Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)

www.gabriola commons.ca

Notes of Meeting of 2 July 2024

Facilitator: Bob Andrew; Recorder: Deb Ferens

Present: Gloria Filax, Kim Kasasian, Heide Brown, Brenda Joy, Heather Menzies, Patrick Olmsted, Brent O'Malley, David Skinner, Brenda Fowler, Maureen Wild, Kristin, David Lightly, Shelagh Huston, Max Cossette

Next CCC meeting: Aug 6, 2024 at 7pm
Facilitator: Bob Andrew (exchanging with Heide). Note Taker: Jinny Hayes
Meeting Format: Three value areas: ecological, agricultural & community.

1) **Welcome and Introductions**
2) **Land Acknowledgement:** Gloria Filax – Harold Johnson "The Power of Story" excerpt
3) **Team Reports**

Covenant Team – Deb Ferens

Regarding the interest of the Gabriola Local Trust Committee in becoming a signatory on the Gabriola Commons Covenant:
• A Signatory means being the Covenant Holder.
• No need for another Covenant Holder. The LTC would be the Covenant Holder
• The Covenant was referred to Islands Trust Legal Team for a review by the LTC several months ago. Which has responded with comments.
• LTC Planner Baugh asked: Would the Commons be open to further amendments to the Covenant? And is there a timeline for the Covenant to be registered?
• The Covenant Team has written a letter to the Agricultural Land Commission requesting an extension for registration and would they be open to amendments to the Covenant.
• There will be a legal cost to draft the amendments. A Cost Recovery Agreement with the Commons will probably be required. Cost recovery amount might be similar to the $4600 for the legal review.
• The Local Trust Committee has to approve any staff recommendation to move the Covenant forward. If they do not approve, then there is no further action undertaken.

Fall Fair – Max Cosette

- Possible dates: Sept 1 or Sept 8
- Goal to raise more funds this year.

Trustees – No Report except:

- The newly constituted Legal Team will meet for the first time this coming week.

Finance Team – Gloria Filax (submitted report)

- There have been unusual expenditures this past month including:
  1. For the kitchen – new stoves (2), including install, permit to hook to propane
  2. And repair on the dishwasher
  3. Irrigation system required a new pump, controller, and pressure wash

- Team project money for March 31 2024 is available if any team wants to know the YE figure. We are working on budgets with the more active teams including the Farm Team and the Commons Kitchen. PST has submitted a budget for this fiscal year.
- Year-end documents are into Kevin Beausoliel Accountants in Nanaimo and may be ready as early as July 31, 2024. They are looking into our GST claim for 2023.
- There are multiple scams going around these days and we ask that all those volunteers on the Commons stay alert for emails and phone messages demanding money from either the Commons or from your own personal resources.
- The Finance Team recommends that we cancel the Farmhouse telephone as it is not used by the Commons, including Bookings. Mostly the phone is used by visitors. Cost is $30.00 plus taxes and this will go towards the increase in internet costs.
  Next Finance Meeting: July 15, 2024, noon-2pm, Farmhouse.

Trail Walking Patrols – Bob Andrew

- Ongoing patrols continue
- This is a community issue

PST – Kim Kasasian (Sent report)

- Goat Barn - we don't know what is going on with the team. Nothing has happened for weeks. Their belongings have gone.
- Big workbee jointly with GAC in preparation for Cultivate - there is a long list of things to do.
- Irrigation system - it has cost a lot to get the irrigation system running again, and there is still a big leak somewhere. Holes have been dug, to no avail. More diggers are needed.

North Garden – Maureen Wild (submitted report)

- From mid to late June, we were alerted to a serious deer problem: Dave Arnell noticing deer in the Little Field and leaping the fence from the Little Field into the North Garden. The problem persisted even as Dave tried to dissuade them from entering the Little Field by reinforcing the gate and hanging and weaving ribbons higher on the wire above the fence. Tanner (for the N. Garden) strung higher wire on a section of the fence between the two gardens, and flags were also hung on part of that wire. The problem continued with considerable consequence to the plantings in the Little Field and noticeable plants being eaten in the North Garden.
- While all this was happening, we were also noticing that the northside fencing for the N. Garden and PHC gardens (which is the highest and most deer proof around the whole perimeter) was leaning unstably and getting worse. The wooden fence posts are discovered as rotting at their base. Some metal posts were attached to some of them to prevent a complete collapse.
- It was clear that a proper assessment of the whole fence line perimeter needed to be done, including Little Field and N. Garden/PHC Gardens. Tanner (who gardens with his family in the N. Garden and works in construction) spontaneously offered his time and analysis this weekend by walking the whole perimeter of this fence, noting the needs in all areas. He made recommendations of what needs to be done to better secure fencing from deer. See his assessment below.
- Tanner contacted Arbutus for a cost estimate.
  - 8 - 10’ metal T posts
  - 4 - 8’ metal T posts
  - 180’ - deer fencing 6’ high minimum
  - 2 - 100’ rolls of 11ga Galvanized wire
  - 4 - 10’ 2X4 Pressure treated or cedar

  Total estimate from Arbutus = **$600**

- 10 - 10' pressure treated fence posts (approx. $20/ea) = **$200**
  [Note: Arbutus doesn't carry this item, but Wild Rose may or some place in Nanaimo.)
- TOTAL ESTIMATE FOR THIS PROJECT = **$800**

Conflict Management Task Group - Brenda Joy

Full written report attached (A)

a. Gabriola Commons Agreement

- Consensus agreement on Poster – with the addition of "No Smoking". See attached (B).
- Poster (Attachment B) is to be sent to all teams for their approval. Team or individual responses are to be forwarded to the Process Team's email inbox at process@gabriolacommons.ca

b. Gabriola Commons Volunteer Agreement

- Pausing work on the Agreement; needs more discussion: including terminology and whether the Commons wants such an Agreement.
- Maybe refer to the Governance Review Group.

Goat Barn – Patrick Olmstead (submitted report)

- I am so far the person temporarily reporting from the Goat Barn Team.
- I am happy to report that stepping back from some of the complex and unpredictable machinations of the Commons has rejuvenated the enthusiasm of the parties still committed to the project. So: contrary to public speculation, the Goat Barn team is still alive, and has as was mentioned at last month's meeting, it has a mandate. Team members: Dave R, Andreas K, Rainbow, Patrick
- I have had no success finding where the team mandates are, but hopefully this is temporary.
- The piano which was a point of concern is something that has some significance to the team and as it is consistent with a proposed performance/presentation space, it will be staying.
- The lawn tractor is possibly more appropriately housed in a machine storage area. The Council was not entirely in disagreement with the idea of the transfer of this.
- The lack of an agreement around the value of a confidentiality policy is something that is likely to come up again.
- The new Commons Agreement if applicable to participants should accommodate the discussion of some of the feelings of disrespect and confusion regarding the "ad hoc" and independent actions outside the scheduled meetings. Gossip, spreading second hand personal information, individual personal friction and agendas seem to have a way of undermining the culture of organizations. The Commons can only benefit from improving the environment so that people feel safe to participate.

Community Kitchen – Brent O'Malley (submitted written report)

Report covers the month of June 2024

- The Community Kitchen has two new stoves, replacing the 50 year old Garland stoves that we had received from Camp Miriam.
- Arbutus generously loaned us their crane to unload the new stoves and take the old ones to GIRO for recycling. We will circulate a card expressing thanks and sending it to Dallas at Arbutus.
- The dishwasher (also a gift from Camp Miriam years ago) almost gave up the ghost but we elected to gamble on fixing it rather than replacing it, and it looks like it paid off. The machine seems to be working better than ever.
- We have elected to put on hold for the moment any fundraising effort. Now that we have the stoves, and the dishwasher is no longer on the list, our needs have gotten smaller. There are many things we still would like to get, but there is nothing pressing at this point.
- We will be putting a budget together, with the assistance of Gloria.

- We have been meeting sporadically during the summer months but do communicate via email for pressing matters. Brent continues to monitor the calendar and email

Peer Governance – Heide Brown (submitted written report from Jinny)

Report covers the last month, one meeting.

• We are putting the final touches on our revision 2021 *Field Guide,* now called *An Introduction to the Gabriola Commons*. With this and the Governance document already presented to Council and teams, we are nearing the end of our work as a temporary group.

• We would like to draw everyone's attention to the fact that with this revision, Trustees and Commoners in general need to find a new place to hold past Commons policies, now deleted from this changed rendition on the former *Handbook*:

1. Constitution and Bylaws (referred to website)
2. Policy: Position Descriptions of Trustees
3. Policy: Financial Resiliency Policy (2018)
4. Policy: Purpose and Operation of Gabriola Commons Foundation (2011)
5. Policy: Financial Resiliency Policy
6. Policy: Annual General Meeting Preparation and Follow-up (2015)
7. Policy: Recruitment of Trustees (2014)
8. Policy: Charitable Responsibilities (2016)
9. Policy: Privacy (2011)
10. POLICY: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (2021)
11 Policy Guiding Tree Cutting (2023?)

• As previously reported, there are a couple of spin-offs from this project:

a) Re-examination of the decision-making documents
   We are working on this document now and it will come to Council separately.
b) Evaluation of the team framework. Report is attached (C).

Items for more discussion:

Possibly the item on Policies above and the item of status of teams, report below.

Date, time and place of next meeting: Monday July 22 outdoors at 2.30 at the Commons.

TAGS – Heather Menzies (submitted written report)

- Initial set of trail marker signs, created with help from Kim Kasasian, placed in strategic spots along trails in woods during Commons work bees.
- A good number of signs subsequently trashed or removed and thrown in bushes.
- Drafting an application to the Gabriola Recreation Society to get a grant in aid of creating more resilient signs and installing them more robustly.
- Seeking advice from GaLTT sign makers and installers going forward.
- Lightweight paper for the Brochure – Thanks to Heather, Cameron (map) & Romeo (pics)

Communications – Heather Menzies (submitted written report)

- Short piece on historical commons is now up on website.
- Revisions to Commons trail map and brochure text made, based on excellent feedback from a range of individuals and teams.
- Graphic artist engaged to lay text out along with beautiful photos taken by Romeo Rossi. Brochure in production now. Funding available in Communications Team budget, Finance Team confirms.
- Plans to distribute copies of brochure to Gabe Info Centre and other venues that have expressed interest, as well as having copies available at the Cultivate Festival.

Farm Team – Heather Menzies (submitted written report)

- Mostly covered by North Gardeners' report (Deer have destroyed what David Arnell has been growing in the Little Field).
- Also, word from the Farm Team Orchard Group: All's well.

Cultivate Liaison Team - Heather Menzies (submitted written report)
- Everything coming together well for Cultivate and the GAC-Commons workbee July 6.
- Three soup makers (David Arnell, Laura Jean Kelly and David Skinner) making soup. Sharon Arnell making two loaves of bread.
- Stephanie Marrie has sent out a Communique about the work bee to everyone on the Commons email list.

Shelagh Huston shared information about **Living Into the Earth Emergency, a** course she is planning to offer weekly from late January through March. Commons is possible venue if available and suitable.

People for a Healthy Community – Brenda Fowler
- PHC will be celebrating its 30th year anniversary in 2025
- GES students received a "Pollinator Award" recognition.
- PHC is entering a great collaboration with the Gabriola Nature Society

Attachments

A. Conflict Management Task Group (CM TG) July Team Report (Brenda Joy)

Date: 17 July, 2024.

Covers 4 June until 17 July 2024.

- Group members: Brenda Joy, Dave Lightly, Bob Andrew, Jen Turner.
- Met 17 June 17 May (hybrid meeting on Zoom).
- Work accomplished:
    - Reviewed feedback comments from Teams and individuals on (1) the Commons Agreement – Poster and (2) Gabriola Volunteer Agreement drafts received following the 4 June Council meeting.
    - All feedback was considered and both draft documents were revised accordingly.
    - Because the Council/Teams has not specifically agreed upon the need for a volunteer agreement, and based on the team feedback, there are differing opinions on to which group (s) such an agreement should apply, as well as differing opinions on the use of the word "volunteer" versus "participant", the CM TG has decided to pause further work on the Volunteer Agreement until these issues are resolved. The CM TG recommends these questions be a discussion agenda item on a future Council agenda.
    - The Commons Agreement – Poster draft V7_17June2024 included the team feedback and all other feedback to date and was presented to the 2 July Council for final Council approval (consensus).

- **2 July 2024 Council meeting** – the Commons Agreement draft was reviewed. There was discussion regarding the term "breaking off relations" vs "breaking relations" and a suggestion to add "no smoking. Council attendees agreed upon "breaking relations" in the last paragraphs, and to include "no smoking" in the 4th bullet. Council consensus was obtained, and this draft was to be sent to the Teams for final approval.

- **Note:** After receiving Council approval of the draft, another comment on "breaking relations" vs "breaking off" relations was received. Although we felt that the two terms have different meanings, the differences in interpretation are subtle and "breaking off relations" may be more typically used and understood by people. Therefore, we accepted the suggestion offered.
- *The final draft (version V9_17Jul2024) includes this change and is attached to this report. This version is to be sent to all teams for final approval prior to publishing.*
- Questions can be sent through the Process Team at process@gabriolacommons.ca

Other news:

- Next step – The group is now working to develop definitions (abusive behaviour, conflict, disagreement, restorative action, etc.), protocols and responsibilities for restorative action should conflict/disagreements occur in the Commons.

B. The Gabriola Commons Agreement

The people and the land of the Gabriola Commons function and thrive through respectful and caring relations. Anyone participating in the Commons or coming onto the land agrees:

- To welcome a diversity of people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and opinions.
- To model respectful behaviour. This means no discriminatory, harassing, bullying, or otherwise offensive words or actions.
- To try to respectfully address any experienced or observed adverse behaviour.
- To treat the Commons' land and facilities with extreme care and respect, including following the Commons' no fire, no drugs/alcohol, no smoking, no littering, no camping policies.

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

C. Team and Group Changes at the Gabriola Commons May 28, 2024

Summary of Assessment and Recommendations from Ad Hoc Peer Governance Group

Teamwork in Practice

Teams and Groups (generally temporary and project focused) as defined in the current *Field Guide (2021)*, are generally functioning well in needed areas of responsibility. All would do well with more volunteer members, as is widely acknowledged across all volunteer organizations on Gabriola. Teams should all have defined mandates posted to the website.

We have a hodgepodge of named teams and mandates: named entities without mandates, mandates with non-functioning teams, and temporary groups that don't really need mandates. Here's a summary (see attached list):

13 Teams as rearranged on May 28 with sub-groups in parentheses)
Coordinating Council Stewards
Board of Trustees
Communications
Community Kitchen
Covenant
Events
Farm (North, South, Namaste)
Finance (Bookings, Grant Writing)
Goat Barn
Property Stewardship
Share the Commons
The Process Team
Trails and Green Spaces (Labyrinth)
Workshop Stewards [mandate pending]
Mandates but no teams
Infrastructure
Learning Opportunities
Long Range Planning
Grant Writing
Mandate but part of another team's responsibilities
Labyrinth
Listed on website but not a team + no mandate
Newcomers
Timberframe (to be deleted as a "team")
Soup makers support Workbees

Recommendations Peer Governance Group recommends that:
1. A team requires a mandate vetted at Council and reviewed every 2 years. (There is a template.)
2. Some administrative functions and groups be subsumed under other teams, ie, Bookings and Grant writing under Finance, Labyrinth under TAGS)
3. Soup Makers be considered support for Workbees.
4. If a community group has a MoU or lease with the Commons, it should have a designated contact person for safety and emergency purposes and should attend Council periodically and give regular reports (currently PHC, Poetry Gabriola Yurt, Tool Library).

Commons Contacts List is available on request from council@gabriolacommons.ca