

Commons Council Meeting Notes

January 9, 2018

Attending: Jinny Hayes (Convenor), Bob Andrew, Deb Ferens, Patsy Ludwick, Judith Roux, Sharon Pattison, Heather Menzies, Louise Amuir (Notes), Tom Sones, John Pierce, K Louise Vincent, Sharon McInnis, Brenda Fowler, Kit Szanto, George Szanto, Patrick Roux

Team Focus – TPT (Louise Amuir)

The Process Team, previously known as Conflict Prevention and Resolution Team, looks after an unusual function at the Commons. While other teams are concerned with practical projects like potatoes and solar power, kitchen building, water, grant-writing and covenants, garden allotments, roof repair and many other instances of productive DOING, TPT is more like the contemplative soul. We meet for 2 hours of just BEING, of contemplating life and culture, every month, to explore reality beyond the words we try to capture it in.

We're interested in process, including how our ways of relating have been shaped by the patriarchal hierarchy of this culture and our verbal, logical, problem-solving, uni-directional, busy, influence-oriented ways. We explore different ways of examining, appreciating, managing and sitting in conflict and creativity. We welcome Commoners (hopefully one or two at a time) to come and join us in thoughtful discussion or to just bathe in the warmth of our little circle. We offer support to those who feel themselves solitary in dissent - we believe that different opinions are vital to a healthy organization. If you've got a problem, we're happy to hear it although we won't fix it for you. But we will BE there with you.

Questions: Is the team available to help sort out conflicts?

Yes, we have some mediation and counselling skills on our team. Mostly we will listen. We begin and end each meeting with a minute of silence.

20 minute discussion: Outdoor spaces and rentals

Kit: there is a group that has a picnic every month. They pass a hat to donate for water use, etc. A wedding or other event will also use resources – water, electricity etc.

Sharon P: As we are booking more outdoor events – Farm to Table, GAC Festival – there is wear and tear on the property. We mow, get ready, set up. We need to discuss with each user. It's not just about the money.

Kit: Spring and Fall Fairs always involve lots of Commons involvement, but are Commons events

Judith: People are pretty responsible for Fairs – never any garbage left lying around.

Patrick: Generally when people use the grounds they clean up – egg hunt was great! Not even a scrap of wrapper left. We are lucky; there is respect from people using the grounds for community events. There are legal issues (insurance, etc.) and we should continue to monitor water, electricity, sewer use and costs. Let's go slowly and think about what our resources are at various times of year. For example we don't have much water in September, so do events then, but be gentle and use good communication.

Heather: People using the Commons are coming with the sense that it is OUR Commons and they are willing to take responsibility. To quote Robbie Huston, "A Place For Everyone to Share Responsibility." We should be careful to keep things within the carrying capacity of the land. We are not a park, no one official is looking after taking care of it for you. We want to keep the language about responsibility and get a good balance between vision and practicality.

Tom: Maybe some groups we might want to offer discounts to according to what kind of group they are.

John: PMT did speak generally about when a private group might monopolize the grounds and others can't get through to do their regular things - is that an issue? It's important that space be made available for right of use for a limited time to them. Are we part of the event, or is this event and space only the renter's? Kit: People will be walking past an event.

Jinny (for COM team): Guidelines would be good. Scaled to take into account size, exclusivity, purpose and other factors.

Bob: PMT suggests that if you use part of the grounds, the rest should be left open. When you charge, there is an expectation of service. We have hard costs. We need an outline.

Patsy: There's a difference between public space and private function. Farm to Table is paid for but open to the public; wedding-type engagements benefit private guests. If I were to have a wedding at the Commons, EVERYONE in the community would be welcome, rather than roping off.

K Louise: Providing a service and renting – not sure how to think of this in terms of Commons mandate. Does renting become a business model?

Sharon P: Community Kitchen is a "business" and if we have the Arts Council Festival, these same issues will come up.

John: The Commons is a space for the public to use. If you rent, you're part of the stewardship, so the education is important.

Kit: Suggests that weddings make a donation. Probably no one wanting to have their wedding on the Commons would expect that their wedding would be completely private.

Deb: Renters may ask for the Community Kitchen and outdoor space. The Kitchen will charge for the space, what about pure outdoor space? All different scenarios will arise.

Jinny's summary: There are both philosophical and practical issues to sort out. Agreed that this should be sent back to STC to map put further considerations and bring these back to Council.

Team Reports:

Grant Writing (George Szanto)

Mandate of the Grant Writing team: as of January 9, 2018

To search out grants that are available, to organize the information needed for a successful application, and to work with teams that are applying for grants.

Commons Teams Generated Grants

To determine what projects need financing and to ensure that such teams have sought and found approval from the Sharing the Commons Team

- To ensure that such a team can raise the sufficient number of workers to carry out the project
- To search out grants that would be appropriate to support such projects
- To request from the teams the necessary information to make a credible application, so that the team creates the first draft of an application
- To work with the team on subsequent drafts

- To ensure there is sufficient time for preparing the application; hence, any grant application process should ideally begin no later than three months before the due date
- To submit the application to the granting agency two weeks prior to due date

Grant Writing Team Generated Grants

- To search out grants that may be appropriate to certain teams, or to the Commons at large, which are consistent with the Commons' Strategic Plan
- To present the possibility of such a grant to the appropriate team, or to a group that may come into existence for the purpose of this project
- To ensure that such a team finds approval from the Sharing the Commons Team
- To follow the guidelines, as above, of team generated grants, including and especially the time lines in the last two sections above

George also suggested that teams break up big projects into smaller pieces and ask different agencies to fund different parts – they like matching or seed money from other sources than their own agency.

Note: The Grant Writing Team is a sub-team of the Trustees; should be in the mandate. Note also that there is not a Commons Strategic Plan – it is Long Range Planning and Stewardship rather than Strategic Plan.

Kitchen Stewards (Sharon Pattison)

We're revamping rental agreements based on our 1st year of experience. Inventory sometimes "walks", so we're working on checklists to keep track of expensive items better. Past users are invited to look through their own inventory in case things were mistakenly packed that belong to the kitchen.

Sharon is leaving the Island and the Commons in early March and the Kitchen Steward Team is planning for a 3 person steering committee to replace the coordinator position. They are hoping to do some recruitment in the community. Currently there are 6 Kitchen Stewards. Good basics in place. Kitchen use is growing and it's great to share the job of coordinating.

HUGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND APPRECIATION FOR SHARON (and Dave)!!!!

As an aside, associated with Commons participation: A kitchen user mentioned that they felt intimidated by the Commons. There was a suggestion that we offer to take new participants under an individual wing, ie, one on one. Someone suggested that it would be good to have someone appointed as a personal liaison for new people/projects so they don't get really frustrated with our apparently different and complex ways.

Tool Library (Patsy Ludwick)

Waiting to hear from the Lions about the success (or not) of their application for funding to build the Tool Library. The RDN has changed the allowable dimensions, which are now 107 square feet INSIDE allowable area. The tool library has applied for a Community Card at the Village Food Market and for a membership at the Mid Island Coop. They are also fundraising for themselves and will use a saw blade mounted on the new building as their donor recognition icon.

Farm Team (Judith Roux)

Meeting cancelled because of snow.

Finance Team (Deb Ferens)

Finance Team meets next Monday. All are welcome to come and count money!

Trustee Team (Deb Ferens)

Trustees will be meeting an additional time this month to prepare tax receipts; everyone is free to join in. Trustees will send date to Communique when this session is set. They received the draft MoU from the Gabriola Arts Council for this summer's Theatre/Music Festival. A template for MoUs will be ready for February. When entering into an MoU, groups are signing on to be PART of the Commons.

Received our property assessment – up approximately 20% at \$750,000. We don't pay property taxes as a Charity.

Communication Team (Jinny Hayes)

Handed out Templates for Team Mandates. It would look great on the website to have all team mandates up to date. Team Mandates should be reviewed every couple of years with 2 years worth of objectives.

They are reactivating the search for a logo to go with our new tag line "where land and people meet." Tim Gambrell has indicated he is willing to help with logo development. We will need new brochures once the covenant is in place, and it would be good to have the new logo ready for that.

COM Team has been putting articles in the Sounder each month; Nancy HP facilitates these. May be asking people to write articles. Jinny is the portal to the Sounder.

The door to the archive room is locked. Linda St C is the key contact person for the Trustees.

TAGS (Kit Szanto)

TAGS is collapsing – need more people. Last work bee was fun AND we need someone who is passionate about Trails. This is part of a general need to increase participation on the Commons. Judith appreciated Kit for her faithful and committed Daphne and broom removal (and we all cheered).

PHC (Brenda Fowler)

Moving ahead to STC with their RDN Zero Waste program. Really interesting to be going through STC in this new way for PHC. Brenda is interested in exploring the notion of entering into an MoU with the Commons. There is new tile in the PHC kitchen – looks great! Also concerted effort at exterior de-cluttering and recycling; one layer done, and they're committed to moving forward with more clean-up.

Information – Islands Trust and RDN are looking for a new Zero Waste Manager. Brenda has more info about this position.

Bookings (Sharon McInnis)

Sharon is getting used to it all – there's a lot to keep track of! Do we keep stats? Would it be useful for funding? Every Commons team is asked to please remember to reserve your room when you set your meetings. Might be a good idea to have one person on each team the designated meeting booker.

Patrick proposed that we contact renters who have stopped using our rooms for various reasons, by offering them compensation in the form of a free rental or two. Also the Linux group should be offered a free month in his opinion. Seemed to be general agreement.

Covenant (K Louise Vincent)

Covenant Team is plowing through the baseline report at present; Judith Roux has produced an outstanding basic and second enormous document for archiving. Deb Curran, lawyer at Environment Law in Victoria, is currently reviewing the Covenant before presenting to Trustees and then to Council. Stewardship Plan and Covenant Holder(s) are the next up.

PMT (Patrick Roux, John Pierce)

Please take a key tag to remind yourself of the Commons number at Mid Island Coop – Patrick passed them out to all who were interested.

PHC kitchen has a leak; will be investigating on Thursday. The septic field should be inspected and assessed for repairs. It was installed in the mid-70's by Steve Rhicard. The cost of pumping and/or repair could be \$500-\$20K, depending on what is found, so the question arises about what we can afford and whether funds are available for large repairs; thus, PMT will be speaking with the Grant Writing Team. Patrick would like us to continue to be mindful of the septic field. Deb asked if PMT can cover the estimates in their proposed budget.

Cleaning schedule of donated cleaner is moving along. Second Thursday unless there are rentals and then it shifts around.

Next Team Focus: Communication (COM)

Business Arising:

GAC – Teams to talk about Mitch and Michelle's proposal and come back with their views and concerns. Do we want to be food preparer? Becky (COM) suggests that the Commons not be the only food provider, but it's thought that other food trucks will be on hand. Port-a-potties will be provided, as will all water. The Festival **Team Focus** dates are August 17, 18, 19 with a day on either end for set up and tear down.

Mortgage Burning Celebration – Rescheduled to Sunday February 18 at 2.00 pm **Team Focus**

Charles Silva Commons Memorial estimated for the end of March or beginning of April. Further details to be determined and announced.

Hedge Report - Tabled as David Lightly is not present

Volunteerism/Participation – to be discussed in the future. Who will take the lead? Should it be a 20 minute discussion or more? It's about collective responsibility, cultivating a sense that we are sharing the responsibility of the island. Stewardship, relationship with land and with each other. Practicalities and Philosophy both. Linda St Clair and Long Range Planning are interested in facilitating a deep conversation with past and present participants at the Commons.

That's all folks! We were finished at 8:58