Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)

Written Reports to: council@gabriolacommons.ca

Notes of Meeting of December 2, 2025

Facilitator: Jinny Hayes

Notes: Diane Conrad

Timer: Mercedes

Also Present: Kristin Allen, Bob Andrew, Patrick Colvin, David Lightly, Elaine Sokyrka, Maureen Wild.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Welcome & Agenda accepted

2. Acknowledgement

David Lightly offered a land acknowledgement reminding us about the purpose and importance doing them. It's not box-ticking, and it's important to think about what acknowledging FN ancestors means for the Commons.

3. Team Reports

Woods Task Group: Diane Conrad (verbal report and extensive discussion):

Proposed Outreach Team Mandate circulated to all team reps prior to the meeting)
This discussion occurred in two sections and is summarized below under **Items Returned To.**

Newcomers Team: Patrick Colvin (verbal report)
- Nothing to report from the Newcomers Team
- Patrick also summarized his work on the yurt.

Process Team: David Lightly (verbal report)
- Importance of getting the message out about how we behave on the Commons with reference to the "Agreement" found on the website.
- A poster was created from the agreement. **ACTION:** David will send Jinny a copy of the poster to circulate.
- **C:** North Gardeners have integrated the principles from both documents into their agreement document.

North Garden: Maureen (verbal report)
- 16 of 18 plots confirmed; 2 small ones available
- Significant donation of fencing materials from Annette Sweeney for deer fencing around apple orchard; now stored in Goat Barn. Bob A. to send Thank You card to Annette.
- A NCG greenhouse potting bench was cut and installed by Bob A. and Maureen from repurposed scraps from Paisley Place.

- Linda Gilkeson gardening webinars streamed in farmhouse Nov 20 6:30-8:30pm (a 2nd one to happen in Feb).
- Public fundraising event: Nov.16th Gabriola's Tribute to Joanna Macy event received $655.75 in donations. $355.75 of this earmarked for Commons fencing needs ($300 to PHC Children's Gardening Program).

Yurt Keepers Team: Kristin (written report)

- Rentals: In the month of November, the Yurt generated $340 in rental income. The best month so far. We are seeing an increase in rental inquiries from a wide variety of folks leading workshops, classes and musical events.
- Fundraising: In November, we raised $210 for the Yurt at the first public yurt fundraiser. The next fundraising event is this Saturday, Dec 6th, at 7pm, featuring Wild Little Spring (Vickey Bowes and Mikey Swallow, with Dinah Dee guests) and Colleen Reid. Tickets are available at Nature Spirit Earth Market for $20 cash. There MAY be a few tickets available at the door before the event, but we don't recommend waiting to find out.
  So that's a total of $550 of income for the yurt in November. Not bad!
  We intend to write a grant application to the Gabriola Recreation Society to help us meet our goal for constructing a new woodshed for the yurt. The deadline is the end of January for projects that will happen between February and June of 2026.
- Rental of Yurt: The homeschooling group is thrilled to be able to gather in the yurt on a weekly basis. We have had a weekly yoga and meditation group and the kirtan group is back in the yurt weekly, too. A monthly community dance is being planned for the wintery months, as well as other workshops and classes. The Yurt Keepers are working with the Communications team to get a public calendar of events up on the Commons Website soon!
- Yurt Upgrades: We are slowly clearing out the yurt's "closet" to make more space for storage of chairs and useful items.
- There was a work bee last month to enclose the underneath of the yurt to prevent camping and garbage collection under there. Donations of wood from Betty and Bob were gratefully accepted. A panel of plywood was promptly broken, so the team reinforced the walls to hopefully prevent further vandalism.
- We plan to install exterior lighting around the yurt this month, for use only when the yurt is being occupied by renters.
- We still need a shoe shelf built for inside the yurt door if anyone feels excited to construct something simple.

20th Anniversary Celebration: Jinny Hayes (verbal report)

- Good attendance at both the party at the Commons Nov. 8th and Shelagh Huston's Museum Series talk Nov. 9 t the Golf Club. Thanks to all who contributed to both events by speaking or helping with setups and takedowns,

Property Stewardship Team: Bob Andrew (verbal report)

- Hedge trimming update: great help, all appreciated.
- Workshop developments: Wood Worker Guild contribution and interest and now a new PHC Initiative is starting, called MenShed, so more use is anticipated; shop will need work!
- Conversation room door is in process.
- Some campers have been around. This is a reality we have to deal with. Unfortunate damage to Farmhouse deck; garbage in woods & Timberframe. Repair to deck is pending (and dangerous in the meantime).

- Workbees are being well attend, average 15.
- Driveway repairs are done and some water repair is needed near PHC; team is aware of someone who knows how to fix this.

Communications Team: Jinny Hayes (verbal report)

- VERY pleased that a team is reforming; it is SO needed! Thanks to Colleen Reid, Kristin Allan, and Rob Stephenson
- The need to track team mandates: All teams should revisit and update their mandates and get them to the Communications team for refreshment of the website.
- Jinny read out the names of teams that are active and other teams that have been inactive and whose mandates needed removal from the website. Inactive teams' mandates are now not visible on the website; they're there should a team wish to remuster, but they are simply not visible to site visitors/potential volunteers..
- When mentioned that Labyrinth Team will be drawn into Trails and Green Spaces: Noted by Patrick that it needs trimming; **ACTION:** he will do that at the workbee on Saturday.

Trustees Report: Bob Andrew (verbal report)

- New board members (3) are being recruited.
- Honoraria for contract workers discussed.
- Possibility for a caretaker on the Commons discussed.
- Item tabled from last meeting: Anyone interested can have access to Heather's resignation letter and a timeline of events leading up to her resignation from the Trustees' perspective. Process has been upsetting for all involved; no need to assign blame.

Commons/PHC Liaison - David Lightly (verbal report)

- This arm of the Trustees has a new member, Rob Stephenson.
- Reminder from Jinny that PHC is always welcomed to attend Council meetings.
- Mention from Bob about board-to-board meetings; will be working with a facilitator.

Council Stewards: Jinny (verbal announcement)

- Looking for new members

4. Other Reports

Health & Well-being Collaborative: Bob is Commons Rep (verbal report)

- The Commons has a role to play with that collaboration of >50 Gabriola groups
- Passed around priorities of the Collaborative.

Gabriola Island Land Stewardship Society: David is Commons Rep (verbal report)

- Nothing to report.
- Sustainable Gabriola likes the fact that the Golf Course is for sale and GILSS is looking at that.

5. Discussion Returned To: Outreach Team Proposal (Diane Conrad)

General discussion:

- Some crossover with other teams, eg, Newcomers and Sharing the Commons. STC mandate clarified; it is the initial screening body for all new initiatives on the Commons. Communications Team crosses every team function when it is working well.

- Proposed mandate needs increased specificity and clarification of how the new team will be different from PHC's outreach role, The Collaborative (EWAT)**.**
- Strategies should be COMMONS focussed rather than community focused.
- **Bob read out comments from Trustees and others as follows:**
  - First, I would personally like to loudly applaud the work and commitment to date of the people who have been working with the "Woods Folks." Clearly there have been some good relationships built with the Commons. I would note however that this, I suspect, is going to be a long-term situation, for the Commons and for the Community.
  - Numerous comments re: the proposed mandate have been identified by the Trustees and others.
    - Within the purview of the Trustees (financial and legal): Of all the comments sent in, only one really applies to the Trustees: There is a consensus from those who commented (4 Trustees) that there should be no building of structures or shelters on the Commons, if this is one of the goals/purposes of the Outreach Team.
    - The whole paper is vague; if directed to disenfranchised, homeless, food deprived folks it would help to plainly state this. The mandate itself is really open to interpretation.
    - Following is a compendium of what I have had sent to me:
    - Objectives: 1) This objective is ongoing throughout the Commons already.
      2) "Shared responsibility". We have a few documents (including the Conflict Management and Respectful Relationships document and the Agreement document) which address this objective. There needs to be a thorough understanding of these documents for any mandated Team to deal with relationships.
      3) "Serve as a liaison between Commons and community members at large": Outreach Team is not seen as a good liaison body from the Commons/community, eg consider volunteer recruitment.
    - Strategies: There is a lot here. Does the Outreach Team really want to delve into all this? It isn't the job of the Commons to develop education events, forums, social campaigns, etc. We have done so in the past, just to get the Community at large to pick up the ball. We simply do not have the resources to do this.
    - "Seek funding to achieve goals": What are the goals?
    - Indicators of success: Avoid the mandate around how people feel or using that as an indicator of success. Base success more on getting people involved in Commons projects and initiatives.
    - If the goal is for the Commons to take on the disenfranchised this is not in our purview.
    - This is a difficult situation that the Commons is poorly equipped to deal with. Further, it's not in our purview. Clearly the Commons is being affected, but this is a much larger issue than we can handle. Yes, form a group, continue to do the good work done so far but do not expect the Commons to take on the responsibility of servicing the problem brought to us. It must be clearly recognised the Commons is not a service-delivering body.
- **ACTION:** Diane will revise and re-submit an Outreach Team proposal for the January meeting.

6. Meeting Closure at 7.00 pm.