

Commons Council Notes – July 5, 2022

Present: Bob Andrew, Brenda Fowler, Deb Ferens, Jinny Hayes, Judith Roux, Mary Wilson, Patty Mertz, Patrick Roux, Robbie Huston, Brenda Joy, Doug Scott

Facilitator: Heather Menzies for the Covenant Team

Notes: K. Louise Vincent for the Covenant Team

1. **Agenda:** approved

2. **Land Acknowledgement** - Bob

Jinny – attended Land Acknowledgement Workshop- suggestion of offering acknowledgement at the end of the meeting.

3. **Food Security Discussion – Mary Wilson**

Intro: There is a lot of people working on the island with food, farmers, Agi Hall, PHC, individual gardening and work. There is an upcoming forum on Food Security, a concept that is not new to us but what does it mean to us? We may not know or know different things.

Round One: What does food security mean to you?

- knowledge of growing locally accessible food
- local and seasonal, food for future generations, capacity for growing
- global perspective, under attack from war, conflict, climate change, connects and affects everyone
- food security is attached to water
- outcome of food security, lack of hunger and health if we don't have it, the opposite if we have it
- enabling and empowering people to grow and preserve food so it is sustainable
- access to food, food equity, social justice, understanding the power of food
- food insecurity as hunger and solutions to hunger, teach the man to fish, who doesn't have food, long term solutions, food security for ourselves in personal household and larger community
- if a community can produce enough food to feed itself, doesn't preclude trade
- if there isn't enough food to get around not likely to get past Vancouver
- knowledge of seed keeping, food keeping; every direction is impacted, with climate change less successful, need to address the whole system
- new ways for the new climate
- that every single soul has adequate nutrition at all levels

- if there is a problem with the ferry what would we do?
- everyone having their own garden plot
- globally timely, critical starvation
- safe food
- end of time, interesting points, from personal to global, imperiled nature in face of disruptions, small and momentous
- what should this mean to the Commons?
- big project ahead from GAC and Agi Hall
- PHC food security report [Ed Note: Some copies available from Brenda F at this meeting]
- coming back to this land, covenant, agriculture and food is key component, significant part of the unrolling
- key pillar that PHC and the Commons share, maybe key to more collaboration
- Islands Trust is to bring forward an agriculture policy re: limitation to farm size.

ACTION: Follow up discussion next Council: Mary's second question: What is the Commons' role in furthering food security on Gabriola?

4. **Patrick** - Please send notices for Fall Workshops to the Community Kitchen: patrick.henri.marcel@gmail.com

5. Appeal to have a **Summer Commons Garage Sale** [Ed Note: 2 people dropped in to request this, did not identify themselves and left the meeting]

6. Team Reports

South Garden Parking Lot Proposal (Doug Scott)

Presented by Patty Mertz – please see proposal attached (prepared by Doug Scott) attached

- Has donor consent in principle for donation (\$20K) toward appropriate gravel and extension of pathway to make it usable – lobbied community support from Gabriola Recreation Society, residents, community FaceBook forums and so on.
- “winter mudpit” – needs suitable walkway.

Next steps:

1. Consensus approval to move to next steps with Patrick standing aside and K. Louise and Jinny expressing concerns regarding process: a) Lobbying the public and donor before presenting project idea to the South Gardeners and Sharing the Commons teams, other Commons teams including the Commons Foundation Trustees, Finance Team, b) legal agreements and MOUs are the responsibilities of the Commons Foundation Trustees.

2. Necessary to tap into knowledge of those at the Commons who know the land well. Review with Property Stewardship Team and Patrick regarding details around drainage.
3. Doug as point person.
4. Geotech consult already completed with (Doug's partner – see proposal).
5. Trustees and Finance Team: Memorandum of Understanding and donation.

Question regarding concern about water flow: Where is the water is coming from? Concerns regarding elevation and level of gradient to work with?

Covenant Team (K. Louise)

Waiting to hear back from The Land Conservancy in Victoria – will have an answer soon. Meeting with Maya to do a budgeting session on July 13th.

Covid Group (Deb)

1) Current Public Health Orders reviewed - Last update April 2022

- Proof of vaccine no longer required

- Follow communicable disease prevention guidance with emphasis on prevention applicable to all communicable diseases, personal responsibility (choice of mask & distancing), ventilation.

Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

<https://vrc.bc.ca/vrc-communicable-disease-prevention-plan#:~:text=Instruct%20staff%20to%20stay%20home%20and%20follow%20BC,dispensers%20are%20available%20throughout%20the%20club%20and%20office>

2) Commons use of space:

- Continue to support the outdoor use of Commons Spaces (Timberframe, Reservoir Stage open grassy areas, etc.)

- Farmhouse: in use as rental since beginning of March, but with limited booking capacity.

Priority given to Commons Teams and Projects and regular ongoing non-profit organizations.

3) Signage - Update the signs with the updated PHO as of April

4) Next Steps

- Not quite ready to end COVID Group work.

- will meet in Sept after the busy summer and as we go into fall/winter season and reassess pandemic situation which is changing rapidly – following communicable disease guidelines – still limited rental – update with current signage for following... report forthcoming

Property Stewardship Team (Bob)

- Timber Frame – upstairs accessible -150 amp power.

- Appreciation for all the work – successful work bees – Sharon Arnell serving lunches – 27 people at the last work-bee

- Doug wants to know ahead of time if possible what tasks and tools for workbees

- Lots done due to collective surge around festival – Kim's landscaping appreciated – more welcoming – well laid out to create good flow and balance.

Cultivate Liaison Report (Heather)

There were 3 work bees prepping the Commons for Cultivate, with Kim Kasasian in particular coming up with a number of important landscaping jobs that helped provide a lovely welcoming entrance way to the Cultivate Festival, and Bob coordinating this with other projects arising from Gabriola Arts Council's requests. The last workbee drew 27 people, most of them GAC volunteers. Sharon Arnell (with help from David) put on a magnificent lunch at short notice, with Betty picking a big pot of strawberries from the kitchen garden, and everyone had a great time.

Re: the Festival itself, it seemed to be the best 'fit' with the Commons ethos so far, with a large central common area where in addition to the food vendors and the craft/ artists, there was a stage of free music, and a nicely groomed stretch of grass lined with magnificent large sculptures by local artists leading to the poetry yurt (which exhibited art and had free events too).

The feedback from the people who used the Community Kitchen was positive, with everyone reporting great satisfaction in the space and how well maintained and appointed it is.

There will be a GAC/ Commons Cultivate meeting on Thursday this week so there will be a further account at next Council.

PHC (Brenda)

- Student (Toby) primarily in garden, office and Namaste
- Hot lunch program over and great success, student appreciation re contributions
- Preparing for extreme heat and cold weather – in conjunction with churches on the island.

Trustees (Mary)

- Fiscal and legal ongoing business matters
- Annual retreat at end of July.

Finance team (Mary)

- Adjusting entries for year-end prep for presentation to auditor, eg, balance sheet and statement of income and expenses.
- Are stewarding Commons assets, there being some extraordinary expenses this year, though nothing strange or startling
- Team budgeting in process; Maya will present at next Council meeting
- Team meeting tomorrow

Woodworkers Guild (Robbie)

- MOU was prepared for housing the Kiln but a change of plans since: Guild members have decided to put it in a member's home (Guy Mireau's shop), partly due to keeping the wood safe plus the length of crossing the lawn on foot carrying heavy materials.
- Thank you to the Trustees and others who worked on this.
- Open to others to use the kiln

Community Kitchen (Patrick)

- Put a lot of effort in cleaning and repairing.
- Kitchen totally running – becoming more ready around capacity for preparation for events.
- Necessary to be aware of what is up-coming.
- Could we create a Commons label/ stamp – i.e. "Made in the Commons Kitchen" for food prepared in the kitchen?

- Was a scare around the freezer regarding accumulation of heat and cooling capacity; thinking about this solution as well.

Communication Team (Jinny)

We are currently 3 active members, plus support for Communiqué. No in-person meeting this month, though business by e.mail and phone.

1. Interior Info Boards: Consulted with Heather about the one poster she wants to put up in the Farmhouse. Heather has taken over this “project”.
2. Social Media: FaceBook and Instagram going OK.
3. Presented our proposed budget to Finance Team; we are requesting \$1242 from Operating Budget because (see next item):
4. Sounder articles: We are proposing a WEEKLY Commons entry into the *Sounder*, similar to what the Walking Group currently does. This would give teams, workbees, events a few words every week to feature what’s important. Nancy HP obtained the budget details and will spearhead this initiative. What do you think?
5. Succession Planning: Recall that 2 months ago, Jinny announced that she will be “morphing” to modified work with the Commons (could continue with the website pro tem; this may be timely as we move to Stewardship Model of governance. Communications could be seen as a central operating function for the Commons in logistically and fiscally. Again, ideas welcome.

Info Poster (Heather) Attached for Team Reps only [ED Note: Unable to integrate into PDF due to PowerPoint formatting]

- For Farmhouse, top of stairs
- Photos need changing, small budget needed; is this a Communications Team or operating or property expense?
- Jinny noted that some Island photographers have large-format printers

Farm (Judith)

- Selling figs, blueberries and apples
- Net going over on orchard
- Betty has been working a lot in orchard and gardens.
- Indigenous Garden plot has been started with Bob Martin supplying a lot of leadership and work.

Trails & Green Spaces (Judith)

- Request from Camp Mariam to have campers come for an hour and contribute to a task: 14 days in summer. In the past, they have contributed wonderfully to elimination of Daphne. volunteers needed to co-lead with Camp Counsellors, eg, trail clean-up. This is pleasurable! ACTION: Get in touch with Judith or Heather – dates to come

7. Freeze Drier at the Commons (Betty)

Framing questions: How to move forward and where should it be located?

Planning:

- First prong: 2½ hr Workshops, a pilot project:
 - 4 ways of working with tomatoes and apples and then one on root vegetables.
 - Dan the chef, Roshene and Betty assisting. Must meet VIHA standards.
 - 95 people have indicated interest; occupancy of the CK is 13.
- Second prong: freeze drying the food
 - Drier dimensions are: 21(w) x 24 (d) x 30 (h)
 - Info sharing potential + food security added value
 - Questions are where and how? Is this a Commons or a personal mandate?
 - Reconsidering adding the Freeze Drier to the CK, determining future directions, addressing the logistics. For example, if the Commons approves it going into the Community Kitchen, it has to be approved by VIHA: approved standards, clear decisions about who takes care of it and takes charge.
 - It's necessary that Community Kitchen Stewards are very involved.
 - Other issues such as overwhelmed panel in kitchen and cooking demands of whole kitchen, trainings needed for all participants, etc. ACTION: please talk to Patrick about these issues.
 - Workshops are possible whether freeze drier is at the Commons or not.
 - If these concerns can be addressed can there be consensus support? Is it viable for the Commons? Haste on this is not possible till CK needs and concerns are addressed. unintended consequences must be attended to.

Next meeting: August 2nd, 2022 7 pm in Farmhouse

Next 20-Minute Discussion: Food Security on the Commons

Facilitator: Bob (Design Group) **Notes:** Judith (Farm Team)

ATTACHMENT: South Gardeners' Proposal to Improve Parking and Connection to Existing Boardwalk

Submitted July 3, 2022.

Here's a proposal to connect the Commons boardwalk to Redwood Road via a pathway, the Commons South Gardens parking lot and its driveway (see attached drawing), so those who wish can review it before Tuesday's Council meeting, where we'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

One of our new gardeners, Patti Mertz, has brilliantly solicited Bob Rooks to make some significant improvements to this route and to provide a real parking lot, and he has very generously agreed. This would be a great benefit for the Commons and the entire community, as the route is a busy one used by many islanders to access the village year-round. At present it's a muddy quagmire for much of the year, so it's difficult to maneuver for anyone walking or riding, especially with a stroller, shopping cart, walker, pram, or bicycle, or without Wellington boots or waders! The plan would be to provide new gravel surfaces to enable easy passage year-round.

A pedestrian pathway would connect the boardwalk with the renovated parking lot, whose dimensions would remain unchanged. If the new gravel-topped parking lot is built properly (which is the intention), water will drain through the gravel to a new swale beside the garden fence and onwards to the existing small ditch at the south end of the Gardens, thereby providing clear passage free of mud throughout the year. Given the low traffic volume, the parking lot will continue to be shared with pedestrians and bicyclists, just as we

do now, and as we share the driveway.

We conducted a geotech survey by digging six holes in the parking lot to see what's under the surface. We found a solid layer of diatomaceous earth about 4-5" below the surface, which explains why it doesn't drain well. (The readings were 6", 4", 3", 5", 6", and 4", for an average of $4 \frac{2}{3}$ ".) The diatomaceous earth is basically firm ground to place gravel on, so there should be no need to excavate any further. Being prime topsoil, it's proposed that the excavated material be saved north of the berm, between it and the boardwalk, for future use.

Any questions or suggestions for improvement, please call or email anytime.

Many thanks,
Doug

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