

Commons Council Minutes for Meeting of September 4, 2012

Present: Mary Aitken, Bob Andrew, Heide Brown, Alison Fitzgerald, Rebecca Furnell, Jinny Hayes (M), Robbie Houston, Pat Maloney, Judith Roux (CF), Patrick Roux, Maya Ruggles, Aidan Simmons, Linda St. Clair (F), George Szanto, Kit Szanto, Raymond Tremblay, Muriel Weins, Susan Yeend.

Note: Action items in yellow highlighting.

Team and Group Reports

Communications Team (Jinny Hayes) – see attached (if written report was submitted)

- Agree with the additional \$5K to go to the Kitchen, but on the list of spending priorities for the \$50K anonymous donation, COM questions the wisdom on \$5-10K repair work for the Goat Barn roof when the whole roof will require replacement soon.
- Decision making document comments have gone to Rebecca.
- Six articles are planned for immediate and near-future publication in Gabriola newspapers. Doug and Jinny will manage these.
- All current members of COM, except our “photography only” member (Richard Pullano) need to move on to other Commons and life goals, so this team will need reconstruction. **How would the Commons like to “do” communications in future?**

Next Meeting: at the call of a new facilitator

Community Kitchen (Judith Roux)

- Judith has been able to obtain five stainless counters, at an excellent price, from closing Zellers.

Next Meeting: Not announced

Covenant (George Szanto)

- Feedback has been received from GaLTT (potential Covenant Holder), though the group has not yet had opportunity to discuss it.
- Feedback from The Land Conservancy of BC is unlikely as it has recently had its assets seized by CRA. We may need to look for another Covenant Holder.

Next Meeting: Friday, September 7 at noon.

Events Planning – No report but Naomi Melnyk reported on Fall Fair

- Many events are planned for Sept 16 noon to 4.00 pm and details will go out in an upcoming Communiqué. Volunteers are needed for set-up on Saturday 4-8 pm, and for and take-down, 4-5 pm. Please contact Stef Marrie to volunteer.
- A question was asked if the stock panels could be held in the Sustainability Centre, with general agreement.
- Questions or comments to Naomi 325-9132.

Next Meeting: n/a

Farm Management (Susan Yeend)

- Blueberries have been sold at the Farmgate stand and are being used for lunches, etc. Produce is also being reaped and prepared for soup-making. That and mulching are tasks for up-coming work bees.
 - There will be a compost workshop later in September by the North and South Garden groups.
 - Team reported their agreement with the additional \$5K going to the Community Kitchen, and gave input to the decision-making document.
- Next Meeting:** September 17, 4 pm PLUS a special meeting to discuss irrigation and the pond on October 29th at 4.00 pm.

*Fundraising (No report)**Grant Writing (George Szanto)*

- Federal agency grant application is currently in review for the Community Kitchen (\$35 K requested, to be matched by already-generated \$35K). Group is positive about the application's potential success, but if it is not granted, we have to re-think the whole Kitchen Project.
 - If the grant is received, the group will move on to the next big project requiring external funding.
- Next Meeting:** Not reported.

*Green Bikes – No report**Infrastructure (Aidan Simmons) – see attached*

- Team had extensive assessment and discussions of the Community Kitchen project and the Fall Fair; there is room to involve the public in these projects. Island chefs will set up a professional guide for approaches to and use of the Kitchen.
 - Commons drawings & site plan are underway; samples were circulated, and comments are encouraged.
 - Looking at green water collection, and also best advantage for the living roof of the Sustainability Centre
- Next Meeting:** Tentatively Sept 20 at 10.30.

Labyrinth (Mary Aitken)

- On Sept 12 at 2 pm, Mary and Linda St. Clair will present a 2-hour session on walking/using the labyrinth in conjunction with the Gabriola Ecumenical Society.
 - Two labyrinth bench dedications are up-coming: Oct 14 at 3.00 for Hank Serlin's and October 21 at 3.00 pm for Kelly Berthelot's; both will be conducted by Maureen Wild.
- Next Meeting:** Not reported.

*Learning Opportunities – No report**People for a Healthy Community (Pat Maloney) - No report*

- Their Board has not met this month
- Next Board Meeting:** September 12 at 4.00 pm

Poetry Gabriola- No report

Property Management (Patrick Roux)

- Deck is finished! Thanks to all who helped. An article about this is just going to one of the papers. Cost was about \$10,000.
 - Lights and approaches to/from the main house to the parking lot are the next project. Estimate is \$1,000.
 - Discussion about whether to repair and/or replace the barn roof and the best use of funds over the long-term. **ACTION: Patrick will get and present estimates for Council and the Trustees.**
 - Raymond read an ad for our need for a cleaner, 2-3 hrs/month for “small” remuneration.
 - Team agreed to the additional \$5K for the Kitchen.
- Next Meeting:** Not reported.

Share the Commons (Kit Szanto) – see attached

- Unanimous agreement for the additional \$5K for the Kitchen.
 - will soon be “godparenting” a group of “Feisty Chefs” who will advise re” principles for use of the Kitchen.
 - The Sustainability Centre has been cleaned up; raises the question of need for storage. **What is the SC’s future?**
 - The Bookings Coordinator is currently part of the STC Team and this practice should continue. Bookings should also handle bookings of tools and equipment (with Property Management); **should there be a small charge for these?**
 - Need to designate one person to each area of function, eg, electrical, plumbing.
 - STC has some new members.
- Next Meeting:** September 5 at 10.00

Sustainability Centre – No Report

Trails and Green Spaces (Kit Szanto)

- Camp Miriam kids and counselors have donated a box of chocolates, which were circulated for sampling. Kit thanks all who participated with the Campers’ events over the summer.
 - Joelle & Victor Anthony have donated one of three trees, a maple. The others are from Don Buskirk, a walnut, and Renata XXX (through the local First Nation), a cedar. Placement of each of these is being discussed.
 - TAGS needs a new facilitator and Team Rep.
- Next Meeting:** Not mentioned.

Trustees (Rebecca Furnell)

- The Board had an extra meeting this month primarily to discuss the PHC Lease & Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and AGM & election planning.
- Support the additional \$5K for the Kitchen
- Reviewed and prepared responses to PHC input to the draft lease; A Board-to-Board meeting in being planned. MoU may be rolled into the lease; would like one that applies across situations for which an MoU is required. **Anyone holding a signed version of the one with Islands Futures or Poetry Gabriola is asked to get that to one of the Trustees for filing.**
- AGM: We are still needing brief team reports for the AGM. **Please submit a 2-3 point summary of your team’s accomplishments/highlights/work to Doug McKnight or**

Rebecca ASAP. A photo wd also be appreciated, though we have some that can be used in the slide show.

- Next Meeting: September 13 at 3.00 pm

Volunteers - No report

Additional Agenda Items

A. Muriel Weins presented an idea for a new group at the Commons: **Stories at the Memories Well** (*see attached*).

- It could be a “circle” in which participants could explore roots, such as the beginnings of the Commons, for example. Muriel outlined 4 boundaries for the stories, and volunteered to “shepherd” this into being. There was enthusiastic support, and referral to Sharing the Commons as a next step.

B. Decision-Making document:

Rebecca is still collecting and collating people’s input. Please submit, as an individual or a team/ group as soon as possible.

C. It appears that there is consensus to increase the amount allocated to the Kitchen from the anonymous donor’s \$50K **from \$20,000 to \$25,000.**

E. Uses of and process for spending the anonymous donor’s \$50K:

- The “wish list “ generated at the July Council meeting had 5 priorities set against it (which is a good thing, since the whole list, with a 10% contingency for the Commons) amounts to \$61,100 ☺. The decision to proceed with the new gravel path and lighting from the hedge to the house is a good example of how we could proceed decisions around how to use these monies responsibly and openly: 1) Get estimates in writing. 2) Present these to the Trustees, who will do any additional research required. 3) Recommendation comes back to Council for ratification, or further discussion if required. 4) Proceed with the expenditure and work.
- Christine Purfield has drafted a spending process policy which is with the Trustees now and should come to Council’s next meeting.

F. Commons Coordinating Council Planning:

- Facilitation at CCC was initially to be on 3-4 month rotations, but has been found to be more practical as 6-month rotations for both co-facilitators. New facilitators are overdue. Judith and Linda suggest that we try 6 month staggered rotations; that is, one of the next facilitators will be in the role for 3 months and one for 6, and thereafter rotate in 6-month intervals. Linda and Judith have identified some possible people, and all they have talked with agree, though some have said “not right away”.
- Partly because COM Team members will not be available for the time being, it was suggested that teams take turns appointing minute-takers on a rotational basis. To this end, Jinny has generated a template for fitting the proceedings of Council into a set format, with teams in alphabetical order facilitating the fitting of content easily into spaces provided. A hard copy of this was made available to each team attending. The completed notes would go by e.mail to the designated facilitator within a week. The

facilitator would supplement as needed and circulate to team reps and make sure they get posted to the website.

G. Long Range Planning:

- Deb Ferens, Doug McKnight, Judith, Linda, and Victor Anthony have completed their work and will be presenting a summary to the Trustees and present at the AGM.

Planning is in multi-year phases.

- **Question: Will LRP become a team?**

H. Announcement (*Heide Brown*)

- O.U.R. Ecovillage is presenting a workshop "Introduction to Council" October 20 & 21 9.00 to 5.30 at Shawnigan Lake, BC. Information and booking may be found at:

<http://ourecovillage.org/events/introduction-to-council/>

I. Interim Storage:

- We do have buildings which are not yet online, and so materials and equipment is building up, eg, green bikes. Need to get a handle on this.

- PMT has started cleaning, taking stock and organizing, and will continue to do so.

- Several suggestions were made, such as asking some groups to remove their "things" from rented space, pitching storage tents, setting limits, building shelving to compact and prioritize storage, and so on. Listing what is on hand will help. Then comes organization. Long-term planning is the key.

Next meeting of Commons Council will be October 2 , 7 pm at the Commons.

Attachments

1. Communications Team Report
2. Infrastructure Team Report
3. Sharing the Commons Report
4. Stories at the Memory Well

COM Team Report to Commons Coordinating Council September 4, 2012

Team met August 27

1. Role in future notes at Council:

- To be decided between Council and new COM Team (Fall 2012)

2. Extra \$5 K to kitchen project (Doug -> Linda)

- COM in favor – Doug got to Linda with our input
- BUT: our team does not like the \$10 K for temporary roof repair - concern for Council

4. Decision making document (Jinny -> Rebecca)

- Needs relating to decision making policy document in Trustee Handbook.
- What is team decision vs. one made at Council? Practically **all** decisions affect more than one team, so maybe we need something more like goals and aims.
- Also need clarification & refinement of intra-Commons communication
- Where do decisions rest vs. the process of making decision? ie, do we need a how-to guide. Yet a paper document and any framework needs to be balanced with common practice, and not become “rule-bound” in detail.
- Although we have the principle of open and collective decision making, discussion does sometimes get shut down, and differences are not voiced. So far the document does not address conflict resolution/dealing with difference, nor other ways of moving through discussion.
 - Let’s not let it drop!

5. Articles update

- 6 Articles and letters to editors are forthcoming – please watch your papers.
- Discussion re: whether or not to credit authors on published pieces, as in photographs. Should this be at author’s discretion/preference? Should go to Council.

6. Communiqués

- Maya has given notice that she is leaving COM and wants replacement for preparing these; will do one more edition
- Other Commons e.communications are apparently coming from elsewhere; please let a COM member know if you are getting messages other than the Communiqués

7. WIFI in the building

- Sometimes seems to not function. Could it be more consistent? Needs access to the office to turn on and off. Please get us feedback.

8. Where can COM go from here?

- Many on this team are cycling off. Team could move to a task-driven means of doing communications at the Commons, eg, Doug will do Welcome Wagon talks, videos for website, Richard photos, Hans website, etc.
- Do we need a communications team? To go to Council.

Next meeting: At call of new Convener.

INF Report: Meeting – 23 August 2012.

Discussion was primarily based on the current ongoing projects at the Commons:

A. Kitchen:

1. Fall Fair. Provide information to the public. Invite support from the community for the project works. Help and volunteering for the works.
2. The Feisty Chefs are gathering to provide help, support and insights to set up the kitchen from an end-user and professional point of view.
3. Drawings. The Kitchen plans, elevations, sections and details to be progressed for submission to relevant authorities for required permissions and permit.
4. Information received, from the original owner/engineer of the site, indicated that the footing and construction details of the goat barn were done to code at the time of construction. The assumption inferred is that the footings of the adjacent kitchen (cheese plant) were constructed to the same standard and details. This will be used to provide sectional/details. Possible to gain additional information by viewing the existing building permits for the site, held by the RDN.
5. Specialist drainage interception/trap requirements for grease and bakery waste. To comply with current regulation. Cannot be discharged directly into the septic system.
6. Water collection and grey water use to be investigated and designed.
7. Existing timber cladding/siding to be removed and if possible renovated for reuse, possible as an internal finish. Initial inspection revealed that much of the timber cladding, which is a very thin board, would not be suitable for external use due to cracking and warping. This item to be inspected and report provided.
8. Sample area to be removed for inspection/report.
9. External wall detail will be refurbished to comply with current code and good practice.
10. Proposal to construct the new external cladding detail as a sample panel, on site, for inspection and comment by all including the public.

B. Sustainability Building.

1. Funding is available for the completion of the living roof section.
2. Detail of the construction, waterproofing and system to be finalised and agreed. Work to commence as soon as practical. Information and programme needed. Who will carry out?
3. the area under roof cover to be cleaned and tidied.
Area to be put to use (seating/picnic/other?).
4. The INF team will assist in moving the sustainability building project forward.

C. Site Plan.

The site plan has the basic information completed. (small scale drawing printed).
Comments and input required.

Next Meeting: 20 September 2012 @ 10.30

Contact Details:

Aidan E Simmons

799 Alder Way, V0R 1X5.

Ph: 250 325 8886

aidanesimmons@gmail.com

Team Name - Sharing the Commons

Report Submitted by - Kit Szanto

Sept. 4, 2012

STC unanimously recommended in the August meeting that the Commons make \$25,000 available (of the \$50,000 given the commons for projects and maintenance) to the Kitchen project.

We anticipate that soon a group of “feisty chefs” will be formed and meet to discuss and decide the principles on which the use of the kitchen will be based, making sure that these principles are appropriate for a Commons Kitchen. STC will oversee the formation and development of this group.

The Sustainability Centre has been cleaned up (it now might be used as a picnic or outdoor meeting space) but 3 problems remain:

1. The wood and other material which are still useable are still there under a tarp so it is not fully open space;
2. This problem (#1) raises the larger question about interim storage space on the Commons, much needed and no obvious answers;
3. The next stage for the Sustainability Centre is still unclear.

We recommend the bookings person be a member of STC (which she currently is) and that bookings handle the borrowing of tools from the Commons – coordinating with Property Management. **Question – should there be a donation or fee charged for such borrowing?**

We recommend that one person only be designated as the emergency contact for each specific issue, ie, electrical, plumbing, leaks, etc

We hope to add several new members to STC who may be able to attend our next meeting, tomorrow morning.

Next STC meeting: September 5, at 10 am.

Stories at the Memories Well – proposal for a new Commons group

This grew out of a need, as I age, to learn more about the human condition and myself before I leave the planet. And I'd like to do that in company. I reject our culture's assumption that at my age I'm a finished product. So do aboriginal communities, which honour personhood in the aged. They use story. The oral tradition has a liveliness and lack of hierarchical process which in my opinion connects with the culture and spirit of the Commons. So, I thought, why not propose a Commons group which honours story telling and memory? For starters, even though a written history of the Commons exists, it would be wonderful for me, and I suspect others, to HEAR, in a circle of real people, the stories, told by those who have "been there, done that" of the beginnings of the Commons, sharing personal memories of the origin, the difficulties, the significant decisions, the misunderstandings overcome, the funniness and silliness, and the victories.

The coherence, intricacy, and defence mechanisms of living systems such as the Commons call for a map of the "skin", or boundaries, of any group proposing to join this system. I propose four boundaries for a story telling circle:

The first boundary would be the focus on story, as opposed to opinion or report. After attending the Seniors' Discussion Group at Rollo centre, which discusses ideas and opinion, I discovered that not even I have more than a few hours' worth of accumulated opinion that is worth sharing. That conclusion was strengthened when I attended a neighbourhood group which was initiated years ago by the Gabriola United Church. In the first meeting of that group, we introduced ourselves by relating something we had overcome or struggled with, before we arrived on Gabriola. It was rich in new perceptions about people whom I had thought I had known for years. We are living, learning, beings. We are not achievements, or plans, or concepts, or occupations, or belief systems, all of which belong to a definition of, or a container for, rather than a lived, experience. Story is the way to communicate Life Itself. It moves.

The second boundary of the story telling circle is its immutable shape. It is especially relevant, on this "isle of the arts" that the circle not turn into a U-shaped theatre in which people perform written or rehearsed material to a passive audience.

The third difference is that a story telling group is not a helping group. As an ex therapist, I know that therapy groups and story telling circles are two different animals. The story circle animal has no "head", no "wise person" to prescribe any behaviour beyond commonly accepted courtesy. Any "learning" therefore happens invisibly and mysteriously inside of the listeners and even, often, the tellers of the stories. It is a community of equals who dip into the Well of Memory to share their past or a good yarn with one another, with one story leading by the mysterious process of association and intuition on to the next.

A fourth boundary would be that there be a small stillness, or silence, between each story and the next, to allow the seeds within the story to germinate in others' minds.

Perhaps such a circle could only have a hope of succeeding at the Commons, a community which has struggled to free itself of many of the traps of "rank" and autocracy. At any rate, I would be delighted to be a part of such a group, and imagine that it would sustain its own life, if it were given a chance to be born. Please feel free to make suggestions which could enhance the integrity of the group, its members, and the Commons.

Muriel Wiens