

## GABRIOLA COMMONS COORDINATING COUNCIL

### NOTES OF MEETING – DECEMBER 2, 2014

#### Those attending:

Nancy Hetherington Peirce (facilitator), Rebecca Furnell (facilitator), Kit Szanto, Mary Wilson (notes), Robbie Huston, Louise Amuir, Alison Fitzgerald, Sharon Arnell, Deborah Ferens, Jinny Hayes, Judith Roux, Patrick Roux, Stef Marrie

#### AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Agenda additions
3. 20-minutes discussion: “How to recognize contributions to the Commons from all participants.”
4. Reports from teams
5. Follow-up from previous meetings
6. New business:
  - a. “Responsibilities of facilitators at Commons Community Council meetings” information page
  - b. Continuing discussion on people sleeping at the Commons
  - c. Social enterprise
  - d. Seeking an assistant bookings person (with Gloria Filax)
7. Actions and next steps
8. Next meeting: Tuesday January 6, 2015 – 7:00pm

Twenty minute discussion: “How to recognize contributions to the Commons from all participants.”

- Many things are currently done to acknowledge financial contributions: written thanks to donors (monthly/annual); acknowledgement in the *Sounder* and on website for large anonymous donations; donors receive charitable tax receipts; event planned for Spring Equinox 2015 to thank all contributors; some existing plaques (downstairs and in the new kitchen) to acknowledge specific/particular donations. Names of funders are also identified on the website.

**TAKEAWAY MESSAGES from discussion:** (Note complete notes are included following these minutes.)

- There are many ways to participate in the Commons. Acknowledging donors is the easy part; acknowledging other contributions is more difficult.
- Having fun together is important
- Wall art and archive binder is a great idea.
- Upkeep of changes is administratively hard.
- Party is a great idea – let’s have one before we plan more!
- Commons Day Equinox Party – could include a presentation on what’s been done.

#### NEXT 20 MINUTE DISCUSSIONS

- January: Website
- February: Personal gain from participation in the Commons
- March: Team decision-making and the greater good

#### REPORTS

1. **Events Team** (Stef Marrie)  
Christmas Craft fair – Held at Rollo Centre as well as up and down at the Commons, lots of volunteers, lots of donations, new volunteers. Excellent time. 98% of vendors had an amazing day.

The raffle, for baskets with things contributed by vendors, raised about \$500. After expenses (including \$100 to rent the Rollo Centre) total raised was \$1360.00. **FANTASTIC!**

**2. Property Management Team** (Patrick Roux)

Asks that if you note something that needs fixing, please pass the news along by emailing [property@gabriolacommons.ca](mailto:property@gabriolacommons.ca). Kitchen – still lots of bits and pieces; final building inspection is the next major step, likely in January. Island Health inspection will happen later; we will ask the inspector to visit before the septic is installed, but final won't be until after the septic is complete. We will be purchasing and installing a UV filter system. We will add the email to the note by the phone. Could add this information to the bookings form.

**Next team meeting: December 15, 1:00 p.m.**

**3. Communications:** (Jinny Hayes)

(See complete notes following these minutes.)

Goal: Two regular communiqués per month. Keeps volume down, and more consistent publicity.

Deadlines: 5<sup>th</sup> of the month for publication on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for publication on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Remember that if you want a photo included, or a poster, it must all be in jpeg format.

Louise Amuir is willing to be backup for doing the regular communiqué publications.

Meeting felt it was worthwhile to post a précis of the Communiqué on the bulletin board beside the grocery store. Rebecca also posts summary to the Commons Facebook page.

Brochure will be distributed through our box outside, through Chamber of Commerce, via Welcome Wagon. 2000 ordered for now.

About money: Some Events money (\$500) has been directed to the Communications Team. There are some funds in the annual budget (\$350) that are earmarked for regular communications. Exceptional communication events/strategies need to have a budget (developed by the team). Noted that all grant applications should have a communications line item. Events Team and Communication Team intend to continue to discuss money.

Remember that we have a Flickr site; if you have photos you wish to share there, send them to Jinny or to Richard Pullano.

**REQUEST TO ALL TEAMS:** Please check your mandate on the website and see if it is up to date, and check to see if your mandate accurately describes your activity.

**Next team meeting: week of December 8<sup>th</sup>.**

**4. Kitchen Stewards** (Judith Roux)

Met to discuss rules, regulations, requirements and rental costs for kitchen when it is available.

**5. Photovoltaic Panels/ Solar project** (Judith Roux)

RDN is supportive; there are some basic bureaucratic steps to be completed before the project can go to the committee of the whole.

**Meeting scheduled for DECEMBER 11, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., for people who would like to be involved in the project task force.**

**6. Trustee report** (Robbie Huston)

Thank you Commons Day Party planned for March 21, as discussed. Trustees have resolved to take charge of membership list; the list, and definitions of membership, will be a focus of the upcoming trustee retreat day. Trustees have written to Minister of Finance, registering disapproval of possible changes to the BC Societies Act. (A proposed change would allow corporations or any individual to sue non-profit societies, thus interfering with the ability of non-profit societies to meet their mandates.)

We have re-applied for the Village Food Market Community Card and have not yet heard a response. If we are successful in our application, money will be directed to the mortgage.

Tasks completed from previous CCC meeting notes:

- Oct 7/14 CC meeting: Trustees have asked current monthly donors to increase their donations by a small amount, making it clear that no-one is obliged
- Nov 4/14 CC meeting: Trustees have discussed with PHC the needed cooperative efforts for maintenance of the house.

## 7. **Finances** (Deborah Ferens)

We are currently halfway through the fiscal year; currently revenue and expenses are both at about \$40,000. We are beginning to draw into the small surplus we had at the beginning of the year. Events Team directed \$3,000 to operating expenses, which is very helpful. If we are successful in our application to Village Foods Community Card fund money will be freed up for operating expenses. We anticipate a GST refund of \$1800. Most recent anonymous donation (\$60,000 for mortgage; \$6,000 for either operating or projects.) is currently being saved for potential operating, but may not be necessary there.

BC Hydro Bill: additional \$70 per month for retaining analogue meters was originally covered by special donors; this has not been the case for the last four months. Suggested that this should be indicated in a communiqué and donations sought from those strongly opposed to smart metres. Fireproof filing cabinet: Will be addressed in the budgeting process beginning in January.

Fall fair: \$1,196 net.

Bottom line: Finances are tight, but we are getting lots of things done.

Current mortgage outstanding: \$156,000.

## 8. **Farm Team** (Sharon Arnell)

Ongoing projects: farm gate sales, mulching, possibility of mid-week or evening farmers' market – January 14 meeting scheduled with producers. Cucumber, squash and beans scheduled for little field; possible field trip to Dan Jason's Salt Spring Seeds planned.

South Gardens compost toilet is built and ready to be put up, courtesy of a Grant In Aid from the Gabriola Recreation Society. Will be on site soon. Farm equipment shed may be incorporated into the supports for the solar panels near the orchard, assuming the solar project goes ahead.

Soup chefs have started developing a cookbook and will communicating via the communiqué to seek other contributions.

**Next meeting: Monday, January 5, 9:30 a.m.**

## 9. **Long Range Planning** (Robbie Huston)

The LRPT met recently; decided they would like to report to quarterly, updating Council on high-priority projects on the plan to remind the community of what they have said they will do. LRPT will also make note of new projects that are not yet on the plan. First quarterly report January.

**Next meeting: January 12, 2:30 – 4:00**

## 10. **Learning Opportunities Team** (Mary Wilson)

A community meeting to discuss learning was held in October, co-hosted with Arts Council, Sustainable Gabriola and others. On December 6, there is a plan for a follow-up meeting to discuss the Gumboot U idea: education for sustainable living, both theoretical and practical.

**11. Share The Commons** (Kit Szantos)

Next STC meeting will be discussing a proposal from Patrick Olmstead for a Gabriola Artisanal School.

**12. Trails and Green Spaces** (Kit)

A circular trail has been completed; the walking of it, done quickly, takes 12 minutes.

**13. Covenant Team** (Kit, for George)

In doing the baseline report, George and Judith observed three trumpeter swans on the pond. Several photos were taken of the swans lifting off.

The baseline report will be underway soon. Volunteers will be sought to record observations, and an electronic means of recording (blog or wiki) will be created.

**14. PHC** (Brenda sent regrets)

Task completed from previous CC meeting notes

- Nov 4/14 CC meeting: Brenda has spoken to the RCMP about the possibility of not ticketing from the Commons parking lot during soup social days. She feels it will be an ongoing conversation.

**New Business****1. Continuing discussion of people sleeping at the Commons**

Immediate housing needs have been resolved, thanks to Brenda and her colleagues' efforts at PHC. The issue of housing on the island is being discussed at Sustainable Gabriola, and will probably be an ongoing discussion there.

**2. Responsibilities of Facilitators at Commons Community Council meetings**

Nancy Hetherington Peirce circulated a draft description of the facilitator role (attached).

**TEAMS: Please read the attached draft description and be prepared to provide feedback next month.**

**3. Discussion of social enterprise**

Deferred until next meeting.

**Actions and Next Steps**

None.

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2015 - 7:00pm**

## Detailed notes from discussion of recognizing Commons participants

- Discussion of other options:
  - At the Community Clinic a list of donors on the wall recognizes people who donated to the *building* rather than to ongoing efforts; decision was made by the Board at the time to honour everyone equally, alphabetically, whether they had donated money or time or both, and without reference to amount of money or time.
  - Noted that it is challenging at the Commons to keep an updated, alphabetical list since it is an ongoing project.
  - May be important to publicize list of people who are involved in any way to offset the possible perception that those involved in the Commons are a small group
  - Maybe have something that thanks groups of people – for example, the farm team, the trails team – particularly any group that helps us differentiate the Commons from PHC.
  - Could be a rotating list on the website – different people each week/month.
  - Would need to track whether people wish to be anonymous or not in their donations (note that this is done on the donation form).
  - Years ago someone had the idea of people writing names on tiles and including the tiles in a wall – benefit to this is that it's self-identified (people write their own names, so they are included as they wish and only if they wish).
  - Do we need something in the first place? We don't thank ourselves for participating in things in our own homes, and the Commons also belongs to all of us.
  - Maybe have the tiles in the labyrinth – or on the east-west connector?
  - Some feel that as long as groups tell me what they are doing (environmental groups particularly), they don't need any other acknowledgement.
  - Some would feel embarrassed to have their name posted.
  - Reason for communicating to the community is partly to let the community know the Commons is an important place for many people.
  - Would like more publicity about what the Commons does beyond farming and being the landlord to PHC.
  - Maybe we should all take turns writing letters to the Souder about how spectacular the Commons is because of X.
  - Noted that a need for public relations was emerging as a separate thread within the discussion.
  - Strong connection indicated between the two; new brochure focuses on what the Commons gives to the community.
  - Love the idea of a Commons day that celebrates the Commons, volunteers and donors. Maybe could be done more often? Annually? Acknowledging those who live while also promoting the Commons.
  - Noted that trustees, by thanking donors, have resolved the question in a way – acknowledging donors in writing, and now planning a party for everyone.
  - Photos on the wall of the stairs of events – one way to acknowledge what's happening, with changing pictures with a bit of text that will eventually become an album.
  - Note: So much of the work of the Commons is invisible. We celebrate work bee work, but there is a lot of other work that is done behind the scenes (finances, communications, meetings, preparing for meetings, etc.)

## COM Report to Council - December 2, 2014

### First rejuvenated Team Meeting, held Nov 07

**Members pro tem:** Alison Fitzgerald, Rebecca Furnell, Jinny Hayes (Convener), Nancy Heatherington Peirce, Stef Marrie, Richard Pullano, Judith Roux, Linda St. Clair

1. Mandate: Internal and external communication. Purposes of COM are to facilitate informing the public about the Commons in two ways: getting info about the Commons out through various means and eliciting what the community wants to know about the Commons, or what they would like it to be, ie, improving the Commons (three legged stool: environment, agriculture, culture/community. We looked at two former (c. 2011) mandates and will re-do this.

Communiqué and webpage fall under this team. We talked about other “ways and means”.

COM is also a liaison with all teams, including the Trustees, and with the newspaper and other community groups. It’s a Commons “spokesperson”.

We should make this a Big Year this year, as it’s our 15<sup>th</sup>!

2. Communiqué: This is now on MailChimp and goes out by e.mail to about 550 households. Of the ~800 members of the Commons, some have “opted out” receiving it and this option is still possible using MailChimp. There is also a bounce-back when a copy is not delivered. Attachments need to be JPEGs. Stef has been sending out a Communiqué on an “as necessary” basis, but we now plan it to go out twice a month:

Deadline the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month for publication the 10<sup>th</sup>  
and

Deadline the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month for publication the 25<sup>th</sup>

Action: Stef to continue to do these with Editing assistance by Jinny. Stef needs an assistant – anyone here interested? If so, please let Stef or Jinny know.

3. Maintaining the Commons Membership List. Decided that this is most appropriately a Trustee function.

4. Brochure: New draft brochure designed by Megan Walker at Topographics as a donation by Topographics Landscape Architecture (Cameron Murray). Group went over the draft thoroughly, and with one other revision, it has now gone to printing, available Dec 8. Yeah! FYI, it is quite a lot more sophisticated, and is designed to last us a couple of years.

6. Generating Funds for COM activities, eg, ads, articles, costs of brochures, etc. Several suggestions were generated, and for this year, COM thanks the Events Team for donating \$500 from their fundraising events to help us cover the year’s expenses, the brochures, etc. Does any team have an objection to this?

7. Flickr site. There are a huge number of fabulously useful photos on our site (Like for the Baseline Report, etc.) If you have good photos, please send them to Richard or to Jinny for uploading to the site. It is a Commons policy to always identify the photographer.

We set a next meeting as we have agenda items left over, but date did not work out, so we are in the process of setting a new date the **week of Dec 8**. Let Jinny know if you want to be informed about when it will be. The plan is to have minimal in-person meetings, but accomplish tasks by dividing them up for independent & interdependent actions.

**Report to December 2, 2014 Council  
from Ad Hoc Website Group**

Members: Judith Roux, Mary Wilson, Jinny Hayes, Muriel Weins

We met Nov 10, and hooked Mary's laptop computer to the data projector and did a page-by-page examination of both the look and the content of the site's pages.

Summary conclusions:

1. Rationale for the site:
  - To communicate internally on the Commons and externally with the community.
  - Put Commons's best foot forward, eg, with photos, activities, contributions, etc.
  - Orientations, various (handbooks, template for Council Notes, etc.)
  - Provide resources, link to FaceBook page, etc.
2. Much of the content of the various pages is out of date:  
Action: We divided up the pages to update them, but forgot to set a due date for getting them together. Teams are invited to get any input to Jinny and she will get it to respective reviser-person ☺
3. Look and navigability of the site. It needs a complete revamp to modernize, improve readability and so on. Various options and others' approaches were discussed.

Jinny subsequently met with Hans and talked with Louise Amuir, who is currently inputting changes. For now, we are just going to revise for accuracy and then to a complete overhaul, probably using WordPress. Know anyone who would like to take that on?  
Eg, Title/Pages are too numerous and will be reduced. Again, all input welcome

4. Need to put up a downloadable map of the Commons
5. Teams need to re-examine and re-do mandates as necessary. Should we make them all the same format for the website?