Gabriola Commons Coordinating Council Notes of Meeting February 3, 2026

Reports to: council@gabriolacommons.ca

Facilitator: Maureen Wild
Timer: Jinny Hayes
Note-taker: Melissa Neville

Also Present:
Patrick Colvin, Robbie Huston, Mercedes Jayne, Brent O'Malley, Betty Kehler, Diane Conrad, Bob Andrew, Drea Leed, Colleen Reid, David Lightly.

1. Welcome & First Nations Acknowledgement

Maureen shared an acknowledgement inspired by a past reflection, recognizing ancestors as knowledge keepers of place and encouraging all (human and non-human) to steward that knowledge.

2. Agenda: Approved as posted.

3. Team Reports

Community Kitchen Stewards: Brent O'Malley (verbal report)
• Thanks to Kristin and Ken for volunteering to the team, which is now 3 members • No updates yet regarding the new stoves

Yurt Keepers: Mercedes Jayne (written report by Kristin Allan)

1. Rentals: In the month of January, the yurt was rented 12 times! Very good for winter! *Note*: When the temp is near freezing, there needs to be a hearth keeper to keep the stove FULL!

2. Fundraising:
• The next fundraising event is on Saturday, February 21 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". He will be discussing achievable ways that we can

all co-create a new culture of belonging in a world that can seem so broken. Tickets are still available at The Swap Shop on a sliding scale of $20-40 cash.

3. Grant Funding for Yurt:
• Submitted a grant application to the Gabriola Recreation Society to help us meet our goal for constructing a new woodshed for the yurt this Spring. The quote for the woodshed materials is $1600. We asked for $1000 and said we'd put in $600. We will be notified in March about the outcome of our application.
• Did we get approval to erect a woodshed near the yurt last year when we ALMOST applied for this same grant (we didn't apply then due to the fact that at the time we were uncertain about the feasibility of installing a new woodstove in the yurt for insurance reasons).

4. Yurt Upgrades:
a. We were able to purchase and erect a firewood rack to store larger pieces of firewood inside the yurt and we also have a new kindling box.
b. We still need a simple shoe shelf (~3 ft length) built for inside the yurt door if anyone feels excited to construct something. Is there a carpenter in the room who can take this on? (will be asking monthly).
• Woodshed: new wood; refurbished roofing materials preferred
• Drea offered reclaimed wood from her shed

5. Events posting:
• Commons events posted centrally
• Yurt team may create and share a full schedule with Communication Team.

Board of Trustees: Bob Andrew (written report)
• Bit of a Finance Team crises: Two of our very dedicated members of the Finance Team are retiring; Mary Wilson and Gloria Filax have been doing an incredible job for the Trustees, and the Commons generally, in helping to keep our books in order. They will be leaving as of the end of the Fiscal year (March 31); thus we need a couple of new people to take this on. Two of the present Trustees will take this on temporarily they can but they have other commitments on the Board. If there are any Treasurer types out there willing to help, please step forward. Fortunately, with good people backing her,

our book keeper (Suzi Heubsch) is staying on. • Interactions between PHC and the present Board are working quite smoothly right now. • The RDN is withdrawing garbage pickup from any "commercial" organizations, which will lead to quite financial burdens for the Commons and PHC. We are writing the RDN to see if non-profits can be exempt from this new regulation, due to begin June 1, 2026. • Both PHC and the Commons see the need for PHC to expand. PHC will be addressing this issue with our Trustees this week.

• The Governance working group produced an 11 page summary document called

"Introduction to the Commons". It is currently available on the website, but will be modified a little and reposted shortly: https://www.gabriolacommons.ca/wp content/uploads/2026/01/Introduction-to-Gabriola-Commons-2026-01-27.pdf • The Trustees are working to create an hours-tracking form for teams on the Commons. We would like teams to try to keep track of the total hours they work. Hoping for the first two weeks in March, June and Sept. An email to Teams will be forthcoming.

Q: Option for garbage removal is to pay our own; huge rat problem.

A: Yes

Suggestion: Alexa & her son at Somerset Farm have designed a mixer we might consider to reduce volume.

Property Stewardship: Bob Andrew (written report)

• Continuously doing upgrades, repairs, etc. all around the property, mostly at workbees; for a few weeks we have had 16 people turn up for workbees (and lunch) and we had no problem putting everyone to work.

• New trench at the bottom of the driveway, new fan in the Community Kitchen, new plug for the apple masher, repair plug in the septic tanks and, the best of all, we now have the solar array on the house roof and the orchard storage building working again, pushing electrons back into the grid.

Woodwork Shop: Robbie Huston (verbal)

Updates:

• Initial meeting held Jan 22

• Reviewing layout and machine placement

• Electrical likely needs upgrades (plugs + possibly panel)

• Insurance remains unresolved

Insurance discussion:

• Volunteers are covered under Commons insurance

• Hobby/personal use not covered
• Waivers required but not fully protective
• Insurance company hesitant to cover workshop activities
• **Suggestion**: consult other community workshops for best practices
Q: Number on team**? A:** 5: Robbie, Drea, Patrick, Bob, Steve.

Farm Team: Betty Kehler (verbal report with others, as noted)
• Fencing prioritized to deter deer**,** but rain is delaying work. ACTION: Betty to follow up with Tanner re: fencing supplies.
• Workshops:
Pruning – Feb 22 ($20, $10 deposit)
Berry workshop – Feb 28 (private residence); poster coming

Cracker making workshop - Feb 21, 7–9 pm
• Exploring monthly community speakers in partnership with Gabriola Performance Centre, but did not work out, so moving this programming to Rollo Centre. First speaker will be Betty. **ACTION:** Betty → email Colleen with event details

Blueberry Field: Leanne Duncan
• Significant labour required last season
• Need 5–10 volunteers**; a**dvertising for helpers to go out end of month • Pruning now
ACTION: Leanne → send details to Communications (Colleen)

Communication Team: Colleen Reid (written report)

• Communications continue to focus on strengthening connections and visibility across the Gabriola community. Colleen is the only member of the team at present. • Monthly newsletter is now going out consistently and includes Council meeting Notes, team updates, upcoming events, and other important Commons information. This has helped re-activate our email list and create a clearer communication rhythm for the community.
• Social media presence is growing, and we're seeing increased community engagement as a result — more shares, comments, and curiosity about how to get involved with the Commons.
• **Looking ahead to next month**, we're excited to launch several new initiatives: • *Faces of the Commons:* short interviews and feature articles highlighting the people who steward, volunteer, and gather at the Commons, to be shared in the *Sounder* and online.

• *Get to Know the Commons poster,* designed for mailbox bulletin boards, to help newcomers better understand what the Commons is and how to engage. • *Short videos* coming.
• Overall, momentum is building, and we're seeing increased awareness and participation through consistent, accessible communication.

• All teams have been asked about a byline for the website. Here's one last time before we update it: Two Options:

1. A living commons for land care, food security, and community resilience

2. Collaborative promotion of food sustainability, environmental protection and community benefit
Subtext: The Commons belongs to us all, and it thrives when we care for it together
Discussion: Suggest a combination of both:
"A living commons for land care, food sustainability, environmental protection and community benefit." ACTION: If no objections, Colleen will change this on website.
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North Gardens – Maureen Wild

1. All plots are now assigned for 2026. Almost all payments have been submitted. 2. Michael and Melissa thanked Dallas at Arbutus with the Commons TY card and a little chocolate to share, for the great deal on the materials for the compost bins and for cutting the pieces for us.
3. We rec'd an announcement, via the Commons general email, about funding possibility for community based agricultural projects; this invitation to submit a Letter of Inquiry (LoI) was forwarded to pertinent Commons teams. Maureen suggested a greenhouse in the North Gardens that could be partially used by PHC's Children's Gardening Program. Significant collaborative efforts resulted, involving Maureen, Jinny, Property Stewardship Team (Bob A, Tanner, Kim) and Kristin, and PHC Garden Teachers of the children, Rachel and Morgan. Everyone was open to this possibility of a community greenhouse for collective needs among interested gardeners. Maureen researched various models and all responded via email; one in-person meeting was held at the potential site. Decision: a dome-shaped Sungrow 10 x 32 ft greenhouse. The grant is limited to $10K and our LoI budget was for that full amount. The submission went in on Feb 6; we await the funder's decision on the LoI and if successful, will need

to submit a full proposal about mid-March.

4. PHC staff were open to the idea of collaborating on this project for a shared greenhouse but have indicated the need to discern their own priorities for the work of their garden. 5. The NCG has woodchips available at the corner of Rollo parking lot that meets at the corner of the Commons, to help with our garden paths and muddy spots.

Council Stewards: Jinny (written report)

• Still seeking additional stewards, despite long written report last Council meeting. • Workload includes a short monthly meeting to discuss logistics, and decide each meeting's facilitation, Note-taking, timer and person to do the FN acknowledgement. • Preference for someone already involved on a team

• Past rotating system was not sustained

Discussion:

Suggest trying team rotations again. Head nodding agreement.

Q: Could Council meeting start earlier? General agreement.

ACTION: Bob and Jinny will discuss at next Council Stewards mtg and bring to next Council meeting. Feedback to: council@gabriolacommons.ca

Process Team: David Lightly (written report)

The team meets regularly at 10am on the last Thursday of each month. We welcome

participation from all – with the possible exception of sessions dealing with matters in which we have promised confidentiality. Some of us are not able to attend regularly but provide valuable help in specific circumstances or task groups. The process team does not insert itself into situations on the Commons but stands ready to provide help where requested.

This approach was a factor in changing the team name from "The Conflict Resolution Team" to "The Process Team". We have discussed this name and reconsidered the need for a name which more accurately describes what we do on the commons. Anyone with thoughts on this please tell us.

Most of our last meeting was spent discussing the agreement poster. Our suggestions

have been forwarded to the Communications Team for consideration.

4. Affiliate Reports: None

5. Other Business

A. Commons Community Agreement Poster
• David gave a brief history of the document.
• One version that was circulated with the last Council Notes was formatted by Colleen and feedback was sought. He circulated another pared-down version for feedback tonight. • **Q:** Is having a liquor license for a planned event a conflict with the "no alcohol" requirement? **A:** Alcohol is permitted when renters obtain correct license. • **Q:** Will this be posted? **A:** Yes
• **Q:** Is it worth it, ie, will it work? Enforcement is the challenge. Gives support for those catching infringements. But it raises the issue about whether posted policies are read and followed.
• Some "no's" are good, set boundaries
• Balance privilege and responsibility. Come, have fun, but don't burn down the forest.
• Smoking: if banned, folks just hide to smoke; provide a designated area? • Concern about consistency with current documents
ACTION (ALL) Feedback to David, please and Colleen offered to format again.

B. Wifi Network Proposal (Drea Leed)
• Drea proposes installing network repeater (not extender); repeater is more powerful (up to 300 yards); she volunteers to install.
• Estimated cost: ~ $200 (donated by Drea)
• Expected to reach workshop & yurt
• Power needed from Farmhouse
• Bob to coordinate electrician involvement; Robbie and Colleen offered help also.

• **Suggest:** speak with folks at Gabriola Arts Council as they have tried various options to strengthen wifi.

6. Closing
• Maureen thanked Melissa for Notes-taking and Jinny for keeping time, and we thank HER for facilitating**!**

Next Meeting: March 3, 2026 @ 7:00 pm, Farmhouse