Commons Coordinating Council
Notes for Meeting March 5, 2024

Facilitator – Bob Andrew
Minutes – Heide Brown
Present – Deborah Ferens, Gloria Filax, Linda King, David Lightly, Heather Menzies, David Reid, Kim Kasasian, Bob Martin, Joyce Lee, Marti Wright

Land Acknowledgement – Unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw.
• Heather recommended that this be held as a **Land** Acknowledgement.

TEAM REPORTS

Council Stewards (Deb)
• Meeting format: Deb reminded all about the 3 value areas of eth Commons: Ecology, Agriculture, and Community.
• Written **team reports** submitted to Notetaker and/or Jinny (electronic postings) make sure the note-taker doesn't miss any of the crucial bits of your report. Thank you for the many of you who are making the extra effort to get them in and so quickly and succinctly.
• Heather emphasized that team reports should be added into the meeting Notes verbatim (please don't change wording of submitted reports).

Bookings (Deb)
• Deb will call a Bookings meeting which will include Farmhouse Bookings, Outdoor Bookings, Kitchen, Goat Barn.
• **Goat Barn Toilet:** Deb and Jinny compiled notes from various sources including Council regarding the GB Toilet. Deb will call an open meeting to discuss how to best move forward with care, operating, maintenance of the GB Toilet.

Peer Governance Group (Deb for Jinny Hayes)
• Report covered the last month.
• Met once to continue and conclude the first revision of the 2021 Filed Guide. Formerly aimed toward Trustee orientation and reference, we are reworking it to be a guide for us all, including newcomers (ie, more accessible language, shorter yet inclusive, better organized). If anyone has any suggestions, please e.mail Jinny at vhayes@uvic.ca. It's not yet ready to come Council as we will review the whole document at our next meeting.
• Also updated and improved the GC Participation Form; see www.gabriolacommons.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Participation-Form-2024.pdf. Feedback welcome.
***** *Date, time and place of next meeting*: March 18 at 3 pm at the Commons.

Finance Team (Gloria)
• Report covers the period of: February 2024
1. Year end is March 31 – please get any expenses in ASAP so we can issue cheques and you can cash them quickly.
2. Quarterly statements are available for December 31, 2023. Nothing unusual to report. Some up and down in revenue and expense but bottom line similar when adjusted for unusual expenses. If you wish an e-copy please send an email request. Hard copy available for view this evening.
3. Tax receipts have gone out.
4. We have two large ticket items: 1. repair to the kitchen from the broken water pipe involving an

insurance claim. Deductible is $2,500.00. 2. Commons is required to have a backup potable water system. This includes a cistern and the accompanying plumbing, filters, and materials costing $2,750.00.
5. North Gardens expenses to repair the shed somewhat greater than the quote given. Farm team to transfer some funds to North Gardens to assist with costs.
6. We need a fundraising program to replace the steady decline of monthly donors over the past few years. Donation dollars keep the Commons going. Expenses increasing along with revenue decreasing creeps the Commons closer to fiscal difficulties. We have some large potential expenditures looming with the kitchen and power upgrade.
7. Big thanks to the Finance Team, which includes Deb, Don, Suzi, Mary.
• Date, time and *place of next meeting*: March 11, 2024, noon – 2:00 pm, Farmhouse.

South Gardens (Linda King)
Plots are full at the moment.

Process Team (David Lightly)
• Team meets the last Thursday of the month on Zoom. We are discussing resuming in-person meetings. Our meetings are open to all.
• We are Freddy Harris, Brenda Joy, Jen Turner and David Lightly. The redoubtable Muriel Weins is on medical leave and greatly missed. Lately we have often been joined by Bob Andrew.
• Discussion is wide ranging and stimulating. The focus lately has been on how we treat and communicate with each other on the Commons. This is driven by the participation of most members in the task group developing an agreement on respectful conduct and the consequences of dis-respect. This is a complex and fascinating subject. The task group working on this will present a draft to Council in the near future. In the meantime: be humble; be brave.
• Agreement of how we participate in the Commons respectfully.
• Renew habit of reading out how we treat each other in the meeting, before we start.

Communications Team (Heather)
• Piece in the *Sounder*, Community Facebook page, and blog for the website.
• Letter came in about fundraising idea.

Farm Team (Heather)
• 30 people at pruning workshop. Farm team and all the gardens participated and shared. All the orchard got trimmed in the process.
• Next activity: composting; North gardeners taking the leadership on that.

Trails and Greenspaces Team (Heather)
• GALTT is taking care of one trail and a map of that trail.
• Cameron is doing a map of all of our trails which will be posted around the property. Heather will do something about this in the *Sounder*.
• Big Daphne pull last Saturday; more relaxing as a group.

Kitchen Stewards Team (Marti Wright)
• Pipe break during winter freeze caused major water damage; this is being worked on.
• Rental agreements, calendar, etc. are being upgraded.
• Worker bees are not able to accomplish all work that is needed, so considering hiring.
• Considering charging for use of the cooler.
• Planning required purchases, budget, etc.

• David Lightly is talking to gas-fitters, asking if the stoves can be repaired.
• *Next meeting:* next week.

Goat Barn (David Reid)
• Nothing has changed. For now, team is staying out of the way of the other works groups.
• Plan to request grant money – from the angle of the arts: performance space, youth space, green space, display space.
• Anything inside has to come out, and surrounds require clean-up for fire safety, etc.
• First Nations display space for GAC Studio Tour.
• Fund raising ideas welcome.

Kids on the Commons (David Reid)
• Partnering with Poetry Gabriola.
• Good energetic activity in the Goat Barn, eg, Breaking Bannock with the kids here, free range play at the Commons.

Trustee Team (Heide)
• So much is going on that we met twice this month: Feb. 7 and Feb 14.
• Brief discussion of elevator; will not be doing it this year.
• Garbage: Get big dumpster – with locks – and several cans.
• Homelessness was a major discussion at both meetings. Do we deal with the problem in general, or here on the Commons?
    • What do we need on the Commons? -- a feeling of safety and welcome.
    • Ask for help from those who can – like PHC.
    • Signs: Educational a well as setting the rules of the place, eg, "Please be responsible. Kids come here too." And/or "A place for everyone, and everyone is responsible for this place."
• March 2nd Talk by Dr. Alison Smith: see notes form this session attached below as Appendix A.

Property Stewardship Team (Kim)
• Goat Barn Toilet: Kim spoke again to the people under the deck about cleaning the toilet.
• Lock wheelbarrows in shop, until equipment shed is secure; it needs to be locked, tools are wandering.
• Brush clearing/limbing up in three most popular party spots. Group job.
• Securing Farmhouse: ongoing issue re: upstairs windows and doors frequently left open.
• Stopping PHC using the downstairs lobby (not rented by PHC); would prevent anyone from going upstairs and unlocking the doors to the deck, which would give 24/7 access to the upstairs. ACTION: Ideas please.
• Party Folks – It affects the work of PST. Eg, Romeo spent 2 hours screwing a bench to a concrete wall so it wouldn't be stolen again.
• Recruitment: Should we form a recruitment task force?
• Hedge: what to do? Various ideas bouncing around.

OTHER GROUPS AND ANNOUNCEMNENTS

Earth Day Celebration (Bob Martin)
• Sat, Sun, and Monday, April 20-22, on the Commons.
• Parade, and children's ceremonial plantings.

• Possible Tree planting: needs planning.
• Suggestion: work on the berm near the Yurt.
• Entertainer for Monday, paid by EarthCare.
• Heather & Cameron could time the new map release for this week-end. Suggestion: doing some guided walks.
• No press release or announcement till March 20th.

Events (No report from Max Cossette)

1. Spring Fair: May 5

2. Asian Event (Joyce)
• Could be put on the same day as Spring Fair.
• Asian potluck – using Farmhouse kitchen and living room.
• Suggestion: Talk to Max.

3. Biological/Ecological Walk (Joyce)
• Tag trees and shrubs and identify birdsongs.
• Maybe part of Earth Day celebrations.
• Suggestion: Bring in GaLTT Biodiversity Group come Spring.

4. Garage Sale (Submitted by Jinny Hayes)
• Sustainable Gabriola 12-12-12 Group on Gabriola Economic Change will be working on the Commons Garage Sale this year. Will be a fundraiser for the Commons.
• Tentative date: July 20.
• Group is checking with Stef Marrie, who organized this event pre-COVID, to see if she wants to be involved.

ADJOURNMENT

APPENDIX A: Notes from Community Talk by Dr. Alison Smith.

GABRIOLA COMMONS ENCAMPMENT

March 2, 2024

NOTES ON HOMELESSNESS

Gabriola Commons presented a conversation with Doctor Alison Smith at the Rollo Centre.

Bob welcomed the forty Gabriolans who participated in the discussion. Cameron presented a *huy ch q'u* to Snuneymuxw ancestors.
Gloria introduced guest speaker, Alison Smith.

Alison has a BC orientation, with the Okanagan and Victoria as home landscapes. And her current focus is pan-Canadian, including Maritimes, Quebec, Ottawa, Ontario, Alberta and BC.

PRESENTATION

Homelessness has a long history in Canada, spanning a hundred years.
Formerly, it was an urban condition; but is now prevalent in communities of all sizes.

Chronic homelessness has been a concern in Montreal for 145 years. Currently there is a governmental tolerance of childhood poverty.

Cooperative housing is an alternative middle way between rent and ownership. However the federal programme was cancelled in the 1990's.

The benefits of housing include improved health and longevity. Chronic homelessness affects children and seniors.

Converging waves of change include: a climate crisis, a health crisis, a covid crisis, a poverty crisis and a homelessness crisis.

Edmonton has introduced a *Housing First* approach, where housing in a community is considered a human right, a priori to recovery and well being.

Scandinavia provides a wrap around approach to social services, including education and housing. And this is based upon the principle of a *right to shelter*.

Kelowna has introduced a tiny home village approach on tempoary spaces. And there is a transition from encampment to shelter to tiny home village.

GABRIOLA COMMONS ENCAMPMENT

On governance, Canada is a decentralized federation, with varying national and provincial mandates. Housing requires both levels of government.

Currently BC has a positive housing strategy; but following a setback of thirty years.

Premier David Eby has a background in advocacy to address homelessness.
And Prime Minister Trudeau and the federal Liberals are aligned with this approach.

Discussion

Co-operative Housing is an intermediary non market, community approach to housing. Cooperatives are managed by members and a housing association.

Social Housing, as exemplified by Regent Park, in Toronto, tends toward isolation from communities and stigmatization.

Existing buildings may also be pulled from market to non market, as in Vancouver.

Student housing is required, as universities plan for foreign students, affordable housing necessary, to avoid overcrowded conditions.

A community led plan to match needs (based upon homeless counts) is necessary. If encampments are dismantled, what is the alternative path?

Shall we consider *a right to shelter* as part of our federal charter? Is a tent housing?

Housing has been considered as either as accommodation or as an investment. And housing rights may be commodified or de-commodified.

A home is a place to live and a place to make a life.

Churches and synagogues provide community emergency shelter in a storm. Charity can support, but not supplant a government approach.

Indigenous housing approaches may include a ceremonial aspect.

Gabriola Housing Society is currently working on Paisley Place, intended for low to moderate income families.

Currently Gabriola Island is preparing an official community plan review.