

## Commons Council Nov. 6<sup>Th</sup>, 2018

Notes – taken by Maya (for the Kitchen Stewards)

Acknowledgement: we are honoured to be able to meet and work on the un-surrendered territory of the Snuneymowx First Nation.

Question: where did the term 'un-surrendered' come from? Buffy Saint Marie.

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### For December 4<sup>th</sup> Council:

- Facilitators: Linda St. Clair and Judith Roux
- Note-taker:
- 20 minute discussion topic: how to increase stewardship on the Commons

### Items to share with Teams (please provide feedback from Teams):

- need another person to join Lynda T. on bookings
- proposal to reinvigorate the Learning Opportunities Team

### Attachments to these minutes:

- letter of intent for cistern funding application to the Nanaimo Foundation
  - proposal for invigorating the Learning Opportunities Team
  - letter of support from Learning Opportunities Team for Intergenerational Place-Based Learning for Reconciliation research project with SFU/GES
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In attendance: Linda St. Clair, Kim Kasasian, Kit Szanto, Stef Marrie, Maya Ruggles, Jinny Hayes, Diane Streeter, Bob Andrew, Brenda Fowler, Patsy Ludwick, Darryl Receveur, Michelle Benjamin, Deborah Ferens, Judith Roux, Mitch Miyagawa

**20 minute discussion: Gabriola Commons Logo** (presentation by Jinny – please contact Jinny if you would like a copy of her presentation)

Discussion points:

- let's vote and choose most popular
- logo should be simple and obvious
- Tagline – Where Land and People Meet – and “Gabriola Commons” - seems like too many words. Depends on what format they're being used.
- Are we committed to Tim Gambrel for the final design? Can we do a contest? Tried that and it wasn't productive.
- Power of branding. Strong image. Something significantly different.
- Other strong images, e.g. Fix-it-Fair
- people meeting/facing each other holding hands; land represented somehow
- more land, less people. Last logo too stilted, too corporate. Needs more flow to it.
- Start with principles; images come out of value set – equality, access, stewardship. What are our core values?
- Words say what we need to say; image catches our attention
- Like idea of contest, maybe with GES students
- Make it flexible for multiple formats; need expertise for final electronic version.
- More brainstorming for values
- Moving forward: brainstorm, ask kids/GES, ideas from kids displayed at brainstorm, talk to Rose Boulton

### Follow-up from October Council meeting:

- South Gardens working with Process Team to develop policies and code of conduct
  - Document about general safety and security on the Commons was started with Trustees (Covenant Team); time to revisit, update and share with all teams
- Reservoir: 2 applications for funding
  - Community Works Fund
  - Nanaimo Foundation (letter of intent attached to minutes) – this fund wouldn't be available until August 2019
  - Planning 2 phases of this project so it can get started by next summer
  - Comment: remember Charles saying that while all four projects that came up in the community brainstorming session are things we all want, a new water system is the one we *need*

### Team Reports:

- **Finance (Deb):**
  - Next meeting: Monday November 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:30
  - Items for discussion at last meeting: recreation marijuana
    - What will our response be when local marijuana businesses want to support our organization? Money from the industry?
    - Draft policy about granting/funding – update existing policy?
- **Trustees (Bob)**
  - Next meeting: Nov 13<sup>th</sup> 2:30pm
  - We had an AGM. The Trustees are now : Allie Charon, Daniel Artuso, David Cherneyko, Deb Ferens, Judith Plant, Don Smardon and Bob Andrew. David did the minutes and are online.
  - The Trustees have asked that the Goat Barn not be rented until we check with insurance, suss out safety concerns, etc.
  - The Trustees are setting up a meeting with the new PHC Board to introduce ourselves to each other and talk issues. We also need to review the lease and rent.
  - The RDN has asked for a letter of approval re: a setback variance for the skateboard park (to 3m, rather than the usual 6m). There has been tentative approval, but we need to hear from Council.
    - Discussion:
      - pathway would have to exit at North Rd. Instead of going through Huxley Park
      - would need to move the trail sign.
      - Skateboard Park committee is asking out of courtesy (and good process); they could get approval from Islands Trust regardless of our response
      - we would have intervener status at this decision.
      - We want to be good neighbours – smooth partnership
      - can the path be re-routed another way (not to North Road)?
      - It took days to get the existing sign up – can we ask RDN for support to move it?
      - Good opportunity to bring young people into the Commons.
      - Opportunity to bring together two sets of interests, mutual learning

- **Property Management (Bob):**
  - We have some tentative and promising results finally for the solar panels
  - The cistern funding is being sought after from the RDN.
  - PMT would like clarification re: the difference between Capital expenses, Infrastructure expenses and Maintenance expenses.
  - We are working with GAC re: the removal and storage of the stage in the yard.
  - Question: what heats water for the kitchen? Solar on the side of the kitchen building.
  - Will be sorting out details of hydro costs to come.
  - House Stewards (sub-group of PMT) (Deb):
    - cleaning the house on Saturdays; 4 people on team
    - log book in upstairs kitchen
    - we all still need to clean up after ourselves
  - Bookings:
    - down to one person; critical to find another person; can we put another ad in the Sounder.
  
- **Covenant (Jinny):**
  - Next meeting: Thursday Nov 8<sup>th</sup> at 3pm
  - Team has really good drafts of all 3 documents (Covenant, Stewardship Plan and Baseline Report)
  - submitted to GALTT (to be Covenant holder) – meeting with them on Nov 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm to receive feedback
  
- **Kitchen (Maya):**
  - working on changing water temperature with PMT (water coming out of tap is scalding and we have kids in the kitchen)
  - still occasionally finding the kitchen open with no one inside
    - calling for shared, general responsibility for keeping an eye on the kitchen; this could be a good habit for when we have more facilities in operation.
    - stewards will be posting signs at all the exits reminding people to lock up.
  
- **Learning Opportunities (Maya):**
  - question: how are we getting materials for consideration from all teams out? Would like to request a review/reminder of this process
    - suggestion: Council Facilitators send the upcoming agenda (including the 20 minute discussion topic) to Stef to add to the Communicue
    - waiting to call a meeting until everyone has had a chance to see (and read, if they want) the proposal to reinvigorate LOT
    - original proposal from the October Council is attached to minutes.
  - Maya and Mary Wilson are representing LOT (the Commons) with the SFU/GES research project Intergenerational Place-Based Learning for Reconciliation, and have recently sent a letter of support for the second phase of funding (letter of support attached to minutes). Mary has attended the two community meetings so far and has met with Sharing the Commons about our participation. If you are interested in reading the current grant application, please be in touch with Maya (maya.ruggles@gmail.com).

- **Events (Stef):**
  - “Deck the Halls” Craft Fair on Nov 17
    - ask for gifts for Commons donation table
    - usually run the kitchen as a fundraiser for a team; if no team wants to take it on will sell to vendor as their space
    - question about how to work new stove/oven; will review the manual
    - need people to be in Commons room at raffle table, donations table, selling t-shirts, etc.
  
- **Tool Library (Patsy):**
  - what is owed the Commons for Hydro and Wifi? Requesting an amount so they can include in budget
  - did an assessment of use; about .5 kw per hour it is open
    - talk to finance team for dollar amount
  - want to make clear to Commons participants that they can't help themselves to tools; need to sign them out.
    - Would like to come up with clearer sharing arrangements with Commons (for tools and storage space)
      - talk to PMT
  
- **PHC (Brenda):**
  - kids cooking class is almost over; worked well in the kitchen – ended up sharing with Dawn
  
- **Cultivate (Arts Council, Mitch and Michelle)**
  - starting to plan and need to have a date
    - proposal to move festival to Labour Day weekend (August 29 to September 1)
    - implications for Fall Fair
    - reason to want to change to that weekend:
      - overlapping with other festivals so can share costs of getting artists here
      - too much happening on Gabriola earlier (summer festival burnout)
      - Sept working with theme better
    - how it might work with Fall Fair
      - Squash races, Fashion show could fit really nicely with Cultivate
    - will continue to do both music and theatre festival
      - more integrated; move theatre to Commons
    - other possible dates: same weekend as last year; weekend after that
    - Need to know for sure before new year; the earlier the better
  - Discussion:
    - would there be more attendance; are people going home by Monday?
    - Exciting potential synergy between Cultivate and Fall Fair
    - Fall Fair for few hours on Sunday; focus at the heart of Cultivate
    - Fall Fair is Events Team signature event
    - Develop “Fall” theme
    - Fundraiser through concession
    - Fall Fair on its own: for islanders, its a tradition
    - Do Fall Fair later?
    - Family focus at both events
    - we could get “mush” trying to put the 2 events together

- likelihood of good weather later in September?
  - Fall Fair finally getting its own momentum
    - don't want to *squash* Fall Fair (ha-ha)
    - potential to add to it
  - set meeting – Mitch to follow up with Events Team
  - Stage to be dismantled by Arts Council volunteers
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## **Application to Nanaimo Foundation for funding of reservoir:**

**Letter of intent - Organization:** Gabriola Commons Foundation

Registered Charity Number: 3038999

### **^ Project name: Reservoir for rainwater storage**

#### **^ Issues:**

Changing weather patterns, bringing longer and more severe droughts to our coast, are having a serious impact on local farmers. Rains no longer fall regularly through the growing season and once reliable ponds are drying up. Capturing and storing winter rainfall in sufficient quantity for irrigation has become a high priority for those involved in sustainable food production.

Owned by and for the benefit of the community of Gabriola Island, the Gabriola Commons is a 26 acre property lying within the BC Agricultural Land Reserve. Developing the agricultural potential of the Commons land has been an important priority since 2005. Extensive allotment gardens have been created, permitting many members of the community to grow food for their families. The Food Bank operated by People for a Healthy Community manages allotments. Gardens stewarded by the Commons Farm Team, including a large apple and blueberry orchard, provide produce for Commons events (such as Fairs and workbee lunches) as well as a source of funding through sales at the summer mid-week market.

By mid-summer this year the large pond which once sufficed for the irrigation needs of the Commons could no longer provide water without drying beyond recovery. Access to water was gradually reduced and finally curtailed. All agreed that it is necessary to find a means of storing winter rainfall. Records indicated that the shortfall goes far beyond the volume provided by several 2000 gallon cisterns (each of which would be emptied in a week). A minimum of 25,000 gallons is now considered necessary.

**^ Proposed project:** An engineered concrete reservoir with 4 chambers: 20 feet x 40 feet x 6 feet deep (with 2 feet above ground), constructed in 2 phases: each 20 feet x 20 feet receiving rainwater from the roofs of nearby buildings and directing it to the irrigation system already in place.

Project budget:

Phase One: 2-chamber cistern (20' X 20' x 6')

Engineering \$2,000.

Excavation 600

Forming and rebar 3,000

Concrete 9,400

2 lids & Xypex 1,000

16,000

Phase Two: 2-chamber cistern (20' X 20 X 6')

Excavation 600

Forming and rebar 2,500

Concrete 8,500

2 lids and Xypex 1,000

Piping 1,000

Pump 1,000

Finishing 1,000

Total 15,600

Start-up and completion dates:

Start-up (Phase One) funded by other source (to be confirmed)

with intention to capture as much rain as possible

this winter). ASAP Fall/Winter 2018

Completion (Phase Two completed) hopefully funded by Nanaimo Foundation Fall 2019

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**Proposal to Commons Council - moving beyond acknowledgments of unceded territory  
Made on October 2, 2018 at Council by Maya Ruggles as rep of Learning Opportunities Team  
(bringing the team out of dormancy)**

Question: It's important to acknowledge that the land on which the Commons sits (and acts) is, and always has been, unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw. We probably all recall that in the 1990's, practicing such acknowledgments was a radical act. And we still give acknowledgments that inspire us to go further. But it's also important to notice when our acknowledgments become rote and no longer work to 'unsettle' us; to help us reflect on how we are, or are not, allies in the journey towards truth and reconciliation with the First Peoples of these lands. There is so much work to be done, for First Nations in working to make their communities healthy, and for settlers to work at decolonizing our own minds and hearts, to be open to this journey of learning that lies before us (especially when much of it is difficult learning). This is a journey together - for First Nations and settlers; but this journey is also one taken by all of us within our various families, communities, organizations. We walk on this land together, and

we're learning how to do that as we go. So my question is: How can the Commons move beyond acknowledging unceded land, and to act as allies in this journey towards truth and reconciliation?

Suggestions:

- 1) that we dedicate at least one of our 20 minute discussions to ways in which the Commons can work as allies in this journey towards truth and reconciliation.
- 2) One thing I've learned, from recent observation and listening to some Snuneymuxw people, is that connecting with one other involves telling each other about who we are; where and who we come from; our ancestral history?; our legacy?; what journey brought us here? We are all implicated in colonization; and we are all living in/with it. Telling each other about where we come from could engage us in at least two kinds of lesson, one of self-reflection about how we are personally situated in this colonial history *and* one of collective – community – resilience as our relations to one another come into greater relief. My second suggestion: that during our round at Council we include something about where we come from (who are our family and our ancestors?). Because Council happens on a regular basis, our stories can unfold slowly as we add a small piece at each meeting.
- 3) that we hold a screening and discussion of the video:

“Making Coast Salish Territorial Acknowledgments Matter”

A panel discussion held in 2016 at SFU

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Tei5tGoQ4s>

-2 ‘meetings’, about 2 hours each: the first meeting for the screening and a brief round for initial responses; the second meeting for a deeper conversation.

I am excited to be reviving the Learning Opportunities Team! I don't have the time to rush with this, but I am inspired to continue moving forward with it. I can't, nor do I want to, do it alone. Who would like to join me?

## *The Gabriola Commons... where land and people meet*

PO Box 94, Gabriola Island BC VoR 1X0

[www.gabrielacommons.ca](http://www.gabrielacommons.ca)

November 29, 2016

Dear members of SSHRC:

We are writing this letter on behalf of the Learning Opportunities Team at the Gabriola Commons. As a team dedicated to engaging the community in learning, we have read and strongly support the Project proposal for Intergenerational Place-based Learning for Reconciliation. We are excited by the possibilities of this research and its potential importance, locally and beyond.

### **About the Commons**

The Gabriola Commons is best introduced by its Charter:

The Gabriola Commons is intended as a source of ecological and community well-being that exists in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Gabriola Island and the land on which it is situated.

As a source of well-being, the Gabriola Commons contributes to our sense of community, of belonging, and of our bonds to one another and the land. It draws the community in, and brings the people of the community closer to each other. It is a space for creativity and justice, for art and learning, and for fairness and openness.

The Gabriola Commons demonstrates ways to enhance sustainability, to preserve ecosystems and biodiversity, and to promote equity both on this island and in the world.

The land includes a number of significant natural gifts and community amenities in one contiguous property: rich wildlife habitats; a pond and wetland area; open vistas and meadows; cedar groves and forests; pathways linking neighbourhoods; a rural agricultural heritage and landscape for farming and gardening; indoor gathering places for community celebrations and events, for solitude and sanctuary, performance and festivity.

The property of the Gabriola Commons is a gift from an earlier generation that we in turn must pass on, undiminished and enriched, to those who follow us." (2008, revised 2012)

The Gabriola Commons is simultaneously a place and an organization. As a place, the Commons is a 26-acre property immediately across the road from the Gabriola Elementary School. It contains agricultural land, a house used as a meeting space, a community commercial kitchen, a beaver pond, an area of Douglas Fir forest, and several other ecosystems. The Commons property is owned by the people, not by private interests or the government. It is stewarded by participants in the Commons. It is the mission of the Gabriola Commons Foundation to hold the property in perpetuity for the people of Gabriola. As an organization, the Commons is non-hierarchical and operates from a stewardship model through consensus decision-making.

### **About our participation as a Community Partner in the project**

We imagine a dialogic and iterative process that would fully explore the Commons involvement in the research project. The Learning Opportunities Team at the Gabriola Commons looks forward to leading the Commons' involvement. Place-based education seems particularly important when the place in question is small community in a fragile ecosystem.

Several other Commons' teams offer contexts for place-based learning of various kinds. For instance, the



Covenant Team is currently completing a draft of a community covenant, perhaps the first in Canada that upholds a land-based covenant alongside a cultural component. As supplemental to the Covenant, this team is developing two documents: a Stewardship Plan and a Baseline Report. It is the governance model that brings all the teams together to steward the Gabriola Commons.

### **Nature of our involvement**

At the outset, we anticipate the Commons' involvement in the project in three ways.

First, we are revitalizing the Learning Opportunities Team after a short hiatus. As part of the process, we will be reworking our team mandate to guide and commit us to the broader project of Truth and Reconciliation. We will continue to forward proposals at the Commons with the aim of engaging all participants in learning how to be effective allies in this larger journey. We will offer various events and opportunities for dialogue that are grounded in such learning.

Second, we would like to be involved in teaching and learning about governance through the project. The Commons governance structure is non-hierarchical and consensus-based. Teams plan and participate in work on the Commons; a monthly coordinating Council, with representation from all teams and interested community members, discusses and shares decision-making when projects have an impact on more than one team. Our governance has itself emerged through discussion and consensus, and is both an important part of the Commons and a valuable example of a way of decision-making that involves everyone in a stewardship role.

Third, we will continue to welcome teachers and students from the school to the property. Many teachers from the school bring students to the Commons for field trips and we certainly expect that to continue. We will extend this welcome to mentors, elders and students from other learning contexts.

### **Participation in governance**

We would like to both share and model a governance structure that attempts to let every voice be heard, and have decisions be made on the basis of consensus emerging as concerns are fully explored. We see this model of governance as being potentially very useful for a project that will combine several community organizations along with academic researchers.

### **In-kind and/or monetary contributions**

As a non-profit organization sustained by community donations and without paid staff, we are not in a position to offer a monetary contribution to the project. As well as the involvement described above, we can make practical/logistical contributions:

- access to a commercial kitchen
- access to meeting rooms and outdoor space, including a trail network

### **Anticipated outcomes**

We anticipate several outcomes from the project.

- We anticipate that children on Gabriola will become more familiar with the Commons, both as a form of making decisions and as a physical place. It is our hope that the children of Gabriola will come to treasure the Commons as much as those involved with it now do, and help to ensure its preservation as a natural, agricultural and cultural space for future generations.
- We anticipate opportunities to participate meaningfully in the work of reconciliation.
- We anticipate an opportunity to share our decision-making process with other groups on the island, helping to grow a spirit of cooperation and open discussion that we feel should inform island life.

- We anticipate opportunities for multi-generational learning opportunities, where children and adults learn, share and explore together.
- We anticipate opportunities for ecosystem learning and increased eco-literacy for the children as they explore the Commons.

We look forward to learning more about the anticipated research, and participating in it as it unfolds.

Sincerely,

Mary Wilson

Maya Ruggles

For the Commons Learning Opportunities Team