

Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)
gabrielacommonscouncil@gmail.com
NOTES Meeting of April 1, 2014

Present:

Muriel Wiens, Raymond Tremblay; Deborah Ferens, Nancy Hetherington-Pierce, John Pierce, Louise Amuir, Stef Marrie, Judith Roux, Robbie Huston, Mary Wilson, Kit Szanto, Alison Fitzgerald, Mary Aitken, Shelagh Huston, Charles Silva, Brenda Fowler

Co-facilitators: Muriel Wiens, Raymond Tremblay

Recorder: Mary Wilson (PMT)

Next Council Meeting : May 6, 2014

Recording Team for next meeting : Farm Management

Meeting AGENDA

- 1. 20 Minute Discussion: Conflict Prevention & Resolution Team**
- 2. Team, Project and Group REPORTS**
- 3. FOLLOW-UP** from previous meetings

■ REMINDERS & ACTION

○ **Anyone who is interested in a special meeting to discuss the hedge** should contact Raymond Tremblay, who will organize a meeting to discuss it further.
See “Trimming The Hedge” attached.

■ 20 MINUTE DISCUSSION ~ May meeting: Financial reporting ~ Deb Ferrens

○ The Consensus Process document (March 9 Communiqué)
~ will also be discussed as an agenda item

Ongoing DISCUSSION TOPICS - for 20-minute discussions:

- How to function without a Communications Liaison until someone steps into the role.
- "Personal Benefit" at the Commons
- Sustainability Building
- Signage
- Recognizing contributions
- How do we decide what gets sent out to membership?
- Website Update (will receive information package from Hans)
- Orientation to the Commons?

1. 20-MINUTE DISCUSSION:

“The Conflict Prevention and Resolution Team”

Shelagh Huston presented an overview of the role of the CPR Team with the intention of raising awareness of the team’s existence and role. The team has been working on team and skills development; **their mandate, objectives and strategies are included as Appendix 2** to these notes.

The team would like to encourage the development of a culture that promotes peaceful disagreement – where differences of opinion are valued and acceptable.

Members of the team include Alison, Mary A., Shelagh and Muriel Wiens and Jen Turner. The team is also open to new members. In the twenty-minute discussion, those attending discussed their own feelings about conflict.

2. TEAM REPORTS:

Covenant (rep: *Deb Ferens*)

- A “draft” Covenant is on the website, and is still open for comments. Bill Pope has worked with the team to look at covenants beyond the traditional conservation covenant to create a community commons covenant; the team also hopes to look at other possibilities for protection, including language drawn from the Global Commons Trust. They are also interested in investigating the idea of “commons property rights,” as distinct from government /state /public or private property. There is a Commons Property Rights movement. The team is considering about separating the conservation aspect from other forms of protection.

Event Planning & Volunteers (rep: *Stef Marrie*)

- Spring Fair May 3 is the next event: 4H will have their manure and be providing refreshments; George will be running a boules tournament; there will be buskers; May pole; procession; seed starts and plants, etc. Advertising will be low key and hands on to keep costs down. Volunteers will be needed for the Commons table, for setup and takedown. Events team asks that we all keep an eye out for tents at a good price, since more are needed.

Farm Management

- Next Meeting: April 7, 4:00 p.m. Focus will be on creating a seed bank; Eric Veale has been invited to the meeting, and Sal Dominelli may be invited too.

Learning Opportunities (rep: *Mary Wilson*)

- Working with others in the community to discuss a community-wide initiative for learning in the community; early days, but there will be a public meeting of anyone who is interested in being involved as an instructor or otherwise. Shelah H noted that the GES has been discussing the possibility of becoming a community school and thus might like to be involved.

- Next Meeting: Not set yet.

Long Range Planning (rep: *John Pierce*)

See attached notes. Mary reported how the process of ranking items identified as priorities at the LRPT's January workshop was conducted. Values assigned: High priority = 5; later priority = 3; low priority = 1; not at the Commons = -5. John noted that we hope to hold a workshop in May or June at which nine projects will be discussed and planned in more detail.

LRPT noted that there needs to be an integrated view of all new projects as they come up.

□ **Property Management** (rep: Mary Wilson)

- Working on a process suggestion for creating a project task force, when project task forces are needed.
- Next Meeting: In April, but not set yet.

□ **Share the Commons** (rep: Kit Szanto)

• Kit reported that the Commons is in no way responsible for any of the finances of the Starhawk event at the Commons. STC is happy about the idea of developing a pottery at the Commons; discussions about location are ongoing. There was discussion at the last meeting about expanding the opening of the hedge, or removing the part beyond the opening, to make it feel more welcoming. STC might bring this back to a Council meeting in future.

There was some discussion about this point; Stef M. suggested we think about widening the entry, to see what happens and also the impact on the birds and such; both Louise A and Shelagh H. noted that an extraordinary meeting, like what was held for solar energy, might be worthwhile. Muriel noted concerns with the special council meeting on solar energy, which to her did not feel like a council meeting due to the format (presentation at the beginning, rows rather than a circle.)

- Next Meeting: April 2. Following meeting May 7.

□ **Trails and Green Spaces** (rep:

- TAGS went next door to remove daphne at the Rollo Centre. There is lots .

According to a local botanist, daphne has taken over many of the woodlands on Vancouver Island in the last 15 years.

□ **Trustees for Gabriola Commons Foundation**

• Trustees have created a case statement, a document they will use to encourage people to donate to the Commons, and will be taking it out to members of the community to ask for feedback and critique.

An amendment to the lease with PHC has been signed. PHC requested a reduction in rent; an agreement has been reached whereby PHC will pay half the rent they have paid previously, will continue to pay the same percentage of hydro, and the Commons and PHC will look at ways in which the space downstairs can be shared. Brenda F. noted that PHC was grateful for the reduction in rent, and found the process of dialogue enlightening.

Deb reported on finances; she noted that by May she will have a financial report for the year, and that at that time we might be able to talk about assigning some money to projects we have started discussing.

- Next Meeting: First Thursdays (2 pm) and Third Thursdays (4:30 pm) monthly

■ **PROJECTS**

□ **Community Kitchen** (rep: Judith Roux)

A grant extension is not possible since the program is ending. Work on the kitchen is proceeding well, and most major expenditures have been made.

□ **Labyrinth** (rep: Mary Aitken)

The large willow tree by the labyrinth has suffered some damage during the storms in the

winter and will require some tree work.

□ **Signage:** Robbie reported; task force has met, and begun the process of discussing signage. Nothing to report yet.

Goat barn: Robbie reported; awaiting a response from the Islands Trust planner concerning zoning for the Goat Barn Phase I (new Roxy)

Solar Energy: Following a special meeting which approved the idea, Gab Energy and the Commons have applied for a \$22,500 grant from Bullfrog Power for installation of a 10KW solar array at the Commons. If the grant application is successful, it should be sufficient to put the array in operation.

■ **GROUPS**

□ ***People for a Healthy Community*** (rep: *Brenda Fowler*)

Brenda Fowler and Judith Roux, working together, have done the water test both pre and post filter, as required every six months. The last post-filter test, several months ago, was fine. PHC is in the middle of the “hunger count,” as named by Food Bank Canada, to add Gabriola information to this national snapshot of hunger in Canada.

The first week of May is hunger week. Brenda will bring those numbers to the next Council meeting.

3. DISCUSSION ~ on follow-up items from previous meetings and new items:

* All present agreed the Commons should co-sponsor Heather Menzies’ launch of her new book, *Reclaiming the commons for the common good*. The launch will be held on FRIDAY, MAY 23, from 5 to 8 p.m. and will include a finger-food potluck.

Hedge: Raymond suggests we invite people via communiqué to a meeting to discuss the hedge. Shelagh suggested having a meeting AT the Spring Fair.

Post meeting note: This isn’t possible, but we will have some opportunity at the Spring Fair for people to comment on the hedge. (See Attachment 1 “Trimming The Hedge”)

4. ATTACHMENTS

1. Trimming The Hedge~ Feedback

2. CPR Mandate and other information

3. LRPT ranked projects

Attachment 1

■ “TRIMMING” The HEDGE” ~ FEEDBACK

In addition to the need for trimming the hedge on a regular basis, there has been some discussions at the Commons about enlarging the entrances to make access easier, and to make the Commons house more visible. Also, we are considering the possibility of creating an entrance on the Rollo Centre side.

If you want to comment and/or participate in this discussion, please leave your name, phone, and email address, and we will be contacting you later on. You can also provide written comments by emailing: **Commons' Hedge** at **ray2604@telus.net**.

Name _____ Phone _____

I want to be part of this discussions Email _____

I WANT TO HELP

COMMENTS

Attachment 2 CPR Mandate

Conflict Prevention and Resolution Mandate, Objectives, Strategies

as adopted by the CPR Team on September 25, 2013

Mandate

The Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR) Team promotes peace on and for the Commons. This team will work collaboratively with teams, groups, and individuals to support healthy interpersonal relationships, clear communications, compassionate understanding, and successful conflict resolution. It will provide resources, sponsor events and programs, develop strategies for consideration by the Commons Teams, Council and Foundation, and offer processes for and assistance with conflict resolution.

Objectives

- ~ To work with groups and individuals on or connected with the Commons with the intention of working toward peaceful and respectful co-existence, skilled communication, and healthy trust and harmony.
- ~ To encourage discussion and adoption of good practices that support these ends.
- ~ To encourage healthy interpersonal and intergroup communication, respectful and fair conflict resolution, and collaborative power-sharing, and to provide opportunities to build skills to uphold these goals.
- ~ To orient all participants, especially newcomers, to the overall vision and purpose of the Commons, and to modes of interaction which support the Commons vision.
- ~ To ensure that healthy, fair and respectful processes are developed, agreed on, and offered, for dealing with differences, airing disagreements, and resolving conflicts.
- ~ To nurture a culture of mutual compassion, honesty, and respect, as a path for creating a better and more peaceful future.

Strategies

- ~ Provide opportunities for discussion of ways and means to support and encourage the peace of the Commons.
- ~ Offer opportunities for individuals to share experiences and feelings, in order to strengthen the bonds of trust, respect and empathy that underpin and nurture peace.
- ~ Provide programs and resources that build the skills needed for peace, including compassionate communication, healthy conflict-resolution, and mutual support, and offer them to the Commons and, where useful, to the wider community.
- ~ Consult with other Teams, groups, and individuals to determine their needs for support of peace.
- ~ Offer programs and resources that meet the specific needs of Teams for support of peace, and of

individuals dealing with stressful differences.

- ~ Develop strategies that uphold peace for consideration by the Commons Teams, Council and Foundation.
- ~ Develop processes for conflict resolution, for consideration and adoption by the Commons Teams, Council and Foundation.
- ~ Offer assistance to resolve specific cases of conflict, using strategies and processes which have been adopted by the consensus of the Commons Teams, Council and Foundation.
- ~ Periodically assess the Commons 'state of peace', through consultations with all Commons participants, and report on it to the Commons Coordinating Council.
- ~ Collaborate as appropriate with other community groups and organizations for mutual benefit in pursuing shared objectives.

Website Invitation

Join the Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR) Team if you are interested in exploring and implementing how the Commons can nurture our well-being and wholeness through healthy interpersonal relationships, clear communications, compassionate understanding, and successful conflict resolution.

Attachment 3 – LRPT ranked projects

BOLDED actions to be potentially discussed / analysed at next planning workshop	FINAL RANKING¹	Why not discuss this one at our next workshop? (reasons for not-bolding)
1. Combine community information kiosk with farm gate stand	121	
Continue removing invasive species	97	Ongoing
2. Complete sustainability centre (timber frame building)	95	
Eliminate the mortgage	88	Not time based: \$ is obvious
Septic –new system for Community Kitchen	83	Must be done by professional; no flexibility on time/money
Complete and operate community kitchen	78	In process
3. The Old Goat Barn Phase I	78	
4. Assess/ maintain existing buildings	71	
Develop alternative energy strategy	70	Can't estimate time without starting conversation
Identify eco-systems to be protected	69	Can't estimate time without starting conversation
5. Build farm equipment storage shed	66	
6. Identify & map plants & trees to be left in natural state & protected.	64	
7. Improve lighting in big house	63	
8. Improve signage (site maps)	58	
9. Complete East/West connector trail	56	
Water – New pond? new plumbing system	55	Can't estimate time without starting conversation
Spring/Fall Fairs	53	Ongoing event
Electrical – another 400 amp panel, generator	53	Solar project, if funded, will have an impact
Identify & protect waterways, water sources & habitat in eco-systems	52	Can't estimate time without starting conversation
Beautify the commons	52	Ongoing, plus needs conversation to define

¹ A note on ranking: Numbers were calculated based on community input at the January LRPT workshop. Values were assigned to the four categories: Important/priority = 5; important but later = 3; not important = 1; doesn't belong at the Commons -5. The number of instances by the ranking (so for instance if 10 people identified item X as an important/priority, it would get a score of 5 x 10 = 50). All rankings were added: (To use the same example if X had a score of 5 x 10 for important/priority, and 3 x 3 for important/later, and 0 for unimportant, and 2 x -5 for "don't do it," it would get a final score of 49. (50 + 9 - 10)

Items for discussion are suggested not because they are more important than others, but because they all need planning before the projects can be started. Projects such as protecting the eco-system, eliminating invasive species, installing a new septic system and paying off the mortgage do not require the same kind of planning discussion as building/renovation projects.

Establish transition zones to protect identified eco-systems	51	Dependent on identification projects
Register Covenant on title (COV)	50	Ongoing team responsibility
Community garage sales	49	Ongoing
Complete sustainability centre roof (timber frame building)	49	Whole centre identified as higher priority
10. Build cob oven	47	
Legacy funding	45	Needs further definition
Christmas Craft Fair	40	Ongoing
Create heritage seed bank with island groups	40	Estimating of time and space too dependent on conversation with other groups
Find more space for allotments (N., S., Kitchen, Namaste, ??)	39	Actual finding = quick; discussion time variable
Provide more parking w/minimal impact on trees	38	Primarily conversational
11. Multi-use gazebo	38	
Build greenhouses	35	Needs assessment required
Establish grain fields	33	Farm team responsibility
Establish permanent Community Bus parking	31	Decision required, not so much cost
Upgrade and expand irrigation systems	29	Needs assessment required
Relocate mulch/manure/soil bins	29	Farm team responsibility
Develop land stewardship plan	43	Covenant team?
Trade and Wellness Fairs	22	Ongoing
Engage w/ other "Satellite" Commons	22	Meaning unclear
The Old Goat Barn Phase Two	20	Too distant to estimate
Plant native species	19	Trails & Green Spaces Team responsibility
Develop fairground site	18	Not enough support to prioritize
Develop Education/Learning Centre	13	Not enough support to prioritize
Develop bandshell	11	Not enough support to prioritize
Pond viewing platform	9	Not enough support to prioritize
Expand food/gardening library	8	Not enough support to prioritize
Acquire additional property through gifting	8	
Develop Spiritual Space	7	Not enough support to prioritize
Develop new building for PHC	-51	
Develop elder eco-village	-53	
Skateboard park	-63	
Develop affordable housing	-77	
Nursing centre	-85	