

Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)

Written Reports to: council@gabriolacommons.ca

Notes of Meeting of July 7, 2026

Facilitator: Gloria

Notes: Diane

Timer: Kristin

Also Present: Mark, Kim, Mercedes, Brent, Maureen, Betty, Bob, Christina, Andreas, Ron, Ian

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Welcome & Agenda accepted

2. Land Acknowledgement: Christina (PHC)

Expressed gratitude and acknowledged that Gabriola was known as the Garden Island where the Snuneymuxw used to grow food.

Gloria added: Honouring Ceremony for Deb Ferens was held on the weekend for the work she has done.

Next Team to facilitate the Council meeting Aug. 4, 6:30 pm will be: The Process Team.

3. Team Reports

Kitchen Stewards: (Brent & Mark oral report)

- The dish sterilizer in the Community Kitchen broke down some time ago. So far, they have not found a reasonable alternative. Usual cost is approx. \$16,000. Someone who regularly works in the kitchen came forward willing to buy one. A cheque has been deposited.
- There is a new Kitchen Steward member: Andrew. They will meet next week.
- The Kitchen Stewards are waiting for Islands Trust's interpretation around a bylaw about what can or cannot be done in the kitchen – e.g. a private business. Kitchen Stewards believe that opening the kitchen to businesses would be of value to the entire community if various organizations receive a percentage of the profits.
- Re: Lovelies Bagels, owner Sarah is having trouble keeping up with demand. Mark sees opportunity to bring this into the CK for benefit for the community. Bagels could be sold off island. Mark is willing to head up the marketing team. Potential profit for the community.

Covenant Team (written report by Jinny, presented by Brent)

- The team is moving forward despite members' disparate summer travel plans and visitors.
- As you know, the Gabriola Local Trust Committee is considering becoming the Covenant Holder and the Island Trust lawyers wanted many changes in the Covenant draft. These have now been made as well as some important changes that the current team initiated, such as clarification of paid work on the Commons.

- An update report to the IT Trustees is on the LTC agenda for their July 16 meeting with the goal of having all 3 documents (Covenant 2026, Stewardship Agreement and Plan and the Baseline Report) all ready to go in advance of their Sept 3 meeting – which means mid-August at the latest. We have busy weeks ahead!

- **IMPORTANT:** The Team will need help from as many people as possible to update the Baseline Report of 2018. Much of this document stands, but updating descriptions of the Land and Amenities from those of you who are “on the ground” is imperative. Expect to be asked to provide some input.

Questions or comments to: covenant@gabriolacommons.ca

Comment: Kristin will look at the Baseline Report and consider if she is willing to contribute.

Farm Team (presented by Betty)

- For apple juicing in the fall, Betty commented on concerns around the amount of water used. The fellow who offered to convert the water bladder to compressed air changed his mind. Betty has organized to install a 15-gallon reservoir dedicated to the apple pressing. Water can be recycled back into the cistern for re-use. Some money will be needed.
- The Cultivate organizers asked Betty to mow the grass, but the mower broke down. Tanner came to try to fix but it didn't work.
- Drea wrote a great article in the Sounder for the learner's garden, but Betty didn't get any responses. Betty plans to water the apple orchard one more time.
- Comment re: the mower. Last year's receipt should be with the Finance Team, as the motor was just replaced last year and may still be under warranty.

North Gardens: (written report presented by Maureen)

1. Resolution in June: The challenging issue reported in June when our garden agreement protocol was not followed by one gardener (p.4 of agreement, what to do when there are *Unexpected Circumstances*) has resolved itself. The gardener expressed no intention to do any work on it herself this year and therefore chose to give it up. Her plot fee was reimbursed to her. The plot was offered to the one on the NCG waitlist, but she'd already found a gardening option. It was then offered and received by two gardeners in the small plot next to this one in question; they immediately began to care for it.

2. Questionnaire re: reasons some plots are not fully planted or maintained: It was noticed throughout June that some gardeners chose not to fully plant their plots or to tend them adequately after being planted. Here is a sample of their responses when Maureen inquired about this:

- We were concerned about water shortages, but we planted the full garden anyway. Unfortunately, much of it failed.
- A big issue was maintenance. I usually worked early in the morning or later in the evening. But I no longer feel safe being on the property alone, and our family work schedules don't always line-up, which made it difficult to care for the garden properly. Because of that, we've decided not to return next season.
- For us it's purely the water shortage issue. Our family simply doesn't have the capacity to haul the amount of water that will be needed to keep our garden thriving when the commons' water supply runs out later this season. The energy and time required to haul that much water is unrealistic for us.

3. Greenhouse Improvements: Robert (gardener) installed a new door handle on the screen door. Further upgrades to the greenhouse are pending completion, including installing a gutter and one or two rain barrels, building two more storage shelves and another smaller potting bench.

4. Security in our Gardens and Heightened Concern Over Water Conservation: An unfortunate discovery following a Friday night intruder into our garden area led to a joint decision for more gate security. A rather hidden tap was turned ON in the Dragon's Garden with its hose removed. On Saturday morning, when a senior came to water her plots, she discovered water forcefully gushing out. After consultation with those at the scene, and then wider communication with gardeners in the NCG, PHC and Dragon's Gardens, it was decided that we needed to secure both gates and suggested that we do this in the same way that gates are secured in the South Garden, with padlock and chain. This was completed within a week of the incident. No further breeches have happened. But one senior gardener did lock herself in late enough one night and called out for help. Luckily three walking nearby heard her. As the combination wasn't working for her or for them, one of them retrieved his toolbox and removed the back gate hinges so that she could be free. She reported this to Maureen as a unique experience of community, being helped in a moment of not knowing what else to do and was grateful for not spending her night in the garden shed. She seemed very good-humoured about the whole affair.

Comment re: the need for more water in the gardens overall. The suggestion that the pond needs to be enlarged seems premature and would be a challenging undertaking. An alternative suggestion that mulching should be mandatory and built into the agreement. E.g. gardeners cannot begin work in the garden until payment and mulching has been completed. Response that mandating would also require monitoring. Another suggestion: a required water conservation workshop should be mandated. Noted that our gardens are at the maximum for the water available.

Yurt Keepers: (Kristin oral report)

- The woodshed is 95% complete. A receipt has been submitted to Recreation Society for reimbursement. Lots of firewood has been offered.
- A group got together with paint donated by Arbutus to paint the wood covering at the bottom of the Yurt. A second coat is needed. Kristen wrote an article for the *Sounder*.
- The Yurt Keepers are thinking of purchasing a port-o-potty unit.
- Frank from Jim Chimney checked the woodstove free of charge. No cleaning needed.
- New team member Fiona.

Property Stewardship Team: (Kim written report)

- The fire suppression system in the Community Kitchen had its 12-yearly overhaul - expensive.
- We now have no garbage collection. We are opting not to get a company to collect our garbage. Recycling will go to GIRO and garbage will go home with us to our own garbage cans. RDN will be picking up their garbage bins soon.
- Cultivate Festival is this coming weekend. It was lovely to get help tidying up the place even if there were only 4 people.
- Circus coming AUG 1ST
- Smoking area discussed at last Council mtg - no progress.
- Drunk people discussed at last Council mtg - no progress. C is by far the worst offender. He is drunk every day from morning onwards.

Condoms that were used for packaging drugs found dropped on ground - so we know people are using drugs here (they are split for drugs packaging).

Q: Campers? **A:** yes.

- The general disrespect for the property continues to grow. Lots of mess left every day. Again - A is the worst offender. Cigarette butts, a surprising amount of clothing, food containers. Open urination with no attempt to be discrete. Poop in unexpected places. The rose bushes by the cob wall was "decorated like an Xmas tree" with poop toilet paper. The upstairs washrooms have had the walls plastered with poop, TWICE.

Q: Should we close the door between PHC and entrance lobby, now?

Q: Is it time for cameras?

Q: Again, a suggestion that the RCMP needs to be brought in.

Suggestion: that we attend PHC's workshop on harm reduction on Thursday 2 pm this week.

Future Council Discussion: Installation of cameras. Disrespect of property: poop issue etc.

Trustees Report: (written report by Bob, presented by Brent)

1) New sign for the front of the house: Cameron Murray will design a new "Commons" sign for the front of the house. This design will go before the Council for approval.

2) Finance help: After a call out, we have had a few offers to help our shrinking Finance Team (one board member and Suzi)

3) Code Compliance project: We recently had the septic field and tank servicing the house inspected (\$4,000) as it was built for a single-family dwelling in the early 80's. We have asked for an estimated cost of 1) immediate upgrade and 2) the total replacement costs, for future house use. The field needs to be replaced with a commercial field. To repair the existing field will cost about \$2000. To build a new field could be between \$80k to \$130k. Septic Compliance Inspection Report available from Trustees on request: trustees@bgraiolacommons.ca

Current system is broken but still working. It eventually needs updating to a commercial septic field. It was suggested that the current septic system needs to be repaired before the wet season begins (approx. \$2,000). Then an updated septic field will cost \$80-100,000. The kitchen and Goat Barn are on a separate septic system. 4) The Trustees are having a retreat to create an action plan for fundraising, July 25, noon to 3:00. All those who are part of the Commons are invited to come.

5) Garbage removal update: PHC is responsible for the garbage issues in front of the house. The Trustees have requested something from PHC as to what their plans are re garbage especially since the RDN are not picking up commercial garbage since July 1.

5) Covenant: Is being updated and sent to the Islands Trust for August 17.

6) Privacy issues. There has been a case that has brought privacy issues to the fore. The Commons Privacy Policy needs updating and all people working on the Commons must be made aware that if anyone posts private information the Commons is responsible. See more, below.

Comment: PHC has made plans for dealing with their garbage.

Council Stewards: (written report submitted by Jinny)

- No report this month as Bob and Jinny have been otherwise engaged; despite recent surgery, Bob managed to attend tonight.

Finance Team – (written report presented by Mercedes)

- Summary: We're about a month behind on data entry, but we'll catch up soon. We've only entered bookkeeping data to the end of April.
- Expecting \$3855 revenue from rentals, including kitchen, farmhouse, Timberframe, reservoir stage; but mostly PHC.
- We've sent all our year-end stuff to our accountant, and expecting the year-end adjusting reports at the end of August (6-8 weeks), but historically we need to badger them and then get it by end of September, so if we're planning an October AGM, it should be no earlier than the end of September based on experience.
- The Finance team processes payment but does not decide what teams pay for.
- Finance Team did get some help following Mercedes last appeal.
- Tool Library is behind on rental. Gloria will follow up.

Q: The status of the Tool Library. **A:** They are not a for-profit company but a community service.

Goat Barn Team (orally presented by Andreas)

- An effort is underway to fix up the goat barn into a community assembly space. According to the engineer's report this would be possible.
- \$50,000 donation from the Kasahara Trust for the Goat Barn.
- Need to check out RDN requirements – permitting, etc.
- Figure what the total cost might be to enclose the space and make it legal for assembly. Then additional funding must be sought to complete such a project.
- **Suggestion:** Do seek other sources of funding.
- **Comment:** Concern over loss of storage space. Additions to the structure would need to be made to include washrooms and additional storage space could be included.
- **Comment:** The Goat Barn team is seeking the Commons support for the project – the proposal by the Goat Barn Team, will go out to Commoners/Teams for comments and questions. The Goat Barn Team will keep the Commons in the loop via the Sharing the Commons Team (Gloria) and Commons Council.

Events Team (written report by Jocelyn presented by Brent)

- Lynn Bowerman is simplifying the Farm to Table event as she has lost her regular chef and hasn't been able to find a replacement who will work within the limited budget. She is hoping to collaborate with PHC and Agi Co-op on the event.
- Shannon Krell had agreed to coordinate the Fall Fair but now has a medical procedure scheduled the same month which may affect her ability to take on this task. We are going to discuss the feasibility of her involvement this next week. Shirley Whalen has agreed to help coordinate but does not want to be the sole coordinator. A few musical acts will be approached for the event, including two indigenous artists. Jocelyn is willing to coordinate this aspect of the Fall Fair. One of the next steps will be to prepare a budget and see what each organization is capable of pitching in at this time. There will also be ways the fair itself can generate income.

Due to a death in her immediate family, Jocelyn is not able to take on a leadership role as part of the Events team at this time; will help with some of the musical programming

5. Affiliate Reports

People for a Healthy Community (presented by Christina)

- Christina reported about the recent activity in the upstairs bathrooms; they didn't notify the Commons and dealt with the cleanup. It happened after hours. She suggested someone or some people are using the washroom and have used the it on other occasions. People are also using PHCs garbage as their garbage drop off. The doors are generally kept locked when not directly serving the community. Abuse is getting excessive and PHC is making plans to address it.

Q: Is PHC planning to get cameras? **A:** Christina hadn't heard about that. Security cameras would be a Commons responsibility. In the meantime, PHC is amicable to locking the front door and monitoring the front entrance better. She will take the issue to the staff to see about having all access to our offices through the food door. Discussion to be continued.

Q: Who is the woman who was sleeping on the deck on Saturday? She is from Gabriola. Christina noted that the few 'new people' have come around, were not recognized, and were not registered participants of PHC. She suggested that the Commons solicit further security on the grounds as PHC is responsible only for what goes on their part of the building. She added that they have a policy that people are NOT welcome to access their services while under the influence.

Reminder: A window was left open downstairs. Windows need to be closed and locked.

Q: How will the garbage issue be addressed? It was suggested that building an enclosure to house the garbage would be useful.

Suggestion: The RCMP may need to be brought in regarding abuse of property.

Suggestion: The door between PHC and the Commons could remain locked to avoid people accessing the upstairs. If the front door is open people can come upstairs without PHC knowing. Alternative entrances could be utilized. Christina reminded the Council that the event with the mess left on the floor happened after hours. PHC will work with the Commons to look at flow of clients and putting up signage.

6. Other Agenda Items

Privacy Policy (oral report: by Mercedes)

- Mercedes handed out copies of the current (2020) Privacy Policy. This is a reminder following an incident when a person's private information was posted on Facebook. We are bound by privacy laws as a non-profit. This is a legal issue. Some discussion was had about the privacy violation.
- Also, we should not post people's full names in the Council minutes.
- Please disseminate to teams that people's information, including full names and photographs, should not be posted anywhere without explicit consent in writing.

Comment: We need other ways of communicating important info besides the Council minutes. See Privacy Policy on website: <https://www.gabriolacommons.ca/privacy-policy/>

Special Report to Commons Council: Brown's Visit (Written report by Jinny; presented by Gloria)
Previous owner Jim Brown's visit to the Commons, June 25, 2026

- At the request of his granddaughter, who was visiting from Toronto, Jim Brown explored by wheelchair some central areas of the Commons - theoretically to “have a look” at the ground floor of the Farm House and “a peek into the Workshop”. Heide and Jinny were able to assist the “tour” which ran into about 1.5 hours! Jim, now 101, was accompanied by his granddaughter Margaret Keery, her husband, and an aunt. Mr. Brown was completely engaged with what is going on the Commons, including PHC, the changes that have been made in over 20 years, and our plans for the future. He was an engineer and said the goat farming expert was a daughter; the workshop was his domain. Derek from the *Sunder* took many photos, a sample of which we hope will soon appear in the paper. Many thanks to Heide for her enthusiastic welcome and detailed briefing.

Volunteer Hours: Kim calculated 600 volunteer hours for the month of June.

7. Adjournment: 8:40 pm