

Gabriola Commons Co-ordinating Council

Notes of Meeting, August 5, 2014

Attending: Nancy Hetherington Peirce, Robbie Huston, Shelagh Huston, John Peirce, Judith Roux, Patrick Roux, Charles Silva, Kit Szanto, Mary Wilson

Facilitating: Raymond Tremblay

Minutes: Jinny Hayes (Covenant Group)

Agenda

Team Reports

20 minutes about Boundaries: Tabled as Muriel was not present

Alternate topic: Coop concept for selling food.

TAGS: Asking GaLTT to put Commons trails on their Island trail Map

Team Reports:

CPR (Conflict Prevention and Resolution) [Shelagh]: No report. Next meeting TBA.

LRP (Long Range Planning): Robbie reported on the “workbee” of 21 people held to engage with the future of the Commons. The team selected the 5 most amenable topics from the last LRP workshop. Participants talked about the costs, human energy, and assumptions for each project: Timberframe, Maintenance of Existing Buildings, Farm Stand/Info Centre, Farm Equipment Shed, Goat Barn/Performance Centre, Phase I.

The priorities, estimated costs, and work hours estimated to complete each of these projects is available from the LRP Team members, and will be charted and ready for the AGM in September. Further workbees to complete the projects will be scheduled, and as funds allow.

One interesting proposal that came up at this workbee was that the TimberFrame and parking lot become the main entrance to the Commons in future. (There was enthusiastic support at Council for this.) Overall, the LRP workbee resulted in great discussions, and engagement with

Trustees [Robbie]: There is a big push right now for new monthly donors, so there has been/will be some presence of the Commons at a table in the Village and at StreetArt. Our goal is to enlist new donors and possibly have some continuing donors increase their monthly amounts.

The AGM will be held Sept 20 at 1.30 pm at the Commons. Annual team reports of three points each should be submitted to Robbie or Jinny. There was a question about doing a special LRP report at the AGM, which does not normally focus in detail on teams’ work, in order to keep the meeting short and interesting.

Next meetings: August 6 at 2.00 pm, and August 20 at 4.30 pm.

STC (Sharing the Commons) [Kit]: Nothing new. Next meeting: Sept 6 at 10.30 AM.

TAGS (Trails and Green Spaces) [Kit]: Susan Brockley (also active in the Gabriola Lands and Trails Trust, GaLTT) would like to involve GaLTT and the Commons with one another by incorporating Commons trails and paths of the GaLTT trail map. This could result in increased use of our trails, though some are restricted due to sensitive ecology.

There was discussion of what trails could be included and improved to encourage more use and appreciation, and which ones should remain limited access, eg, marshy areas. John (also President of the GaLTT Board) noted that what will be needed is a good GPS file as a start, sent to Randy Young.

Consensus: Agreement to approach GaLTT; John said he would put this on the next GaLTT meeting agenda in September. TAGS to give thought to the various trails and implicated logistics.

PMT (Property Management) [Mary]: The team is engaged in several projects at present and in the near future and will need sub-teams and taskforces. A question that arises is how these fit with STC, for example. Mary asked that those present and other team reps take the attached PDF handout on “Forming Project Teams at the Commons”, and be ready to discuss and clarify the proposed process at a future meeting.

There is a bit of a “black box” in our processes, which result in our jumping over planning the initial needs for a new project. For example, the Community Kitchen has a “stewardship team” that has been working well, advising on needs and logistics for the development of the Kitchen. Drawings and plans are important. Patrick noted that each project needs to consider monetary and human costs, and require plans for regular assessments and debriefings, etc. Future users need to be consulted and so on.

Bookings: Mary is ready to pass Booking over to a new person at the end of the year, and we need to start recruiting. Please think about people who might like to do this job for the Commons, and send your ideas to Mary at bookings@gabriolacommons.ca. A description will be circulated in a future *Communiqué*.

Events Team [Judith]: The Fall Fair will be Sept 14, and include a GIRO Fashion Show and many more categories for entries.

FMT (Farm Management Team) [Judith]: There are good crops coming out of all gardens now, eg, transparent apples and blueberries. FMT is too busy farming to have meetings in the summer.

COM (Communication) [Jinny]: The Communications Team will be reactivated in late September. In the meantime, a plan to improve the Commons brochure is beginning, a change to something that emphasizes better what the Commons IS and offers to/does for the community, and less about what Gabriolans can do for the Commons .

Jinny handed around a hard copy of draft text for the new brochure, inviting comments. Suggestion: Have these at Chamber of Commerce tourist table; there is a cost involved. Nancy would like to see a better statement about what the Commons IS.

In the process of this discussion, a book was mentioned by Raymond: Jeremy Rifkin (2014). *The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism*.

- Next meeting: TBA.

Question for COM: the TAGS bounce-forward needs to be checked with Hans.

Action: Jinny will check with Hans and let Kit know.

Hedge Project [Raymond]: A “team” of people is needed to help John LeMarquand trim the hedge, learn the skills, and help clean up. So both skilled and non-skilled volunteers are needed Saturday August 23 from 8.00 AM to 1.00 PM. 40 human-hours of work are estimated.

20-Minute Discussion: Co-Op Concept

Judith lead a discussion on behalf of the Farm Management Team. As was mentioned at the last Council meeting notes, Co-op could be a possibility for the Commons, an informal cooperative system for sharing produce, work and so on. Concerns that the practices fit with “the Commons way”, even though it would be a means of maintaining our agricultural commitments, which are a lot of work for “the few”. It would be a good way to build a stronger volunteer team, and provide good processes for follow-up.

Alternative: Should we think about rewarding workers and commitment using produce or other tangible rewards? This notion is not “the new kid on the block” any more, and has been raised for the Commons before. The ways of becoming and being a co-op are not self evident, and deserve looking at again, as the amount of produce is increasing. Currently produce “stays” with the Commons as soup ingredients or farm gate sales that stay with the Farm Team.

Co-op is different than a collective (eg, pottery one currently operating on the Commons), and the history of the commons (Menzies, Ostrom) shows some scope for monitoring and tying work with reward.

Is this 2 issues? a) Planting vs. maintenance, ie, sharing produce as a means of managing the work; and b) Not enough people to do the work. It does partially solve the problem of guilt.. It was suggested FMT talk with Thomas Harding.

To work, co-op requires some self-assessment as people participate in various ways, as they can, and all contributions to the Commons matter. Also, rewards are felt subjectively in very different ways. When all projects are managed by volunteers, it would be important to achieve long-term commitments and solid understandings of “co-operating”.

Next step: FMT to suggest potential structure(s) for a Co-op, with further discussion to follow.

Next Meeting: September 02, 2014, 7.00 pm
Notetaking: Learning Opportunities.

Special note: AGM September 20, 2014 at 1.30 pm