Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)
Written reports to: council@gabriolacommons.ca

Notes of Meeting April 1, 2025

Facilitator: David Lightly
Recorder: Kristin Allan
Present: Brent O'Malley, Patrick Colvin, Kim Kasasian, Heather Menzies, Dinah Dee, Trevor_____, Brenda Joy, Bob Andrew, Jinny Hayes

Next CCC meeting: May 6, 2025 at 7 pm.
Facilitator(s) for next meeting: TBA
Recorder for next meeting: TBA

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Welcome & First Nations Acknowledgement – David Lightly

2. Agenda Approval

***3.* Events - DinahD and Trevor – "New Old Time Chautauqua" on July 25th**

- This circus has been to Gabriola before; will be here 1-3 days, Fri-Sunday. Bring all their own gear, band, transport, etc. Commons outdoor spaces have been booked.
- As part of what these ~ 40 people do, they offer social exchange. So: **What can 40 able-bodied people do to help the Commons?**
- Potluck on the Friday night (could be a work day?)
- Saturday (could also be a work day) workshops and parade, performance on Sat. Evening; Sunday could be a work day
- Would like use of community kitchen in exchange for their labour. (Food is only for themselves.)
- DinahD and Trevor are the liaisons between the group and the Commons
- Have their own insurance.
- Will need a port-a-potty for the approx. 200 attendees.

4. Team Reports

Board of Trustees – Bob Andrew

- Commons financial year ends March 31; statements TBA.
- Woods update: See Heather's report below. Note: the Health and Wellbeing

Collaborative is very interested in what we are doing; offering $500 to the cause. Some folks from Nanaimo are also interested.

- Yurt is now held by the Commons
- There will be a public workshop around the Covenant in the not too distant future.
- There is a new 3-year lease ready to be signed with PHC.
- PHC is requesting better communications with the Commons. As well, they are not happy with the new entrance idea.
- Rats & mice are an ongoing issue but it is being dealt with in collaboration with PHC and Property Stewards. A company is being brought in, but they deal with the rats only. PST is trying to find accesses.
- Fall Fair: no date yet but likely a dual celebration as this is the 20th anniversary of the Commons.
- Regular meetings: Last Wed. of the month 3.00- 5.00 pm.
- **Next Meeting** - Wednesday, April 30th 3-5pm
- Jinny - Suggestion to the Trustees to have a guest speaker at the Commons AGM to draw more attendees and fulfill part of our mandate of giving to the community.
- Heather- thank you for the reminder to organize a meeting between Gabriola Land and Trails Trust and Trails and Green Spaces team
- Jinny - At their recent AGM, Kim Kasasian received an award from GaLLT for her sustaining, years-long work on removing daphne from the Commons.

Council Stewards – Jinny

• No special report.

• Deb (facilitator), Bob and Jinny meet the second week after the last Council meeting to review and plan the subsequent mtg.

• Reminder to submit your team report in writing if at all possible; greatly helps the note-taker. Also, please let us know if you think your report warrants more that 5 minutes of report and 5 mins for discussion. **council@gabriolacommons.ca.**

Yurt Keepers Team – Kristin Allan

1. Transfer agreement:
    a. The yurt has officially been given to the Commons and the legal paperwork is complete as of March 15th, 2025.
    b. Would like to have a plaque made for inside yurt- Poetry Gabriola Society has gifted the yurt to the Commons in 2025 – is there a local person who can make this? Brenda Joy has info.
2. Insurance coverage: The yurt structure is not insurable.
3. Heating options:
    a. Underneath yurt has significant insulation, walls and ceiling have very little.
    b. Thealia Black, local electrician, recently emphasized the need for further insulation of walls and ceiling if installing any electric heating. A wood

stove still makes the most long-term financial sense to heat the yurt on an as-needed basis.

c. Fire department has no issue with a wood stove, other than needing a WETT certification and the stove pipe needs adjusting to meet code (as per email)

4. Washroom Facility for Yurt:
    a. Mack Shaw, local excavator and septic company rep. told Kristin that it would cost more to create an up-to-code composting toilet system than to install a normal septic field. Neither of these is feasible.
    b. Considering a temporary rental of port-a-potty GI John Rental ($175/month), starting in the summer, until a permanent solution is found.

5. Sounder Article:
    a. Kristinn has written an article for the Sounder and will be submitting it in the next week or two; announcing the yurt transfer, need for more YKT members, spring work bee to scrub the exterior of the yurt on Sat., April 26th.

6. Fundraising for 2025:
    a. Grant application will be written to the Lions to support the cost of toilet rental, new heating system, wall plaque, lighting?
    b. Our family (with lots of help!) will be hosting a full-day event in July, with some proceeds going back to the Yurt Keepers Team.

7. Rental of Yurt
    a. Yurt is set up to be rentable on the Commons website, other than the rental agreement that still needs to be written.

Community Kitchen Stewards – Brent

- Nothing to report
- Grub Huggers are not changing their arrangements and PHC Meals on Wheels are not delivering at present; changes could be forthcoming.

Newcomers – Patrick Colvin

- Only had 3 e.mails; directs new people to workbees and Council meetings.

Goat Barn – Bob Andrew

- I've been getting inquiries about using the Goat Barn; currently it is not secure or suitable for public access.
- We need an engineer's assessment to make it a public venue – we have the $5000 to have it done.

- Kim – there is a rat issue, and the building needs a complete renovation to be safe.
- We need leadership and big fundraising and collaboration to get it renovated.
- **ACTION:** There was general agreement to move forward. Bob will pursue hiring a structural engineer.
- **ACTION:** need to ask Don Buskirk about his donation.

Farm Team - Heather Menzies

- We seem to be forming a group to care for the orchard
- Also, a new team is coming together for planting a medicinal herb garden in the Kitchen Garden.

Property Stewardship Team – Kim Kasasian

- Irrigation pump is working, but a filter needs to be added.
- Replacing a portion of the irrigation, with the help of a donor.
- Installing 2 water meters: one in north garden and on the line that comes into the FarmHouse, which will give us an idea of how much water PHC is using.
- **Hedge idea**: get rid of south-facing stretch between east parking lot and main driveway into FarmHouse and replace with a row of sunset maple trees
    - Trimming the entire hedge cost $3,000 last year and needs to be done every 2 years
    - Patrick – add a bicycle parking area with a cover somewhere on Commons
    - Jinny- make driveway a loop for drop-off
    - Children's play area could be there.
- Some discussion of this item was moved to the end of the meeting.
- Noted that a root grinder was required last time some hedge was removed.
- Cherry trees are getting old
- Could add more parking
- Agricultural potential could be enhanced
- Walkers could damage roots.
- **ACTION:** There was a consensus to move forward with visioning the new front entrance and landscaping for the farmhouse. Kim will write up a proposal to send out to all Teams with these Notes **(see attached)**.
- We need further discussion about hedge plan as well as a master plan of phases of landscaping changes to the road side of the farmhouse yard. **Moved to end of meeting; see below.**

Woods Task Group – Heather Menzies

- The task group is in transition, the re-opening of the Commons woods on March 20th, marking the end of its initial mandate.
- Phase II beginning with more relationship building:

- Met with Danielle Bye, PHC's mental health and outreach worker; she also came to a Friday afternoon mee-up at the Gathering Place.
- Asked Deb Ferrens, coordinator of trails patrollers/walkers for a chance to meet with her group to explore possibility of her group collaborating with the task group and its friends at the Gathering Place, to pool resources and plan ahead for the fire season together.

- Distributed copies of the trail-map brochure to local businesses, plus library and Info. Centre and encouraged them to promote having Gabriolans walk the Commons trails.

- Kim reported that fires are still being lit on the property.
- Kim suggested signage to point walkers in the direction of the trail heads as there have been a number of enquiries.
- Kim encourages our attendance at the Friday at 3pm gatherings with the woods task group at the "gathering place" behind sports courts to help make ourselves known.

5. Affiliate Reports

Museum – Brenda Joy

- There's a speaker series upcoming, eg, family outdoor movie on the Commons maybe with concession or a food truck.
- Meeting with Gloria from Sharing the Commons team on April 8th
- Brent and Brenda are in discussions about collaborating for the 20th anniversary.

6. Announcements:

Gabriola Land Stewardship Society (GILSS) – David Lightly

- Acquiring land for community benefit – largely agricultural.

Land would be held by GILSS – leased short or long-term to a business, agriculture, or low-cost housing.

- AGM is on April 7th at 6pm at the Agi Hall with an Agi Co-op guest speaker.

- **20th Anniversary Event Planning – Jinny**

We need more volunteers coming forward to help make this happen
So far the group is Brenda Joy, Brent, Jinny, Heather

- Heather - Library may host an event with a speaker

7. Appreciations:

- David: acknowledging Brenda Joy for her work on the *Conflict on the Commons* document
- Kristin: Maureen Wild is a hero for the north gardeners. She's done so much already this year. Her weekly newsletters are really great.
- Jinny- Thanks to the people who are stepping up to take notes, facilitate and time keep

at Council Meetings.

- Heather: Thank you to Jinny for her great work on the last Council meeting notes

8. For Teams' discussion & follow-up at next Council meeting

A. Kim's hedge idea
B. What project(s) could the Chautauqua (aka circus) volunteers help with in July?

9. Closing

Next Council Meeting – Tuesday, May 6, 2025 7.00 pm at FarmHouse

APPENDIX: Proposal for Alterations to Hedge

At Commons Council on April 1st we discussed a new idea for the hedge.
The idea is to remove the section of the hedge that runs along North Road between the main carpark and the Deliveries driveway - roughly 25 metres.
The plan is to replace this section of hedge with a row of trees - possibly the same kind of trees outside Nature Spirit and Wishbone, which are attractive in leaf, and fabulous in the Fall.
Everyone at the April Council meeting liked the idea, but we decided that we need a more comprehensive concept for that area of the property and the approaches to the house before taking action.

We would like your opinion, and your ideas.
You can send them to Kim at kasasian@shaw.ca

There are various reasons to do this:
• Without the hedge, the property would feel more approachable.
• The new trees would define the property line, but still give a view through the trunks to the farmhouse.
• The front of the farmhouse will be getting an inviting and welcoming facelift in the near future, and it would be good to be able to see that from the road.
• Several metres of this bit of hedge has bare trunks which spoil the appearance of the hedge, and they will remain with that "look".
• With climate change, this section of hedge gets the most intense sun as it faces directly south. Cedars don't like to dry out, so keeping them healthy requires more water; we really can't spare water resources to use any on the hedge (we run out towards the end of every summer as it is).
• The row of trees could either go on the property line, or be pulled back a few metres onto the lawn to provide an inviting apron of grass next to the road.

Cost:

• We need the hedge pruned every other year, minimum. That cost was $3,000 last time. That would, at a guess, mean that this section of hedge costs $600 to prune, so we would save $600 every other year.

• It would cost under $1,000 to buy, plant and protect the trees.

• The job of actually removing that section of hedge.....we haven't figured that cost out yet.