Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)

Written Reports to: council@gabriolacommons.ca

Notes of Meeting of June 2, 2026

Facilitator: Bob Andrew

Notes: Tanner Ellingson

Timer: Don Smardon

Also Present: Mark, Kim, Steve, Mercedes, Jinny, Brent, Jocelyn, Colleen

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Welcome & Agenda accepted

2. Land Acknowledgement: Mercedes
Expressing gratitude for the weather warming up and care for the land here on the Commons. Grateful for everyone who has taken care of the land here for millennia and for everyone here on the Commons who is caring so well for the land now.

Next Team to facilitate the Council meeting will be: **Sharing the Commons Team**

3. Team Reports

Kitchen Stewards: Mark, Steve and Brent

- Sterilizer dishwasher is not functioning (bought over 20 years ago new). Temperature control device has been bought and installed by Bob but no luck on getting it working. The Team has contacted Bastion Janitorial and is looking into buying a new one, used or possibly even leasing one.
- Old stove that was contributing to making the CK so hot was taken out and swapped with the stove that came out of the PHC. The PHC stove doesn't have the BTU output to cook large commercial kitchen meals. Works for smaller meal prep (family sized meal) but that's about it.
- Stove was purchased from PHC for $1,200 and might need to be resold as it isn't doing the job in the commercial kitchen.
- There was an idea of getting Bruno in to using the Community Kitchen but it seems like he has been having issues dealing with VIHA or he's being held up with other things but it seems like things are on hold for him with that.
- Questions have arisen about how much bleach we can realistically flush down the drain into the septic field. The kitchen staff is having to do bleach soaks for the dishes considering that the sterilizer isn't currently working. It's determined (according to AI…) that we're probably fine but long term it could become an issue for the bacteria in the septic system.

Communications Team – Colleen Reid
• Monthly email has been sent out this evening. Some initial info regarding the FarmHouse with the RDN code compliance issues that have arisen and the possibility that we will need to fundraise for that.
• Any teams are welcome to forward information for Colleen to put on the Commons FB page.

North Garden: Maureen (written report presented by Tanner)
• Having two potting tables in the upgraded NCG greenhouse has been a great improvement! More shelves will be added for organizing pots, etc. It will soon have a gutter and downspout attached for water catchment.
• Due to dry conditions and needing to conserve moisture for the plants, MULCHING is the theme word for 2026, with leaves, grass clippings, straw on almost every plot. It's a significant water conservation method as much less irrigation is needed when 2-3" of mulch surrounds each plant and covers the soil surface of each allotment.
• An issue is being dealt with in the NCG since mid-May. It raises the importance of having a community garden agreement which we do. It gives clear guidance re: protocols to follow for all sorts of circumstances, and what's expected for each plot holder in our garden. There's expectation that these guidelines will be followed. We're dealing with a situation where a gardener holding the agreement for her plot cannot fulfill her responsibilities. Unfortunately, she was remiss to follow the guidelines of what to do when unexpected circumstances arise. So, we're dealing with the fallout of her action and those outside of our NCG involved with her in the decision - and her and compromised communication. It's been challenging. We're hoping to come to better understanding moving forward. It's very important that gardeners remind themselves of the Agreement, so these kinds of issues don't happen.

Yurt Keepers: Mark **(**written report by Kristin)
1. Rentals: The yurt keepers have made a postcard-sized flyer that has been posted around the island to encourage rentals of the yurt.
2. Yurt maintenance:
- The yurt's annual spring-cleaning work bee took place on Saturday, May 30th.
- A painting work bee will take place in August to paint the plywood skirting under the yurt.
3. Fundraising:
- Local band, Wild Little Spring, played a fundraising show at the yurt in late May and raised $280 for the yurt.
- Mark Fenster will host a fundraising event called Serenity Sessions on the evening of Sunday, June 28th at 7:30pm. Proceeds will go to the yurt and Gabriola Outreach. Tickets are available at Nature Spirit Earth Market.
4. Yurt Woodshed:
- It's under construction and will be completed by the end of June in order to comply with the Gabriola Rec Society's parameters for the grant money. Tanner and Rainbow have spearheaded this project.
5. Yurt Keepers Hours: approx. 50 hours in May

Property Stewardship Team: Kim – Written report
• We are having trouble deciding which team pays for stuff. If there is any doubt it tends to fall under PST. We need more clarity from the Finance Team about this.
• Someone with a new electric backhoe wants to do a demo on the Commons by doing a job here. We will meet with them on Friday to decide what would be a good job.

• Garbage – RDN will stop doing roadside pickup for the Commons and other commercial and multi-home buildings at the end of June. Instead of signing up with a private garbage company we will take the garbage home to our own bins. If we end up with too much garbage we can get a one-off private pick-up.
• Water – the pond level is dropping fast. Gardeners are being encouraged to be careful with water and to mulch their plots. Tanner has installed a disc filter so that the blueberries can be watered by drip irrigation. We have just started to discuss what we can do about the need for more irrigation water. Bob is installing a well-watcher to keep an eye on the level of the well.
• We have new grass growing on the old boules court. People will need to keep off the grass this year because it is still tender.
• There have been three rounds of graffiti on the cistern in the car park. Kim painted over it with a little pond scene in the hopes that the graffiti will stop.
• Many parents no longer bring their kids to the Commons because of the behaviour of some people who frequently pass their days on the Commons. We say that the Commons is a place for everyone, but it clearly isn't anymore. We have signs all over the Commons saying that "The Commons is a smoking, drug and alcohol free zone;" these directives are completely ignored. We could enforce it, but that would lead to a lot of bad feelings, and possible retaliations. The question is: should we have a smoking area?
• Stuff has been happening: a broken window in the planning room, thefts upstairs in FH, used condoms on paths to FH and community kitchen, large jar of human feces in the little pumphouse near the pond, syringe found at the cob wall.
• Fires this year, so far: 9

Questions
1. Establishing a "smoking area" has been posed, potentially behind the timber frame. Jocelyn brought up issues around the safety factor of the home-schooling group who have kids playing near the yurt and kids sand/play area. Parking lot doesn't seem like a great spot. Suggested spot could be the northeast area of lawn behind the hedge along the side of the PHC driveway? Several other locations + pros and cons. Smokers should be consulted.
2. Water, making the pond larger to catch more water?
3. There have been issues with people who are rip roaring drunk on the Commons, how should we deal with that scenario?
These three issues were tabled to end of the meeting (see below).

Trustees Report: Bob (written report)
• We have been focusing on the Code Compliance project.
• The cost of a Code consultant, a Structural Engineer, an Architect, and a Professional coordinator amounts to a total of roughly $35,000. We have received reports back from the Code Consultant and the Engineer so far ($11,370) and now we must fundraise for the remaining $23,000. This will take us to the stage where we can apply for a building permit to renovate the house to bring it up to code compliance for a publicly occupied building. We did look at several options from "do nothing" to keep on the direction to legalise the building and have settled on the latter.
• We have applied for two grants to date and have been turned down by one.
• We have decided we could use some of our capital reserves to keep us on course while we fundraise.
• We will be fundraising to the tune of about $80,000 to include construction costs.

• Questions regarding how we could co-fundraise with PHC for the costs associated with the FarmHouse Code Compliance issues. Exploring ways in which we could work together with PHC? The

issues should be taken to the Trustees. Can we somehow figure out the amount of cost that would be directly involved? The idea of co-fundraising has been agreed to not be in our best interest.
Comment: Possibility of a corporate sponsor has been raised by Mark Fenster?

Council Stewards: Jinny (written report)
• Rotation of Commons Coordinating Council (CCC) mtgs seems to be working. Tonight PST is taking responsibility and the July meeting will be facilitated by Sharing the Commons, which is next alphabetically.
• By twist of fate, neither Bob nor Jinny is able to attend the July Council meeting.
• Notice is hereby given that Jinny plans retirement from all Commons commitments as of the AGM in October, with the exception oof the Covenant Team. She would like to take on an "understudy" to orient someone to take on Council facilitation, copyediting and circulation of Notes, and website tasks (formerly Communications Team functions).
• Date, time and place of next meeting: We normally meet on the phone a few days before an impending Council mtg. Let us know if you want to attend!

Finance Team – Mercedes (oral report)
• Internet has been switched to a new account to save money on the monthly rate and the speed is faster now.
• We've used up a large amount of AGES fund to do the RDN building project.
Q: Does the WIFI reaches to the Community Kitchen? **A:** No, it barely reaches to the edge of the CK. Possibly Colleen or Drea will put a wifi booster in the wood working shop to get the signal to the CK.
Q: There is a conversation regarding if there could be a Go Fund Me or Canada Helps fundraiser for the Commons FarmHouse (Code compliance) fundraiser. Jinny suggests that both would be best as the Canada Helps might appeal more to elder contributors and go fund me more so to the younger crowd.

Events Team – Jocelyn (oral report)
• Emmet Scrimshaw and Jocelyn are now on the Events Team
• Jocelyn has a meeting about Farm to Table, Apple Fest and Fall Fair to see if the events could possibly be combined in some way. **Question** about why the events need to be combined? **A:** No reason other than Pollen has requested that the Apple Fest and Fall Fair be a separate event. Shannon Krell has volunteered to take on organizing the Fall fair. There is a need to fundraise for the Commons so these events could be a possibly be a source of fundraising.
• Colleen – has two members of the community who are interested in joining the Events Team.

6. Other Agenda Items

Water – Can we make an agreement for mandatory mulching in the Garden areas as a way of conserving water?
• Does it make sense for us to be growing blueberries with the shortage of water?
• Could we charge more per plot and if people are mulching they get their "deposit" back?
• Can we put it into the gardening agreement next year for mulching to be mandatory with the idea that we are all mulching to conserve water for all the gardeners on the Commons.

Jinny commented that she had asked after the last Council meeting for a Team report from the South Gardeners but had had no response from them.

Questions about **smoking** and should there be a designated smoking “spot”? Possibly asking the smokers where they might agree to smoke.
• Jocelyn states that if there was a designated smoking area then it would be easier to direct people who are smoking to that area instead of saying please stop smoking, there is no smoking on the Commons property.
ACTION: Tanner will ask Will tomorrow about how we can best handle people who are smoking on the Commons.

Drunk people on the Commons – Can we hire a security company? Possibly asking Gabriola Outreach to speak to the person or try and de-escalate the situation.
• Should we be calling the police when there are people who are obviously drunk? We need to potentially reach out to XXX to let them know that people (families in particular) are not feeling safe when there are people drinking, yelling obscenities, etc. Jocelyn and ACTION: Colleen And Jocelyn have agreed to reach out to XXX about this issue and see what they can come up with.

7. Adjournment: 8:40 pm.