

Commons Coordinating Council

Notes for September 1, 2015

Present: Co-facilitators: Linda St.Clair, Muriel Wiens

Shelagh Huston, Robbie Huston, George Szanto, Kit Szanto, Judith Roux, Sharon Arnell, Alison Fitzgerald, Deb Ferens, Maya Ruggles, Louise Amuir, Patrick Roux, Jim Ramsay, Bob Andrew, Meghan ?, Jinny Hayes, Nancy H. Peirce, John Peirce

SPECIAL TOPIC: GERTIE. Jim gave a brief history of GERTIE, expressing appreciation to the Commons as base of operations. Now in the third year of the pilot study GERTIE is clearly a success with ridership surpassing expectations. Next February there will be a referendum question asking Gabriolans to support the Island public transit system through their property taxes. Since BC Transit has not received the provincial funding to continue leasing buses, GERTIE will continue to operate as they have been doing, with slightly older buses and a largely volunteer administrative and driver crew. Application is underway for non-profit society with charitable status. Drivers would be paid, however, and the cost of upgrading and maintaining the vehicles would be covered.

Would the Commons still serve as home base? This will be a topic of discussion over the next months both at the GERTIE table and Commons Council. Some questions raised:

- Are there alternative sites? (GIRO and the old Fire Hall have been explored and rejected for now. The Commons needs to determine its willingness to continue as home base for GERTIE.)
- Do buses need shelter? (Not necessarily, but a maintenance facility would be an idea to consider.)
- Alternative parking needs to be planned (Infrastructure Team is working on this.)
- Would the referendum question include funding for a facility? (No, but overhead costs could be covered.)
- The question of “exclusivity of use” was raised. A lease extending more than 5 years becomes a “subdivision” and is technically not allowed. (Jim agreed that a multi-use of shared facilities is the best solution.)
- How many buses would the “fleet” consist of? (Probably no more than the current 4 in the medium term.)

Team Reports:

Communications: (Jinny Hayes)

Website revisions to be ramped up in Fall. Signage, as a subgroup of COM, needs a meeting and Jinny will call one this week so that planning progresses in a timely way.

Welcome Wagon volunteer needed to represent the Commons when Jinny can't make it. (Contact Jinny at vhayes@uvic.ca) Thanks to Kit and Muriel who have volunteered so far.

Property Management: (Patrick Roux)

- Water in the pond still extremely low. Well water sampling during the prolonged drought has shown a low coliform presence (**not** e. coli), consistent with last year's record in the same conditions. Island Health expresses no cause for concern, but we will change water filters and post a note suggesting people get their water at the Village.

- Interesting meeting with Nick Doe and a scientist from VIU analyzing the diatomaceous earth near the pond.

- New roof on the house: Great turnout of volunteers - on the roof and cleaning up on the ground! After 3 Saturday mornings the work is more than halfway done. Shingles have been bundled for sale as kindling at the Fall Fair (to help cover PMT expenses.)

Gabriola Commons Foundation Trustees: (Robbie Huston) Next meeting Oct. 1 at 2 pm

- A decision has been made to set the AGM for Saturday October 24 afternoon, with input (posters, photos) from teams showing specific accomplishments. It was suggested that the Poetry Yurt could be considered as a venue for the AGM (more accessible, with the circular form inviting a "Commonsy" format.)

- The Trustees responded to the Infrastructure Team by adding their support for Parking Idea #2 (new, more central, entrance focussing on protected Arbutus and long vista.)

- Financial report (Deb Ferens and Maya Ruggles): Year end Financial Statements are nearly done by the accountant.

Transfer of Treasurer's duties from Deb to Maya is underway and a Commons-finance-only laptop has been purchased with the programs needed to simplify as far as possible the complex bookkeeping of the Commons which has separate streams for the different teams and projects. Thanks to Maya for taking this on

and to Deb for her years of financial wizardry (combining attention to detail and infinite patience!)

Brief update on our financial situation:

- The unpaid mortgage balance is now at approximately \$91,000.
- Our annual operating expenses (including overhead and insurance) are “very lean” at \$20,000.
- There is approximately \$7,000 in unallocated funds (donated anonymously to be spent on projects and maintenance). This will be discussed at next Council.)

Long Range Planning: (Deb Ferens) Next meeting Tuesday September 8 at 2 pm.

Covenant: (Deb Ferens)

Fall Equinox Biomapping of mini-ecosystems set for Sunday September 20 from dawn to dusk, over 4 periods (6 to 10 am; 10 am to 1pm; 1 to 4pm; 4 to dusk) Come for any or all periods! There are ecosystems not yet “adopted”! Contact K.Louise Vincent (klvincent@shaw.ca)

Farm Management: (Sharon Arnell) Next meeting: Monday September 28 at 9 am

- Apple Juicing: **URGENT!** Our committed apple juicer, Christine Watt, will be away in October and needs several people as backup. Please contact her at 247-7478 if you have time to learn the ropes and volunteer occasionally.
- For the Fall Fair there is an urgent need for a screened tent to protect from wasps. Note: the cost of juicing (50 cents/litre) drops to 30 cents for more than 40 litres
- Fall Fair: Bring your Spring Fair potato in its pot to see who has the greatest volume of potatoes! If you have a produce scale, please contact Judith at 247-9948.
- Commons soup chefs’ cookbook will be going to print in time for sale at the Christmas Craft Fair. (Contact Sharon (davidarnell@shaw.ca) if you have beloved recipes for appetizers or desserts that you’re willing to share.)
- Harvest: Current harvest includes tomatoes, cucumbers, kale, squash and apples. These are either sold (by donation or at the Mid-Week Market) or dehydrated.

- Next year, major garlic planting
- Trellis w/pergola is planned at north west corner of North Garden to provide shade for gardeners - to be planted with grapes (in soil visibly too rocky for plum trees!)

Fall Fair Sunday September 13: (Judith Roux)

All the favourites will be there: the great Squash race, the GIRO Fashion Show, food by Gabriola's restaurants, toe-tapping music - as well as some new events: Dog show (PHC fundraiser); bigger and better Agricultural Exhibition in the goat barn with fabric art in the Poetry Yurt; **kindling sale** (\$2 per bundle of cedar shakes from the roof!)

This is your chance to volunteer!

- Set-up of tents, tables, signs at 2 pm on Saturday, Sept. 12.
Earlier at the workbee for fine-tuning the goat barn (to receive entries at 3 pm for the Agricultural Exhibition as well as decorate for the Fashion Show)
- We still need some volunteers to receive and place the entries (3 to 6:30 pm) on Saturday
- Judging starts at 7 pm Saturday. More judges for fabric arts, baking, and crafts would be very helpful (contact Phyllis at vpfafard@shaw.ca)
- Volunteers are essential on Sunday 2 pm for the transformation of the agricultural exhibition into Fashion Show. (Tables down, chairs brought over!)
- Two people needed to sell tickets to the event (\$2 per seat, but \$3 for front row red plush seating!)
- Take down Sunday at 4ish.

For this weekend we are hoping for good weather but prepared for anything!

Sharing the Commons (Kit Szanto) Next meeting Wednesday Sept. 16 at 1 pm

Fine-tuning of a draft template for a "Facility Stewarding Team"

Plan for a workshop with Fire Chief on using fire-fighting equipment.

Request from CKLG radio for space on the Commons for an 8x10 steel shed.

Need for them to apply through STC form before this can be considered.

Kitchen Stewards (Kit Szanto) Next meeting Monday Sept. 7 at 4 pm.

Waiting for approval by Island Health to plan an opening ceremony. Sharon Pattison has joined the team.

Grant-writing (George Szanto)

Thank you signage to funders of different projects in progress.

Gabriola Rec Society (partial funders of Boules Court), held a summer camp event with George initiating island children into the magic of playing boules

Shelagh Huston (one of the founders of the Gabriola Commons) leaving the island. All welcome to an Open House farewell Sept. 19 from 2 to 6 at Seagirt.

Infrastructure (John Peirce) Next meeting possibly Sept. 22 at 4 pm

Feedback from teams to parking proposals to be assessed. Need to meet with Signage Team to present to next Council.

Next Council: Tuesday October 6 at 7 pm.