Organizational changes associated with the Covenant and Stewardship Plan