Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)

www.gabriola commons.ca

Notes of Meeting of 7 May 2024

Facilitator: Jinny Hayes; **Recorder:** Deb Ferens

Present: Dave Reid, Bob Andrew, Kim Kasasian, Heide Brown, Brenda Joy, Dave Lightly, Heather Menzies, Patrick Olmsted, Patrick Colvin, David Skinner, Brenda Fowler, Margaret Pottinger (Gabriola Outreach)
Regrets: Gloria Filax

Next CCC meeting: June 4, 2024 at 7pm
Facilitator: Jinny Hayes; Note Taker: Deb Ferens.
Written Reports to: debferens@shaw.ca AND vhayes@uvic.ca
Reporting: Think 3 value areas: ecological, agricultural & community.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Land Acknowledgement: Brenda Fowler shared the Four A's of the United Way: Awareness, Acknowledgement, Atonement, Action.

3. Team Reports
Extra time had been requested in advance for:
- Process Team for "Commons Agreement" – 15 minutes
- Goat Barn Group for Team Mandate & Update – 15 minutes

Process Team's Conflict Management Task Group: Commons Agreement (Brenda Joy)
Poster previously circulated and attached below.
(15 minutes extended to 45 minutes, in 10 minute intervals, with consent of those present)
• The draft "poster" had been previously circulated and was provided in hard copy to those present
Summary of Council feedback re: Poster, which is to be posted publicly to encourage civil behaviour on the Commons. Two audiences: Volunteers & all others (renters, transients, etc.). Two documents are planned: 1. everyone (poster) and 2. Volunteers. Language must be accessible.

- The subpoints (bullets) are important, bullets are a bit detailed. Balance brevity and the concepts.
- Not practical to use a website on a poster.
- 4th bullet – drop the link to the website, use email only. Too much information.
- Short & sweet & to the point is needed to be effective. Using wording like "further information" is acceptable. Shorten the bullets.
- Safety is mentioned in the 4th bullet. Respect for safety protocols including ones specific to personal safety. For example, protocols specific to using the equipment in the community kitchen.
- Keep short. The tone comes across as a "message from on high" ie, "participants will…". Not engaging. Use a more positive tone.
- Short, to the point. Use the opening statement on some things. For example, on the new trail map. Invite people to enter into a relationship with the land/people with an aspirational tone.

- Commended for the work to date
- Suggest removing the word "caring" because we can't know from people's actions whether they truly care or not (paraphrasing).
- Likes the values stated, clear. 3rd bullet re: observer intervention seems like an outlier (different from the other 3); seems more like a social contract than an agreement or code of conduct.
- Bring in mention of "ecology", "community" and "agriculture".
- Look at what is at Twin Beaches as an example.
- Likes …understood to be breaking off relations unless…; people are welcome as they are; being a role model. Drop…seeking guidance.
- 4th bullet – suggests rewriting; "means" mentioned too many times. Too many examples of types of communication.
- ACTIONS: Teams invited to get more feedback to the Task Group, which will do another draft and bring back to Council and Teams. Jinny to send the original document out to team reps with invitation to participate.
- Clarify: are the Task Group and those working with the RCMP and neighbours working in concert? YES

Goat Barn (Dave Reid)
Report previously circulated to Team Reps.
15 minutes extended to 35 with consent from Council.

• Dave updated progress re: maintenance and cleaning of Goat Barn since September 2023. Working on FireSmart and stopping the area being used as a dumping spot; getting a dumpster.
• Progress of structural assessment summarized by Dave, Bob from PMT and Heather (past goat barn work group).
• A 2018 Goat Barn Team Mandate has been understood as accepted by Council but had not been posted on the Commons website. Agreed it is ok as submitted. ACTION: Heather will excerpt it from the presented report and have it posted on the website [Ed Note: see https://www.gabriolacommons.ca/volunteer/]
• Clarification that it's important to report to Council and to Finance Team., especially since fundraising efforts are forthcoming.
• Q: Are planned changes to code? A: Yes.
• Q: What is planned? Are Gabriola Players involved? A: Yes.
• Comment (C): Lights are stored at Port Theatre: A: Dave knows this.
• C: Safety and respect imperative in this work (like Kitchen, STC, PMT.
ACTION: Suggested that the Goat Barn Team to bring a new proposal, when there is one, to the Trustees who are legally and fiscally responsible.

TEAM REPORTS
Due to extra time for the focus on the Commons Agreement and the Goat Barn, only a few minutes remained for selected team reports. With agreement of those present, other written team reports may be attached (see p. 3 ff).

Trails and Green Spaces (Heather Menzies)
• Team members Heather and Deb, along with Trustee Bob Andrew and former trustee Cameron Murray met with Hugh Skinner and Barry Moerkerken of GaLTT to walk the path of the trails for which GaLTT has just signed a license agreement, to confer on signage location.
• They also scoped out where signs might be placed across the open area to connect the two trails to which the license agreement applies (See dotted green line on circulated map).

• The team is seeking consensus on this connector line and location too (and also ensuring that it's outside the boundaries of events like Cultivate during which some temporary fencing is placed.)
• Details around making these two much-used trails wheelchair accessible (ie. Ensuring at least a 4' if not a 5' width) were also discussed. The team is seeking consensus on this point too.
• With considerable help from PST, one of the Commons trail maps that Cameron Murray created has been posted at the head of one of the trails off Huxley Park, and simple "Trail" and directional indicator signs have been created ready for posting.

Finance Team (Deb Ferens)

- The fiscal year end (Mar 31, 2024) books are being prepared for the accountant.
- Reminder of the 2024-2025 Budget Process
- Earth Day Event raised $950 – thank you to Bob Martin

Reports Attached:

1. Process Team, Conflict Management Task Group
2. Commons Agreement Poster
3. South Garden
4. Farm Team
5. Communications
6. Trustees
7. People for a Healthy Community

1. Conflict Management Task Group Report (Brenda Joy)

Date: 7 May, 2024. Covers 9 Feb until 24 April 2024.

- Primary group members at this time: Brenda Joy, Dave Lightly, Bob Andrew, Jen Turner. Heather Menzies (as available).
- Met 9 Feb, 21 Feb, 22 Mar, 2 Apr, 15 Apr, 24 Apr (Zoom and in person).
- Work accomplished to date:
    - Preparatory work was completed including a review of other organizational "code of conduct" documents, the Commons governance/constitution documents, the draft document *Towards a Commons Agreement on Respectful Behaviour and Accountability,* and a discussion on the Commons values.
    - To help develop content for the Agreement, a brainstorming session on issues potentially contributing to interpersonal conflict in the Commons was completed. The group agreed to include the following themes: communication, behaviour, teamwork, decision-making, and diversity.
    - Using content from the brainstorming session, two Agreement documents were drafted:
        1. A longer Agreement specific for Commons volunteers (with all themes included).
        2. A shorter Agreement version for anyone participating in the Commons or coming onto the Commons land. This includes volunteers, tenants, renters, users, and members of the public.
    - The group felt that the detail in the longer Agreement was important for volunteers to read and understand as expectations of respectful behaviour in the Commons. It could be provided to new volunteers as part of an orientation.

- The shorter Agreement is intended to be used as a poster that could be displayed throughout the Commons.
- Both documents went through several reviews within the group and were cross-referenced with the draft document *Towards a Commons Agreement on Respectful Behaviour and Accountability.*
- 25 Apr. The drafts were reviewed by Process Team (Brenda Joy not in attendance) as well as provided to Heather Menzies.
- Comments received were incorporated as best as possible into the current drafts provided to the Commons Council for feedback/discussion at the 7 May meeting.
- Any questions or further feedback on the Agreement drafts can be sent through the Process Team at process@gabriolacommons.ca

Other news: Next step – group work to develop protocols for restorative action should conflict/disagreements occur in the Commons.

Date, time and place of the next meeting: To be determined.

2. The Gabriola Commons Agreement

The Gabriola Commons functions and thrives through respectful, caring relations, including with the Commons land. Anyone participating in the Commons or coming onto the land agrees to do so on these terms.

Below are the minimum standards that the Commons participants agree to follow while participating on The Commons land and/or using The Commons facilities.

Participants who choose not to abide by this agreement are understood to be breaking off relations with the Commons unless restorative action is taken.

Commons participants will:

- Understand that the Commons welcomes a diversity of people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, experiences, and opinions and that everyone deserves to feel welcome as they are.

- Be a role model of respectful, caring behaviour in words and actions. This means not using discriminatory, harassing, bullying, or otherwise offensive language or actions in any situation and by any communication means including verbal/non-verbal, written, virtual meetings, email, or social media.

- Respectfully address any adverse behaviour experienced or observed as a bystander. If unsure of how to proceed or feeling unsafe, seek guidance from a member of the Commons Process Team. Conflict management protocols can be located on the Gabriola Commons website (insert link to the Commons Website – protocols are under development by the Conflict Management Task Group).

- Treat the Commons land and facilities with respect and care, including but not limited to following all Commons fire, safety, drug and alcohol policies and other relevant BC public

health and safety policies (insert link to the Commons Website- signage is under development by the Commons Encampment Group).

3. **South Commons Allotment Garden (Brenda Joy)**

Date: May 7, 2024 Report covers the period of: March 5 to May 7

- Met 2x (monthly)
- No available plots. 1-2 plots are being rejuvenated (one has clubroot)
- Installed a water meter at the main out pipe to the SCG. Water consumption will be monitored every week to establish trends over the 2024 gardening year
- The Sweet Pea program has started. Plants are in the ground and sponsors are being solicited. The goal is $5k and the beneficiaries are the PHC school lunch program and the McRae Mortgage Fund (Gabriola Museum)

Other news if applicable: none.

Date, time and place of next meeting: June 12, 2024.

4. **Farm Team (Heather Menzies)**

• The consensus that emerged about the unused portion of the Little Field that has become weed infested was to grow a green-manure crop. Simon N. used a large rototiller to turn over the sod and prepare the soil for planting. Buckwheat is now germinating.
• The team helped the North Gardeners host a composting workshop - and funded it.
• Betty K. has begun her "Learners' Garden" program for this year in the Kitchen Garden.
• Heather M. has connected with the relevant person at the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for submitting an updated report on the Commons' agricultural activities and productivity, and is gathering material for this report.

5. **Communications (Heather Menzies)**

• Wrote two pieces for the Sounder (one a trail-walking guide to accompany the published trail map; the other on composting tips culled from the composting workshop). These also turned into blog posts on the website.
• Working to create a short piece on the historical Commons for the website, as a drop-down link to the statement there now that "Community is the heart of the Commons and always has been." Will circulate draft for comment, especially by Covenant Team.

6. **Trustee Team Report**

Report covers: April 8, April 29, and May 6

1. A decision was made to hire a deep cleaner for the Farmhouse, twice a year, from the AGES fund designated for cleaning.
2. At the meeting with the covenant team we decided to focus next on the Stewardship plan, while a second covenant holder continues to be sought. It seems that there has already been a great deal of work done on this plan, so it should be much easier to finalize.
3. It was agreed to allow the Kitchen team to go ahead and hire a grant writer because:
a. the multitudes of things that need to be replaced or repaired keeps growing,

b. a functioning Commercial Kitchen is part of our agreement with the ALC,
c. the Commons finances are not adequate to pay for all of this, and
d. we have no existing Grant Writing Team at the moment.
4. Just as the Finance Team is an advisory team to help guide the Trustees, the Covenant requires a Legal Team, also to help guide the Trustees. This has been approved by the Trustees, and George, Deb Ferens, Gloria Filax, and K Louise have agreed to set up this advisory team.
5. A Long Term Planning team needs to be re-activated. Gloria Filax and David Reid will work on setting this up.

Other News
1. A joint meeting was held on the topic of zero tolerance on the Commons, on Wed., April 10 with Constable Jake and other people who work with the homeless. Signage and a Commons Agreement for behaviour on the Commons were the key next steps, and Margaret agreed to help with the Homeless people she knows.
2. The Trustees still need a Secretary. If you know anyone who might be interested, please let one of us know.
3. The Trustees will also be holding a retreat on Wednesday, May 22nd, from 10-2, at the home of David Lightly.

Date, time and place of next meeting: Friday, June 8th, at the Commons.

7. People for a Healthy Community (Brenda Fowler)

1. PHC has made a temporary staff position starting May 1 until dec 30 2024 . The job is Community Mental Health Worker and our existing staff Danielle has been appointed to this position. She has just graduated from the UVic program. She will work with the Commons and RCMP and Gabriola Outreach to assist homeless residents and visitors.
2. We also had a meeting with the new Integrated Child and Youth Outreach team working out of School District 68. This team may lead to additional supports for children and families at our elementary school.
3. We are working with the Agi Coop to secure $100K of infrastructure funding from the United Way for improving food security on the island on their site. This grant may also be available in the Fall, and PHC would continue to request a joint venture with Commons to secure these funds.