Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)

www.gabriola commons.ca

Notes of Meeting of 9 January 2024

Facilitator: Bob Andrew; Recorder: Deb Ferens

Present: Jinny Hayes, David Oliver Reid, Gloria Filax, Brent O'Malley, Alison Fitzgerald, Bob Andrew, Deb Ferens, Kim Kasasian, Don Smardon, Brenda Fowler, Heide Brown.

Next CCC meeting: Feb 6, 2024 at 7pm
Facilitator: Bob Andrew Note Taker: TBA

1) **Welcome and Introductions** (Bob)

2) **Acknowledgement** (Deb)

3) **Meeting Format:** Three value areas: ecological, agricultural & community.

4) Team Reports

Sharing the Commons (Gloria/Alison)

Bench Proposal to Gabriola Commons Council, January 9, 2024

Gabriola Song Keepers – Alison Fitzgerald and Carolyn Wilkinso

Alison (Song Keeper)
Song Keepers is a Gabriola women's choir devoted to chanting the words of such poets and mystics as Emily Dickinson and Rumi. Our director, Leah Hokanson, who also composes some of our chants, puts their words to music which we sing together each Monday (at the Commons) and this becomes the choir's way of saying/singing that peace is possible in our suffering world.

Because we sing songs of peace, the idea of gifting a peace bench was born and because the Commons is a place of peace on Gabriola, song Keepers thought it the perfect place for the bench. We also thought somewhere close to the children's playground might be a possible placement.

Rob Maynard has agreed to design and craft the bench from a slab of seasoned arbutus he has. Song Keepers would be responsible for financing making the bench and the accompanying cement foundation. We envision a plaque which would acknowledge this is a gift from Song Keepers of Gabriola Song for Peace and include the year the bench is gifted. The spring of 2024 would be a good time for the bench's placement and we hope the Commons volunteers would agree to the bench upkeep.

Caroline (Song Keeper)
I believe in my response that we have suggested placement somewhere close to the children's playground. It's also my hope that that the Commons will agree to maintain the bench. However, if neither is possible, can the committee suggest alternatives. I believe Rob thought maintenance would happen every three years depending upon weather, of course. Perhaps song keepers could raise a little extra money for the bench's first finish. However, although women certainly can sand and finish, I think the Commons could accept some responsibility for maintenance but that's just my thought. I suggest that the Commons contact song Keepers in three or four years when bench may need refinishing if the hesitation remains.

One final thought is about moving the bench if repairs are needed. GaLTT has anchored all of their benches in cement and I think the Commons can take its lead from GaLTT's experience. Hope this answers committee's questions/concerns.

It would be useful to have the bench detachable from the things that anchor it to the ground; this way if it needs to be repaired in any way, it can be carried to the woodworking shop.

It would be good to add detail about anticipated maintenance: perhaps ensure the wood is finished in a durable waterproof material so that it will hold up for many years with little or no maintenance.

STC recommends the Song Keepers Bench Project proceed with details to be worked out as we go.

Governance Review Group (Jinny)

- No report tonight; have met once. Will update at Feb Council meeting when more work has been done.

Goat Barn (Dave)

- Max and Dave have been working on the Goat Barn – cleaning & preparing.as a multi-use space.
- Need for structural assessment
- Will be attentive to surrounding landscaping.
- Suggestion box for ideas from community
- Hopefully ready for use for Spring Fair.

Trustee Team Report (Gloria)

- Finance – quarterly report will be prepared for Feb Council meeting
- First meeting was held with the new Trustees and roles and responsibilities still to be determined.
- Water Trustees – to monitor water projects
- Encampment Community Meeting Nov 23/2023 Meeting – Minutes forthcoming.
- Date, time and place of next Trustee meeting: Feb 14, 2024. – Focus: Covenant

Kitchen Stewards (Brent)

- Major capital campaign needed for infrastructure and equipment – on hold while thorough Assessments are being completed
  ACTION: Add to agenda for further discussion
- The team is working on learning the Kitchen process: bookings, calendar, rental fees, orientation for users, cleaning & maintenance.
- Rental Rates have been raised – connect with Colleen McCarthy to update the website. Fees have been raised from $50/half to $70/half and $100 full to $130 full. These new prices need to be updated on the Commons website.
- Discussed the state of the kitchen post Spirit Feast and agree that there should be fine levied against PHC. Part of the problem is the lack of clear guidance from the Kitchen Stewards so we need to take some responsibility.
- Our primary focus at the moment is to ensure the team has access to the booking calendar and emails, and is able to adequately manage incoming booking requests.
- Once this has been taken care, we will shift back to kitchen upgrades including presenting a wishlist to council, costs, and fundraising game plan.

Property Stewardship Team (Kim)

- Working on the installation of the new cistern re: VIHA potable water requirement. Trench is done.
- Kitchen – electrical assessment to be done.
- With only 3 people on the PST team (Bob, Kim and Don) the amount of maintenance and repairs is getting hard to keep up with.

- Putting up “No Camping” Signs
- Putting a lock on the equipment shed (which has never had to have one).
- The Goat Barn toilet was broken into, used and mess left. Doors are now screwed shut, water has been turned off. New combination lock will eventually be installed once the washroom has some operational policies developed and implemented.

No date or time set for the next PST meeting.
ACTION: Add further discussion of Encampments

Bookings (Deborah)

- Brief history:
  Farmhouse has been used for rental purposes going back many years; it is a major source of revenue for the Property Stewards Team – maintenance & repairs.
  Currently, Janice Kerr is doing the bookings for the Farmhouse
  Community Kitchen Stewards have always stewarded the Kitchen rentals.
  Outdoor spaces were never rented in an organized way.
  Commons shut down during Covid. But outdoor spaces increasingly used where people could more safely gather during Covid on a “First come first served” basis.
  Lino organized and stewarded the Outdoor Bookings starting in 2022 and charging for the space was introduced. Currently Janice is filling in until a new outdoor bookings person can be found.
- Deborah will convene a Bookings meeting soon for Farmhouse, Outdoors and Kitchen Stewards and will also include Suzi (finances); Colleen (website) and Dave (Poetry Yurt).
- Outdoor Bookings are dependent on availability of bathroom facilities. The only outdoor bathroom is in the goat barn which is currently shut down. Jinny & Deb will meet to begin discussion on Policy Use/Maintenance of the Goat Barn washroom. Dave will attend for Goat Barn Team.

People for a Healthy Community (Brenda)

- Spirit Feast: 226 people fed. Doing an assessment of the event.
- Christmas Bureau: 251 / 82 children. More adults than usual.
- Feb 10 – Health & Wellness Fair at the Community Hall
- March is Hunger Count Month. Will be adding questions about homelessness; if Commons has any questions to be included in the survey, let Brenda know.

Sharing the Commons (Gloria)
See separate file, attached

5. Further Discussion

A. Kitchen Equipment Project

Fundraising – based on assessments of space & equipment
Assessments include:
- cost of new stove, cost of getting rid of old stove;
- size of griddle – is the current large size necessary;
- electrical upgrades, flooring
- inviting a professional chef to provide advice & information about a well functioning kitchen space
- The existing equipment does work – but need to pay attention.

Expressions of gratitude extended to the new Community Kitchen Stewards.

B. Encampments

- There will be another neighbourhood encampment meeting hosted by the Commons – date to be determined
- Salt Spring Island Forum Jan 14 Alison Smith (UofT); author of "Multiple Barriers: The Multilevel Governance of Homelessness in Canada"
- Is there a way we can have a Gabriola event with her? Maybe by Zoom?
  ACTION: Gloria to investigate and get back to those interested.
- Political pressure is needed at all levels including locally, eg, RDN and Local Trust Committee.

ACTION: PHC will assume responsibility for cleaning the immediate Farmhouse surroundings, including the Tool Library area.

• From PST Report:

To the RCMP's knowledge, NONE of the people on the Commons have no home to go to. They are there because they want to be close to the village - food, drugs, alcohol.
RCMP said they all the campers know that they shouldn't be camping on the Commons - "Give them an inch and they will take a mile".
RCMP said we cannot get rid of the problem, we can only lessen it.
Suggestions for the forest:
Keep patrolling. (2 people)
Find a way that the forest is in use more often, eg, Could we clean up and widen the main
U-shaped trail to attract dog walkers? Get a GaLTT trail license on it?
Limb up/clear the most popular areas.
Trail cams.
Suggestions for the buildings:
Lighting - startlingly bright motion lights, protected by wire mesh.
Cameras - so the RCMP have proof of who was there.
Other stuff:
Suggest to Poetry Gabriola that they remove the tarp skirt around the yurt so that the area beneath the yurt is exposed.
The RCMP said he will start to patrol the Commons, and make it a place to park and do his paperwork.

6) Discussion from Dec 5/2023 Council Meeting – Volunteer Appreciation

- The discussion on volunteer appreciation will be held on a later date
- Bob will contact Brenda Joy

7) Adjourned early at 8:35 - Yay!