Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)

Written Reports to: council@gabriolacommons.ca

Notes of Meeting of May 5, 2026

Facilitator: Betty Kehler

Notes: Diane Conrad

Timer: Bob Andrew

Also Present: Kristin Allen, Mark Fenster, Jinny Hayes, Kim Kasasian, Drea Leed, Christina Rajsic, Don Smardon, Rob Stephanson, Maureen Wild

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Welcome & Agenda accepted

2. Land Acknowledgement – Betty
Betty noted that Gabriola settlers used the land as a "grocery store", so she tries to give some and always appreciate what the land has given. She also donates to the Eel Grass initiative.

3. Team Reports

Kitchen Stewards: Mark - Oral Report

• Report on the new stove: seems to be working out. Payment has been settled
• There's a problem with the dishwasher/sanitizer overheating; needs a replacement part. That is being dealt with; the part has been ordered. In the meanwhile, there is a three-step cleaning process is in place for all users.
• PHC hasn't needed the Community Kitchen yet but may need to use it sometime in the future.

Farm Teams

North Garden: Maureen – written report
• COMPOST BINS
Thanks to gardener Michael for constructing the units at home, leveling the ground, and installing them just right. Melissa twice made and posted signage regarding bin use, but unfortunately, someone took down both sets. Plan C for signage is in progress.
• WATER / MULCHING / EMERGENCIES
Signage is up on our NCG shed to **conserve water.** Gardeners are strongly encouraged to mulch due to anticipated drought conditions. A water emergency system is in place in the NCG and with PHC who share the garden space (re: what to do, who to contact, signage to place on main valve)
• GREENHOUSE
Over recent weeks our greenhouse has progressed toward becoming more functional. Gratitude to NCG gardeners, Karl and Marlo, and to Romeo (Commons volunteer) for completing the metal roof. Bob Andrew installed a second potting table (thanks to a scrap floorboard from Paisley Place). Bob purchased any needed roofing and gutter materials from Arbutus paid for by the Property Stewardship

Team. Gratitude to Karl and Marlo for installing the glass panes and a 1/2 height metal windbreak on the east side. And thanks to Bob Kehler for gleaning and giving Paisley Place castoff construction materials and for installing a door frame and screen door (from GIRO). A new door handle is here. Karl plans to install the gutter soon.

• **NORTH SIDE OF SHED**

Thanks to NCG gardener Robert for digging out the soil from that side, sloping it just right, and to Patrick for hauling it away. And to Kim (Commons Property Stewardship), and to NCG gardeners, Patrick and Marlo, for creating a brick and rock feature at the base and on the slope to prevent soil erosion, and for planting perennials here (donated by Kim).

Discussion: Maureen also talked about possibly needing to replace the old water spigots. One of the spigots was broken. There was some discussion. Signage will be posted to remind people to turn off the main water valve. Rob & Maureen will go take a look after the meeting.

Q: We'd like to hear from the South Garden more often. Jinny will send an e-mail. [Ed Note: Done]

Q: David asked how we could increase the water supply. This is an important discussion: see "other Items" below.

Blueberries: Drea oral report

Tanner is setting up a filter for the water drip system for the blueberries. We've collected wood chip mulch for the blueberries. Weeding of the blueberries is complete.

Yurt Keepers: Kristin – written report

Rentals: The yurt keepers have made a postcard-sized flyer that will be posted around the island to boost rentals of the yurt.

Yurt maintenance:

• The wood stove needed a replacement door. It was covered under the warranty. The handle was repeatedly seizing up and was preventing proper use of the stove.

• The yurt's spring-cleaning work bee has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 30th from 10am-2pm. We will be doing indoor and outdoor cleaning and hopefully painting the plywood skirting that was installed in the fall. We may also create a rain deflector for over the door to help keep that area drier in the wet season.

Fundraising:

• Local band, Wild Little Spring, has scheduled another yurt fundraiser for Saturday, May 23rd at 7pm. Tickets are available at Nature Spirit Earth Market.

• Mark Fenster hosted his first fundraiser called *Serenity Sessions for the Yurt* and Gabriola Outreach last month. He will offer another one on the evening of Sunday, June 28th.

• The Yurt Keepers Team has been awarded a $1,000 grant from the Gabriola Recreation Society to put toward the construction of a woodshed for the yurt before June 30th.

Team Members:

• The team is seeking 2 new members. We need someone to do the bookings communications as soon as possible. Kristin needs a break. We also need someone willing to do minor maintenance tasks and manage the task of splitting and restocking firewood in the yurt. Patrick Colvin has been doing these tasks and is stepping off the YKT.

Q: The Yurt needs a better communication system for the Commons teams; can we hire someone?

A: Not at present, though paid labour on the Commons is currently being revisited by the Trustees. There was some **discussion** around this but more is needed.

Property Stewardship Team: Kim - oral report

• The dishwasher/sterilizer in the community kitchen has had 2 major problems in a week.
Bob and a new kitchen steward, Steve Towes, have been dealing with getting the dishwasher going again.

• Bob and Kim reseeded the old boules court a second time - the Fall seeding failed.
It's looking hopeful.

• Signs asking gardeners to conserve water went up early this year.

• The deck rail rebuild has been halted until we know what will be required code-wise.

• The proposed Budget for 2026/27 is expenses $31,199.00. Total revenues $3061.00.

• A tally of problems related to the two woods patrol pairs is kept by PST:

- Fires - 8 so far this year. Last year we had 21, one of which required the fire dept. to attend.
- Camps - 3 so far this year that we know of for sure. However, campers now know to pack up and move on before 8:00am - we have seen evidence of this.

Note: The RCMP were here on Sunday to let us know that they are searching for Duggan.
He is off his meds and considered dangerous. They suggest that no one walk through the Commons woods alone. Call 911 if spotted. **Note:** Local RCMP contingent is only Constable Jake and one trainee right now.

Q: Mention of concern regarding people hanging out in the "road allowance" forested area and private property behind Rollo Centre.

A: My have to close down the woods again; that did work last year.

Trustees Report: Bob - written report

• The Trustees could still use another person to help the Financial Team.

• Re the **RDN Code Compliance Project**:

To cover the initial costs, having a Code Consultant give us a report on what is deficient in the house to meet the code as a public gathering place, hiring a Structural engineer to help us decide what actually needs to be done, meeting with the RDN, and begin to look at having an Architect draw up plans for us to submit for a building permit, we are drawing from funds put aside to upgrade the house and grounds (roughly $15,000). We then need to have plans drawn up and submitted to the RDN for a building permit. Some of the things we know we will need to do: better drywall separation of some rooms and the downstairs to the upstairs, two new metal stairways off the back deck, putting up fire resistance below the deck, removing the skylight added a few years ago to the East end addition, etc.
We have the initial Code Consultants report and we are now in consultation with the RDN and the consultant. We are expecting the Engineers report in a couple of weeks.
Inevitably, unless we are successful with a couple of grant applications, we will be going to the community for financial assistance.

• July 1, RDN will no longer be picking up Commons and PHC garbage; private removal will be very expensive. An ongoing issue.

Q: What if we are not able to meet the code requirements?

A: The answer is fairly simple, the many uses of the building as it is now would have to cease and the building retains its status as a Single Family Dwelling.

• Rob added: This is a serious issue. Once we hear from RDN we will need to make the necessary changes in a timely fashion. No deadline has yet been set. We should communicate the need to the community sooner than later, once we know how much money will be needed.

• Drea mentioned a grant that we could apply for: Canada Community Construction Grant.

On a brighter note: There have been 2 meetings with the Agi Coop, PHC and the Commons to get the ball rolling for the Fall Fair and the Farm-to-Table Fest. Stay tuned.

• Teams are requested to report on the **number of volunteer hours** that each team spent in the past month. Teams should figure out for themselves how to tally hours. Probably needs some guidelines. Has to be a "ballpark".

Ad Hoc Commons PHC support committee: Diane written report
April 17th: Christina, PHC ED, was away for this meeting. In attendance from our Commons ad hoc group were Bob Andrew, Bob Martin, Leanne Duncan and Diane Conrad.

• Mary Lee reported on what was learned from the Islands Trust: the agricultural zoning of the Commons will be the biggest obstacle to a new permanent building for the Community Hub - but not insurmountable. We brainstormed some non-permanent options e.g. shipping container structure.
• PHC is continuing to pursue funding for the community engagement they are planning, which has been pushed to May/June.
• They are also continuing to pursue ideas for other locations for the Community Hub, though the Commons would be a preferred site.
• Leanne took lots of notes (thanks Leanne), so if there are any questions, please ask.
Q: What are the ramifications of the Commons leaving the Agricultural Land Reserve?
A: The ALR protects the Commons from development. Noted from Covenant team clarifications with the ALC: they consider all 26 acres agriculturally viable (eg, upright growing structures) – and want to keep it that way. It would be very difficult to have any land removed from the BC ALR.

Covenant Team: Rob oral report

• Getting the Covenant on Title needs to be completed by next July.
• There are some issues with the version that the Team received back from the Local Trust Lawyers' review, eg, paid work on the Commons (currently under review by our Trustees) and a section about how payment would be handled if the Commons were to violate the terms of the Covenant (called the Rent Charge). Team is proposing that such monies would be paid into a trust, which we could get back once issues have been dealt with.

Q: What will a covenant really do for the Commons? Is it done mostly to protect the Covenant holder?
A: No. Covenant Holder does not benefit. A covenant on the Land Title represents a promise to keep the Commons as it is, for Gabriola, in perpetuity. If left to By Laws, they could change.

Council Stewards: Jinny
• Council Stewards are currently Jinny & Bob. The next team to facilitate Council will be the Property Stewardship Team.

5. Affiliate Reports

PHC: Christina - oral report

• There has not been a liaison meeting
• PHC is in a financial pinch; they're slowing their spending, eg, Tammy is taking the summer off. The Gaming Grant has been taken away from not-for-profits and will be instead funding government capital projects. No hot lunch program over the summer. Tammy volunteered to take the summer off. Some spending has been halted. They are applying for other grants.

• Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative and HealthCare Foundation are doing community mapping/consultation projects, looking at community health needs, so community consultation around creating the Community Hub may be folded into this. Meanwhile, still plan to go to the community.
• There are plans and funding in place to renovate the shed where animal food is being held. This area is a concern re: rat control. There was discussion re: possible solutions.
• Overwhelmed with the increased food distribution, ie, 120 people needing meals has become 415!

6. Other Ageda Items

1. Water sources are reservoir (two weeks supply) and pond (almost out). We could add additional rainwater collection. We could add this into our grant applications. We need a forum on this issue. Drea has offered to lead a Commons table at Silva Bay Market and has recruited volunteers.

2. Could there be a spot on the Commons for a **traditional First Nations fish BBQ event**? The Sharing the Commons Team will be approached to consider this. Also check with the Fire Department.

3. Drea will put herself forward as a **Trustee**.

7. Adjournment: 8.25 pm.