

**Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)**  
**gabrielacommonscouncil@gmail.com**

**Notes for Meeting of July 02, 2013**

**Present:** Raymond Tremblay, Rebecca Furnell, Judith Roux, Jinny Hayes, Mary Aitken, Muriel Weins, Alison Fitzgerald, Bob Andrew, Heide Brown, Shelagh Huston, Mary Wilson, Robbie Huston, Sam Adair

**Co-facilitators (2):** Maya Ruggles, Stef Marrie

**Recorder:** Kit Szanto (for Sharing the Commons)

**Next CCC meeting:** August 6, 2013

**Recorder for next meeting:** TAGS, Bob Andrew

**Meeting Agenda:**

1. 20-minute discussion - current: Memorials/Memorial Objects
2. Team, Project & Group Reports
3. Follow-up from previous meetings
4. Additional items arising from this meeting

**Follow-up Items from previous meeting - discussions outlined below:**

- A. Suggestions for changes to the website
- B. Alternative Energy
- C. Skateboard park
- D. Final version of Concensus Decision-making Policy (attached below)
- E. Recommendations for CCC web page changes (attached below) - to be forwarded to Hans/ Heide

**Reminders & Action Items - will be followed up at next meeting:**

- A. Camp Miriam campers here from July 4 to late August
- B. All Teams: Review list of projects to use the remaining \$4000.00 of donated funds (list attached below)
- C. Please consider co-facilitating Council with Stef Marrie (starting in August)

**Ongoing Discussion Topics - for 20-minute discussions:**

- A. Memorials (current, starting July meeting)
- B. "Personal Benefit" at the Commons
- C. Sustainability Building
- D. Signage
- E. Formation of a Conflict Resolution Team
- F. Recognizing contributions
- G. How do we decide what gets sent out to membership?
- H. Website Update (will receive information package from Hans/Heide)
- I. Consensus process
- J. How do we orient people to the Commons?

\*\*\*\*\*

**1. Notes from 20-Minute Discussion:**

**Current topic: Memorials/ Memorial Objects**

A good, quite wide ranging discussion re memorials, focusing mainly on benches presented to the Commons and other tangible objects in memory of someone, whether we want to limit the number of objects, the types of objects, the material the objects are made of, the text on such

objects, and if so, how we might develop the guidelines for doing so. One suggestion was to think of projects that might be achieved as a memorial to someone. The discussion will be continued.

1st session: July 2, 2013

### CHEAPBFVs

#### Concerns:

- do not want donations to have to go through bureaucratic process
- folks should go through bookings to hold a memorial in labyrinth

#### Hopes:

- labyrinth good location
- green cemetery
- memorials could come in form of bricks, in combination with donations, to form a walkway

#### Expectations:

- is there a limit to the number of memorial objects?
- deal with the problem of too many objects when it happens

#### Assumptions:

- 'memorial' means event to celebrate a life
- limit the discussion to memorial objects

#### Priorities:

- create a list of acceptable objects and locations; approval of wording
- also make a list of components of benches/ objects
- considering that they are permanent, there should be a process for folks to go through

#### Beliefs:

#### Fears:

- end up with too many objects
- must consider up-keep of objects
- what happens when we reach the acceptable limit?

#### Values:

- BC Parks may have a process from which we can learn
- the value is in honoring those who have passed, while reinforcing the values of the Commons

## 2. TEAM Reports:

### *Commons Coordinating Council* (reporter:

- Maya said this was her last Council meeting as facilitator, so needed someone to come forward, someone with some experience of Council to be facilitator with Stef.

- Next Meeting:

### *Communications* (reporter:

- HIGHLIGHTS: Heide is back. Patsy did a wonderful job!! Thank you Patsy.

#### NEEDS:

-- More team members – more participants to meet a few times each year and work together to oversee Commons' communications, in all its aspects.

-- We continue to look for more short – 150 words – articles for The Sounder and The Shingle. You might write about why you support the Commons, what you like about the Commons, your history with the Commons, etc --- things like that. If you are interested, please let us know ---

[communications@gabriolacommons.ca](mailto:communications@gabriolacommons.ca)

-- A participant to take over my position for this next year --- I will no longer be the liaison between Counsel and the Commons' Communique after September. The sooner someone (you?) steps

forward, the more time you will have to get the hang of this fun and fulfilling opportunity.

- Next Meeting:

***Covenant*** (reporter:

- 

- Next Meeting:

***Event Planning*** (reporter:

- Stef reported on the Garage Sale, July 13. She needs help from 2-4 the day before, Friday, to set up, and some people to volunteer to be at the Commons table from 10-12 and 12-2.

- Next Meeting:

***Farm Management*** (reporter:

- Judith Roux reported the South Gardeners have some questions about height restrictions on the constructions in the South Gardens that may come to Council. They have a new sandwich board for the Farm Gate sales.

- Next Meeting:

***Fundraising*** (reporter:

- 

- Next Meeting:

***Grant Writing*** (reporter:

- 

- Next Meeting:

***Infrastructure*** (reporter:

- 

- Next Meeting:

***Learning Opportunities*** (reporter:

- 

- Next Meeting:

***Property Management*** (reporter:

- Mary Wilson reported it was working well.

- Next Meeting:

***Share the Commons*** (reporter: Kit Szanto)

- Various members of Share the Commons helped Kit (who had been absent from the last meeting, but who is the STC contact) report on the support from STC on a Healing Arts fair proposal for February 2014, and Stef suggested it might alternate with the Trades Fair. The proposal for a Christmas pageant again this year has been approved by STC. And STC heard a “heads up” about a request to place a skateboard park on the Commons, to be discussed further.

- Next Meeting: July, 3, 2013 at 10:30 am

### *Trails and Green Spaces* (reporter:

- 

- Next Meeting:

### *Trustees for Gabriola Commons Foundation* (reporter: Jinny Hayes)

- 

We have again met twice since the last Council meeting, first our regular business meeting (June 6) and then our financial planning/fundraising one (June 20).

#### **Trustee Business**

The **Covenant Group** is munching on ideas generated by those we met with on our Islands Futures-facilitated “field trip” 2 weeks ago to the Galiano Conservancy, and continues to plan for writing a Stewardship Plan and Baseline Report.

We’re working on the **Consensus Decision Making Policy**, which is an extension of the Decision-Making document previously circulated. We will bring a draft to Council for the August mtg.

**Trustee changes:** We are currently 7 when 10 are possible. Maya will be appointed a Trustee when her term with Council facilitation concludes, and Cameron Murray has agreed to let his name stand at the AGM for a term starting in October.

**AGM:** We’re still planning for this year’s AGM: **Sept 28 at 1.30 pm.** There will be Bylaw revisions, revisions to policies for the Commons Handbook, and new Trustees. With resignations and terms ending, we will require 3 further nominees in addition to Maya and Cameron, so please let any Trustee know if you’d like to be involved in the financial & legal aspects of the Commons, or think you know someone who would be a good fit.

#### **Financial**

**Year-end accounting** is currently being prepared by Treasurer Deb and Accountant Judy McPhee. Deb proposes that she attend the next Council meeting to do a quarterly report, update teams and review a few items, eg, decisions will need to be made about the un-allocated \$4,000 of the \$50K anonymous donation of last summer.

Heads-up! We will need to institute a system for **tracking in-kind donations** from people who don’t want any real acknowledgement, eg, tools for Namaste Farm Gardens. It is important to track these things for Revenue Canada purposes even though there’s no real financial implications. We’ll keep teams posted.

Since an important aspect of fundraising is to regularly **acknowledge donors’ participation**, we recently sent individually written photo cards to every regular donor. Thanks OF COURSE to all donors and also to the photographers whose pics were lifted off the Commons Flickr site and gave their permission for use.

We continue working on a **Fundraising Campaign Prospectus**. We are working through “weather mapping” of various potential aspects of a new plan. Be ready for announcements and projects in the Fall.

## Legal

We've been working through a few questions arising from **Commons Zoning, OCP & Local By-Laws**, such as "agricultural policies", "sustainability", "personal profit", etc. Our discussions will continue...

As will **archiving**, in response to input from teams.

- Next Meeting: Regular business: July 4 at 2 pm; Fundraising: July 18 at 2 pm

*Volunteers* (reporter:

- 

- Next Meeting:

## PROJECTS:

*Community Kitchen* (reporter:

- 

*Green Bikes* (reporter:

- 

*Island Connections* (reporter:

- 

*Labyrinth* (reporter:

- Mary Aitken reported on the Ecumenical Society's event at the labyrinth, which was a great success (despite the rain) with Leah Hokinson playing her keyboard, a tent over it keeping it pretty dry. Mary thanked everyone who had scythed, mowed, weeded the area and the path down so that wheelchairs could access the labyrinth easily.

*Sustainability Centre* (reporter:

- 

*Other:*

- a. Robbie Huston reported on the **haying, scything learning and practicing day on June 21**. The rain reduced some of the numbers of people expected and made it harder to dry the hay but all who were there for some or all of the day enjoyed the experience enormously.
- b. Shelagh Huston reported that she and Muriel had begun working together on **conflict resolution** and hope to have something to discuss within 3 months.
- c. Sam Adair said he was here mainly to listen but also asked some questions about the role of AGES in relation to the Commons. He proposed focusing his energies on **turning the Goat Barn into a Performing Arts Centre** and said he had a large group of friends to do the work and raise the money for it. He was invited to attend the next Sharing the Commons Team meeting to present his plan. There was some discussion of the logistics of the Commons way of proceeding on large (and small) projects.

## GROUPS

*People for a Healthy Community* (reporter:

- 
- Next Board Meeting:

*Poetry Gabriola* (reporter:

- 
- Next Meeting:

### **3. Discussion on follow-up items from previous meeting:**

**a.** Suggestions for changes to the website: Teams should report to Heide any suggestions they have for changes to our website. Mary Wilson suggested a small group of people who know about websites could get together for a quick, careful discussion and make suggestions based on their experience, and that might be more effective than trying to sort through a lot of ideas (or none) from all the teams.

**b.** Alternative Energy: There was some discussion of Sustainable Gabriola and Judith explained some of the past few weeks news, chat, that grew out of Michael Mehta's suggestion of Gabriola developing its own energy system.

**c.** Skateboard park: The idea of a skateboard park on the Commons was discussed, pro and con. Despite the advantage of its attraction for the young to the Commons, a good number of people were not happy with pouring so much concrete on the Commons property. In addition the complexity of having the RDN participate in building this park seems to involve what would amount to a subdivision of Commons property, something not permitted by the by-laws.

**d.** Consensus Decision-making Policy

## **Decision Making at the Gabriola Commons**

### **Introduction and Intent:**

This document details the general process used for making decisions at the Gabriola Commons.

'Decisions' may include the creation and implementation of new policies or determinations to take action on a topic or activity. This document is not intended to guide consensus process but rather the process that leads up to the point of making a consensus decision.

Informed and effective decision making is possible even within a non-traditional organizational and governance structure such as practiced at the Gabriola Commons.

This style of decision making is premised upon self-organization, and inspired by good information sharing and trust.

The following principles are kept in mind throughout the decision making process:

- Decentralized decision making is practiced at the most appropriate, practical and empowering level, and in such a way that it models the ability of natural systems to self-organize.
- Information about activities and plans is shared in ways which are playful, articulate, accessible and engaging and which enables people to feel enthused and empowered.
- Messages are non-directive, respecting the ability to make a response that is appropriate to a particular situation.

(Modified from Hopkins and Lipman 2009)

**Commons Coordinating Council (Council):**

A meeting held monthly, attended by representatives from teams and involved groups on the Commons and open to the public. Council acts as a mediating body where involved parties can discuss ideas, issues and current goings-on and initiate cooperation and collaboration. This is the main venue through which new information is passed from team to team and where new decisions are discussed in depth between Commons teams, groups, projects and individual participants before being finalized.

**Teams, Projects and Groups:**

Teams are groups of individuals who operate on the Commons with a specific mandate. All Commons affairs are attended to by one or more teams rather than being directed in a top-down manner. Teams function independently on the Commons while co-operating with each other to ensure the organization functions effectively. There are also project groups on the Commons which function as teams throughout the duration of a specific project. Additionally, there are several community groups that are active on the Commons property. Members of these groups are encouraged to attend Council so as to stay informed on current affairs.

**Representative:**

This is the person(s) who attends Council to represent their team, group, project, etc. It is the responsibility of this person to bring the information their team wants heard to Council and to circulate information from Council to their team and, when required, collect input on that information. This person is responsible for following up at Council with their team's input on issues from the previous Council.

The team representative is trusted to speak on behalf of their team when a time-sensitive decision is required to be made at Council when no time is available for team input.

**Decision Making:**

Decisions which do not affect those outside a single team are made within the team according to the team's mandate, plans and budget. For example: the farm team decides what to plant where within the existing gardens. It is crucial that teams, groups and projects consider the effects of their decisions so as to avoid making decisions that may affect others without going Council.

Decisions which affect multiple teams, groups, projects, etc. are ultimately made at Council, using input from all teams, groups, projects and with direction from the team(s), project(s) or group(s) most affected by the decision or most knowledgeable on the topic. This process is outlined below.

When an issue does not fall within the mandate of a specific team, group or project, or is important to many, representatives can 'draft' a recommendation or decision together. Occasionally a short-term task force made up of members of various teams, projects, groups or interested individuals may form to research or examine the issue and bring forth recommendations to Council.

**Decision Making Process**

A team, person, group, project, etc. has an issue that requires a decision to be made that has repercussions outside their own sphere on the Commons:

The recommendation, or "draft", for a decision comes from the team(s), projects(s) or groups(s) whose mandate(s) the decision falls within as this is the group of people who are the most informed on the given topic and most able to provide an appropriate solution or plan. For example: following the decision making process outlined below, the Farm Team might initiate the placement of a new garden. The 'draft' decision process might involve the Trails and Green Spaces team as well.

### **A. Drafting a recommendation:**

Information is brought to the Commons Council meeting by the representative for discussion. A recommendation for a policy, action, etc. may be brought instead of a question or issue. (skip to B in this case).

1. At Council the issue is discussed and it is determined if there are other teams, groups, projects or individuals that should be involved in drafting a recommendation for a policy, action, etc.
2. The involved parties form a task force to work up a draft plan of action, policy, etc. using their own knowledge and input from discussion at Council.
3. The involved parties, bring this draft to the next Council meeting for discussion and circulation.

### **B. Circulating the recommendation:**

Representatives circulate the draft recommendation to their team members and collect input. Because this is an inherently slow decision making process it is vital that team reps are doing this promptly, so that unreasonable delay is not created in decision making.

### **C. Making a decision:**

At the following Council meeting representatives discuss input and the recommendation is either:

- ⤴ Adopted and made final through consensus (based on input as presented by the representatives).
- ⤴ Amended and re-circulated for further discussion/input (back to B).
- ⤴ Dropped if it is found to be unnecessary and/or unpopular.

A final decision is made based on a consensus model as outlined in the trustee handbook policy on consensus decision making.

### **D. Circulating the Decision and Follow up:**

The decision and any pertinent information is circulated by representatives to their teams, groups, projects, and also through Council minutes, which may be sent out by representatives and are posted monthly on the Commons website.

Trustees are responsible for updating the Trustee Handbook with new policies or changes to existing policies.

Once a decision is given the “green light” it is imperative that reports and updates are regularly submitted to Council as the project or activity progresses. This communication allows members to be up to date with current goings on and to monitor any changes to the original decision.

### **References:**

Hopkins, Rob & Peter Lipman. 2009. The Transition Network Ltd. Who We Are And What We Do Version 1.0

e. CCC web page changes - proposed by Maya Ruggles

Proposal for website presence of Commons Coordinating Council  
Introduced by Maya at June 4th, 2013 Council meeting  
Sent with June meeting notes



- add under 'Upcoming Events':

Commons Council Meeting *\*with link to CCC page\**  
1st Tuesday of every month at 7pm  
Everyone is welcome

COMMONS COORDINATING COUNCIL PAGE

- Change intro paragraph:

The Commons Coordinating Council is a key body in the cooperative operation of the Gabriola Commons. The Council includes a representative of each Commons' Team, two co-facilitators, a notetaker, stakeholders such as People for a Healthy Community and Poetry Gabriola, and interested individuals. Everyone is welcome; in fact, this is probably the best place to learn about the present and future activities on the Commons.

- Add paragraph on 'Twenty Minute Discussions':

The first 20 minutes of each Council meeting is used to address an issue that calls for some focused attention. The Council provides a forum for large-group discussion of 'larger' issues, as well as some guidance for how action could be taken. Some issues may take more than one 20-minute session. A brief summary of the discussion for each issue will be posted on this website page once some resolution has been found (see left column).

Current discussion item (starting at July 2013 meeting): Memorials/ Memorial Objects

- Add '20-Minute Discussion Summaries' in left column:

▲ Front Yard of the Gabriola Commons

- Delete, Update or Replace diagram of CCC

- Change 'Agenda Outline for Council Meetings':

1. Twenty Minutes Discussion on current issue
2. Team/Project/Stakeholder Reports (with Intro Round)
3. Follow-up on Action items & Questions from previous meeting
4. Follow-up on Additional Agenda Items from previous meeting
5. Next meeting date & next notetaker

#### **4. Additional Items Arising:**

a. Questions from Sam Adair: Where (to what Society) is the Commons designated in the event that the Commons is dissolved?

#### **Attachments:**

- A. list of projects funded by donations
- Farm-Gate Stand/Info Centre
  - Barn Storage System
  - Parking lot expansion
  - Blinds for Upstairs room (to permit dark-out)
  - Chipper
  - Upgrade Water System with new UV filters
  - New Parking area between Barn and Road