COMMONS COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 6, 2026

Send Reports to: **council@gabriolacommons.ca**

Facilitator: Jinny Hayes

Notetaker: Maureen Wild

Timer: Bob Andrew

Also present: Kristin Allan, Patrick Colvin, Robbie Huston, Mercedes Jayne, Brent O'Malley, Kim Kasasian, Betty Kehler, Mike Cozak, Melissa Neville

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Welcome & First Nations Acknowledgement** – Bob acknowledged learning from First Nations in the north and their close relationship to the land, and how this has affected his own coming to better know and experience the land in a more intimate way at the Commons. Culturally we 'save what we love' … while white culture has a pattern of destroying what we have not learned to love.

2. **Agenda Approved as posted.**

3. **TEAM REPORTS:**

Board of Trustees – Bob Andrew (verbal report)

The Board did not meet in Dec. Next meeting is Jan. 7.

They will have a retreat Jan. 11 to discuss "Long Range Planning" covering many topics, e.g. live-in caretaker, paid jobs, Elders Eco village.

Re: feedback on Commons website byline: No feedback yet.

Re: feedback on the "Agreement poster" no consensus but suggestions:
- make it even shorter, just segments of wording in large type
- create a large permanent sign. Where to post?
- paint segments on some walls

See attached Draft: Appendix 1.

Have a very good/improved working relationship with PHC, eg, a clothing issue at the Timberframe. PHC offered to deal with it to see if any of the significant amount of clothing was usable (it was not) and will take any good clothing to give away.

Colleen Reid has revived the monthly Commons Newsletter and it is fabulous.

Communications – written report submitted by Colleen Reid

The Communications Team has been focusing on strengthening connections with the wider Gabriola community through social media and the reactivation of the Commons email list and monthly newsletter. With many new residents arriving on the island in recent years, this work supports a shared understanding of what the Gabriola Commons is — and why it matters.

We recently shared our second monthly newsletter, and the email list continues to grow. To support this, we've added a "Join Our Email List" pop-up on the Commons website and created a pinned post on our Facebook page inviting sign-ups.

Community input is essential. We warmly encourage teams to share updates, stories, photos, and calls to action. Each month, a mid-month email is sent to team leads inviting them to contribute:

• What your team has been working on
• What's coming up next
• Volunteer invitations or community events
• Photos or short videos from your activities: Visual content helps bring the Commons to life and is greatly appreciated. Please send photos or short videos to: Colleen Reid - wildwellness.live@gmail.com

Looking ahead, the Communications Team will also be sharing monthly updates in the *Gabriola Sounder*, inviting the broader community to engage with the Commons through hands-on volunteering, renting Commons amenities, and participating in community gatherings. These Sounder updates will offer a brief overview of recent activities and upcoming plans.

Thank you to all teams for the care, creativity, and collaboration that help keep the Commons visible, vibrant, and rooted in community.

Community Kitchen Stewards – verbally report by Brent O'Malley

No Real report; got through Christmas with no issues.

On lookout for Kitchen Stewards to work with Brent, especially helpful when decisions need to be made about certain things. Good to have someone who also works in the kitchen from time to time. Kim will ask a few persons directly.

Property Stewardship Team – oral report by Kim Kasasian

The hot water tank in the farmhouse developed a leak and had to be replaced. It cost $2,500.

Because of the recent upgrade to the Community Kitchen electrics, we needed a generator specifically for the kitchen. Gloria has generously donated one.

The farmhouse deck rails are in very poor shape and dangerous. They will need to be replaced soon. We hope to do it section by section.

The person who fixed the corner of the Community Kitchen roof that was crushed by the PHC van discovered lots of problems with the roof. He supplied us with a thorough report so we will ask him to do the same for all the other roofs.

As PHC gets more and more busy, they have an increasing amount of garbage and recycling. PST plans to work with PHC on coming up with solutions.

The Timberframe was recently swamped with clothes from an unknown source. The clothes were too damp and moldy to be of use, so they have gone to landfill. PHC has agreed to take any good donated clothes, and to sort and distribute them. We also have new signs at the Timberframe asking that clothing and bedding not be left there.

As everyone knows there are plans to give the north side of the Farmhouse a facelift. PST suggests that the north side of the house be given a clean and a fresh coat of stain to make the most of the facelift when it happens.

Q: Is PHC helping with the water tank replacement cost?
A: No; a compression tank is needed at approx. $1500.

North Gardens – written report by Maureen Wild & Mike Cozak.
• Materials for the new compost bin system have been purchased from and prepared by Arbutus employee(s) re: cutting boards to the lengths for the compost bin model.
- Is there a Commons **Thank You** card that can go to Arbutus for both their generous discount on these materials as well as for the cutting the boards to size?
Action: Bob A. will get a card to Maureen.
• Materials are being stored off location by Mike & Melissa who will construct the compost bins in warmer weather.
• Woodchip pile at the southwest corner of Rollo where it meets The Commons: thanks to the hedge project. Chips will be used for pathways in the gardens and elsewhere on the Commons.
• There are still two small plots available to new gardeners. Our agreement indicates that currently registered gardeners will be offered more garden space if vacant plots are not taken by Dec. So, these will now be offered to them on first come, first serve basis.
Action: Maureen will let Colleen Reid to announce two plots are still available.

Farm Team – verbal report by Betty Kehler
• everything is sleeping now.
• Betty's Bob has gleaned usable wood pieces from the Paisley Place dumpster and stored some in the Goat Barn.
• Fencing around the Orchard: **Action:** Betty will remind Tanner to calculate how many t-posts are needed for the one side to be rebuilt. T-posts can then be ordered from Arbutus. A start date will come for a fencing work bee. In the meantime, Betty will cut the blackberries away from fence line area.
• A memorial for Christine Watt (former apple juicer at the Commons) is scheduled at The Commons for Sunday Jan 25th, 2 pm.

Council Stewards (written report by Jinny Hayes)

As an intro to tonight's meeting, Bob & Jinny (current active members of this team) thought we'd review the purpose and raison d'etre of Council to remind us all how it works and why a strong steering group is important, ie, we need at least one more member. This is from the *Introduction to the Commons 2024/2026* document:

> The Commons Coordinating Council is the heart of the organization and governance of the Gabriola Commons. It meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7pm in the Farmhouse. It is the place where teams, groups and community members share ideas and information and ensure the health and well-being of the Commons.
>
> Council format includes reports about Commons activities and its interactions with the Gabriola community. Discussions are facilitated and minutes are recorded. ...
>
> Although Council is not primarily a decision-making body, decisions may be made by consensus on matters that cross teams or involve the Commons as a whole. Any decisions are recorded in the Council Notes, which are sent out to all teams and are posted monthly on the Commons website...

The Council Stewardship Team supports the functioning of the Commons Coordinating Council by:

- Ensuring the smooth functioning of Commons Coordinating Council meetings.
- Assisting teams and individuals on effective ways to report to Council orally and in writing.
- Illustrating the values related to Commons agriculture, ecology and community.
- Initiating updating the *Introduction to the Commons* as required.

Therefore: It's not Council Stewards' role to do all the facilitating and minute-taking, but rather to facilitate others to do these important tasks on a rotational and volunteer basis. So, in the friendliest way of asking: please "step up" and consider becoming a member of this team.
• involves about a half-hour meeting monthly and a couple of emails or phone calls.
Suggestion: Consider resuming team rotations for Facilitation and note-taking at Council/

Trails and Green Spaces Team – submitted by Heather Menzies in an email
• Team is revising its mandate, partly considering care for the labyrinth having been folded into TAGS responsibilities. Heather will forward the revised draft mandate when the team has it ready to show to other teams for comment.
• A small work party in December did some maintenance work on the labyrinth too.
• Patrick noted that Raymond weed whacked the labyrinth.
Q. Can we purchase a 2nd battery for the battery-operated weed whacker?
Action: Bob A. for the PST will investigate purchasing a 2nd battery pack.

Process Team: David was not present, but Patrick had a query about the code of conduct statement (about to be posted); it does not clearly identify that it also applies to visitors (not only to volunteers and participants).

Yurt Keepers Team – written report from Kristin delivered by Mercedes Jayne

1. Rentals: In the month of December, the Yurt brought in about $500 from rentals of the space. The best month so far; although that was reported last month, we surpassed that amount in the heart of winter.

2. Fundraising:

   a. In December, we raised nearly $300 between the second fundraising event and generous donations.
   b. The next fundraising event is on Saturday, February 21st from 3-5pm, featuring Tad Hargrave from Marketing for Hippies. He will be offering something special outside of his normal ethical business marketing workshops called "Building the Bone House of Belonging: An Evening with Tad Hargrave On Culture Work - A Human Scaled Approach To The Troubles Of Our Time". Tickets will be available starting next week at Swap Shop on a sliding scale of $20-40 cash.
   c. 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 to be determined by the GRS, but they said if we apply now, we will be in the applicant pool whenever they create a deadline.

3. Rental of Yurt: Multiple groups are using the yurt on a weekly basis. We continue to get rental inquiries, and we are strategizing on how to do monthly yurt rental advertising. We just received a confirmed booking all the way in May!

4. Yurt Upgrades:

   a. We were able to purchase a firewood rack to store wood inside the yurt and we will also have a kindling box built soon to keep it all tidy in the yurt with ample fire starting materials for a week or two at a time.
   b. Mercedes purchased some lovely exterior lighting that she installed last week. It makes evening events much more welcoming and allows for a well-lit outdoor gathering space during event breaks.
   c. We still need a shoe shelf built for inside the yurt door if anyone feels excited to construct something simple.

5. Q: Can team hold petty cash frequent small expenses? Yurt Keepers will ask Finance Team for perhaps $50. A: Generally, if a team raises the funds, they can decide how to manage them as long as Finance Team is "in the know".

4. Affiliate Reports

PHC – Jinny reported on behalf of Christina (PHC Director), who emailed her regrets & report
• PHC meets with David Lightly as the Commons liaison. PHC is working on the garbage situation with help from PST/Bob Andrew.

• PHC is sprucing up the inside as it has been quite a while and putting a floor in the main office as it is currently only painted plywood.
• All clothes that are left (eg, at Timberframe recently) that look like they can be used if washed can be brought to PHC to be washed and redistributed.
• Question for the Community Kitchen: can have bins that can be used for the use in the kitchen?
Action: Brent will follow-up with Tami re: Christina's question about garbage bins in the community kitchen.
• Christina welcomes any comments or feedback.

5. Special Agenda Item: Commons Workshop – oral & written proposal by Robbie Huston

Robbie proposes that we create a workshop stewardship team to take the Commons Workshop from its current state to a fully functioning usable community workshop.

Background

The Commons Workshop has always been a useful space and it's been used extensively ever since the Commons was created. However, it's never been available to the whole community. There are a variety of reasons for this. One is concerns around the danger of injury and liability risk. Another is who will monitor the space and look after the equipment.

Recently, we have received a very generous donation of new, high-quality power tools [Ed Note: > $10,000]. These tools, properly used, would allow the shop to be capable of nearly any woodworking undertaking.

What is required

In order to make this space into the community shop that it could be, we need a team of people to undertake several tasks:

- Find out what our insurance concerns would be for third-party liability.
- Determine the best way to install the new equipment and to complete the installation.
- Established a set of procedures to allow the community access to the tools. This might include an hourly or daily rental fee, a booking procedure, possibly a shop host to ensure safety, regular inspections, etc..

Robbie would like to serve on this team or task group and encourages anyone else who is interested in this project to join. Patrick Colvin volunteered. Other suggestions to:
Robbie Huston robbie.gabriola@gmail.com 250-802-0672

Discussion

• Jinny mentioned the guide for starting teams in the *Introduction to the Gabriola Commons* and the template for mandates on the website.
• **Q:** Is the space insulated? **A:** Yes, but not heated
• Suggestion: find another community workshop, eg, Cowichan.

• Brent is Trustee with the Commons insurance “portfolio”
• Possible meeting soon; would like it up and running by summer.

6. Other Items

Kim raised the question of expediency of the Commons decision-making process. There are two identified routes which have been worked on, documented and brought up before. Kim raises the question of shortening timelines for decisions whenever appropriate.

• Robbie summarized the usual one-month process, but often this is not practical because of meeting times of teams and getting back to Council (when this is warranted). The process is elongated to be sure that everyone is heard.

Discussion:
• Commons Trustees try their best to make decisions in a timely manner.
• The possibility of giving ourselves two paths for decision making, which is essentially what is happening since eth last tie Kim raised this issue and its associated community-wide image that it takes so long to make decisions on the Commons.

Action: Bob and Jinny offered to reconvene the Governance Ad Hoc Group, and to include others interested – like Mercedes, Kim, Patrick – to clarify decision-making process in the document.

7. Closing

ADDENDUM: Community Agreement Poster DRAFT

Teams to please discuss and provide input to Process Team: peace@gabriolacommons.ca and Trustees: trustees@gabriolacommons.ca

The Gabriola Commons

Community Agreement

The Gabriola Commons thrives through relationships of respect, care, and shared responsibility between people and the land.

By being here, all visitors and participants agree to uphold the following principles:

Welcome Diversity
We strive to create a space where people of all ages, abilities, identities, backgrounds, and perspectives feel safe and included.

Practice Respectful Conduct
We commit to interactions that are kind, considerate, and supportive. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, or harmful behaviour — in words or actions — are not compatible with the Commons.

Respond with Care
If challenging behaviour arises, we encourage calm, respectful communication and restorative approaches whenever possible.

Care for the Land & Facilities
The Commons is held in trust for the community and future generations. Please help steward this place by following our foundational guidelines:

no fires • no drugs/alcohol • no smoking • no littering • no camping

& by treating all natural areas, gardens, and facilities with care.

Anyone who chooses not to uphold these principles is understood to be stepping outside the spirit of the Commons community. We invite restorative dialogue and steps toward repair whenever possible.

GABRIOLA COMMONS
• where land and people meet •