

## Commons Coordinating Council Notes September 4, 2018

Facilitators: Linda St. Clair, Judith Roux

Regrets: Kit, Jinny, Dave, K Louise, Heather

Recognition that we are meeting on the unceded Territory of the Snuneymuxw

Present: Linda St.Clair, Michelle Benjamin, Mitch Miyagawa, Bob Andrew, Judith Roux, Maya Ruggles, Maggie Mooney, Doug McKnight, Sheila Brooks, Deb Ferens, Kim Kasasian, Patrick Roux, Jade Evoy, Alison Fitzgerald, Patsy Ludwick, Patrick Olmsted

Note-taker: Maggie Mooney for Trustees

**20-minute discussion:** a review of Gabriola Arts Council's (GAC) **Cultivate Festival** held on The Commons (August 16 - 19, 2018).

### **Appreciations expressed by those at Council for the Cultivate Festival:**

- incredibly well organized - all the thoughtfulness behind showed in the details
- amazing how the refrigeration repair all came together on the last day helped by the responsive GAC builders who immediately built a cover for the refrigeration to meet last minute inspection requirements. This incredible collaboration continued through the whole festival, everything seemed to flow, an amazing accomplishment for a first-time event.
- loved that it was here - at the Commons
- glad that nothing disastrous happened (e.g. didn't burn the place down or no one drowned). This points to the value of all the pre-event discussions on prevention.
- the family zone was a great idea. Everywhere you looked people were smiling and laughing.
- the wide variety of music
- Although I'm a non-working participant and not really a festival goer, yet I sat on the grass and was thoroughly entertained, wonderful to be on the Commons amongst people enjoying themselves.
- the diversity, from kids' music to more classical, seeing kids swinging, face painting, and people just being here, not frenetic, relaxed and enjoying it.
- when asked at CCEC by teller if I'd been at Cultivate, I was told that "everyone is coming and talking about how great it was."
- the clean-up was very thorough
- great that GAC mentioned The Commons in their closing of the festival on the main stage and particularly that the Commons "is ours."
- as a new person to the island, it was a wonderful introduction to the community. Awesome.
- an absolute success. We are a busy island with so many events yet this was the first time (in my 30 years of being on the island), that an event had so much community engagement from so many different groups and everyone putting out more than was expected.

- as a performer, impressed by the quality of volunteers backstage, they handled things calmly and things were well-executed. A great example of when the community invests in each other's interests we have a real unified community event -- a spectacular event. The organization was stellar. Allows for the kind of scene behind the goat barn of musicians improvising and continuing the excitement of the festival after it ended. And then the clean-up was done immediately. A-singular, unique event - beautiful.
- the festival was like a sand mandala, all the grains come together, then when it was over it blows away and out into the community.

### **Learnings from Cultivate Festival:**

- need a better brochure next time -- one that says what was going on and when -- before the event so you can plan your visit.
- heat in the theatre tent; improved sight lines - perhaps more of an amphitheater? [GAC responded that they were aware of the heat and that it has always been an issue in the Theatre tent. This year they also had no access to power so couldn't run fans. Will keep looking for possible solutions].
- "wrinkles" in the Community Kitchen: some communication issues - a lack of clarity with the Kitchen Stewards regarding what had been planned and what would be happening in the kitchen during the festival. Maya gave a context for this confusion: 1) there have been lots of changes of roles recently in Kitchen and 2) it wasn't communicated to the Kitchen Stewards that Cultivate wasn't a "normal" rental. The issue was flagged and will be discussed further.

### **GAC's review:** Mitch and Michelle

- appreciate all the feedback tonight, particularly the wonderful "collaboration and serendipity" and the fun of working together
- magic of having it on the Commons - the collaboration of our two organizations, despite some "wrinkles" was a "magic collaboration"
- the feeling of being at home which began with Shelagh Huston's sharing that this -- a community festival, was her "dream" for The Commons.
- lots of learning but really happy to be celebrating after nine months of us dreaming and planning together.
- the feedback GAC is receiving that this festival is somehow "transformational" in terms of community, that it has changed the relationship to the Commons for people who had never been here and that they have a new sense of belonging here on the Commons.
- we need to figure out all the right pieces and fix those that weren't quite right.
- make sure that the Commons calendar is booked with the festival. To prevent double-booking of an AGM that happened this year. Although great responsiveness and improvisation was used to make the Workshop available as an alternative place for the AGM meeting, it was suggested that a thank you be sent to the AGM group for their flexibility. Also thank-you to the 2 AA meeting groups who showed up and needed to be accommodated in other spaces.
- discussion around the Mainstage is still to happen. Does the Commons want to keep and maintain the stage, how much will this cost us? PMT will put a tarp over the stage until a discussion and decision is made.

- GAC reported that there were only 2 cans of garbage produced at the festival - all else was recycled or composted. This ecological accomplishment was the hard work of the volunteer team of recyclers and everyone participating in following their lead.

- GAC has a box of Lost and Found items left over that they will leave downstairs in the farmhouse with a sign.

### **Team Reports:**

#### **Workshop:** Patrick Olmsted

- Woodworkers guild show was well attended. Shared the good news that the Woodworkers guild has agreed to participate in the Workshop Stewardship Team. They have already had a meeting where they discussed possibilities to improve the workshop.

- Patrick views the Community Kitchen as a standard to emulate. The joining of this new group makes that possibility closer now.

- Patrick agreed to be available to Tool library to help assess tools donated to the library.

#### **Tool Library:** Patsy

They are receiving offers of help from community to help set up the library. Planning for a "soft" opening near the end of September or beginning of October. Will invite those who have expressed interest. A grand opening to follow in November. They need more volunteers, people with software experience or who can be part of a pool of people to assess value of tools donated. Hoping the library will bring other people to the Commons.

#### **PMT** - Property Management Team - Bob

Busy around Cultivate and the Fall Fair. Have managed to finally cure the longstanding refrigeration problems, and the goat barn upgrade has been incredible. Amazing how it was transformed for Cultivate and then again for the Fall Fair.

- great collaboration between PMT and Signage. The first of two big signs is up.

#### **Water** - Patrick Roux

- Patrick expressed urgent concern over water use during the July, Aug, and Sept. each year. Drinking water comes from the well, but we need a separate water system for the gardens, the sprinklers in the goat barn, and for supporting the wild life in the pond. He proposed putting a team together to work toward a separate water system for this purpose. The system would include a 14,000-gallon cistern with a cost of approximately \$25,000 dollars.

Deb expressed appreciation to Patrick for his focus on ecological protection and stewardship.

She suggested that as Long Range Planning has already identified water as one of the four projects to go forward, and as the water system issue is urgent, that this project be given priority.

Financially there are no discretionary funds to meet this urgency but if there was a budget, grant-writing could be directed towards this project and we could approach others, for example, The Lions, to support this.

Michelle informed that GAC has no well but does have 2 cisterns, one with potable water & one with rain water for flushing toilets. She suggested that perhaps the Commons could have a couple of similar cisterns in the future.

When asked about location for a cistern, Patrick suggested that it would need to be higher than the current level of the septic system which means it would be mainly above ground and likely near the goat barn by the boules court.

Questions/suggestions raised: Is the reservoir at Rollo available to use? Perhaps we might work with the fire department on emergency water sources? PHC cisterns are not being used. Are they available to use?

Patrick outlined steps involved in addressing this water issue: a task force be formed to create a proposal and a budget and a plan. Would likely involve hiring an engineer.

Discussion followed on process: the proposal would go through Sharing the Commons Team and then to Trustees, and then to Council.

Next step: Patrick to create a drawing and share with Sharing the Commons Team.

### **Finance report - Deb**

Last meeting was on August 20th - we are working on getting BC Hydro to figure out net benefit of solar panels.

- AGES, who funded the down payment for the Commons, is disbanding and we have received a \$60,000 donation. \$30,000 to be used for a maintenance fund, \$20,000 for a legacy fund and \$10,000 for a Visioning Fund. We will receive the funds by the end of the fiscal year in March.

- an Ad in the Sounder requesting new volunteers for the Finance Team, to help steward the money that flows through the commons, has been successful. We've had two responses so far from the public.

### **Sharing the Commons - Doug**

- They are considering rental costs for day use or long-term use of the Commons, comparing quotes by GAC, Theatre Centre and the Roxy.

- Sharing the Commons needs to consider the rental of the Goat Barn. Patrick Olmsted mentioned the unexpectedly good acoustic qualities of the Goat Barn will make this is a desirable space to rent.

### **Community Kitchen (no report but issue discussed):**

Maya expressed some concern with some of the misunderstandings and disagreements around the Kitchen that may be arising because the Kitchen has developed policies and protocols outside a strong engagement with the Commons. Suggestions were made to engage the Process Team in bringing the 6 stewards together and to also encourage a mandate for the Kitchen be created that is in alignment with Commons principles.

### **Trustees: Maggie**

- working on a Memorandum of Understanding template for future agreements with organizations wanting to use The Commons. Will bring to Council when the draft is finished.

- Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on Sunday, October 21 at 3pm. Deb mentioned that the AGM will be happening just after World Commons Week (Oct. 4 to 12) <https://www.iasc-commons.org/event/world-commons-week/> with conferences and events happening throughout the world. She suggested that we might include reports from this week at the AGM to strengthen our engagement with the Global Commons movement.

Council was then asked for suggestions on how to make this AGM interesting and useful for all.

Suggestions:

- do bean shucking throughout
- do work for the commons before or after
- teams to share what excited about
- trustee committee working on nominations for new trustees for the AGM.
- trustees are trying to set up a meeting with the PHC board. This would be an informal conversation between the two boards to encourage more understanding of the direction of the two organizations.
- Deb gave out copies of a draft policy on the **Commons Accessory Commercial**. This is a statement to clarify the commons accessory zoning bylaw (see policy attached) with examples of how the bylaw might be applied in certain situations on the Commons. Deb asked for feedback from teams on whether this statement is clear enough.

**Next note-taker:** Events Team

**Next Council:** October 2nd, at 7 pm

#### **POLICY: COMMONS ACCESSORY COMMERCIAL DRAFT: Aug 19, 2018**

The Gabriola Commons is a unique and distinct property on Gabriola, as it has a unique zoning, the Gabriola Commons Comprehensive Development Zone. This zone's **principle uses** are **Commons Agriculture** and **Commons Institutional** \*. There are six accessory uses, one being Commons Accessory Commercial - a **very limited** scope of commercial activity permitted solely if it supports the principle uses and is of community benefit.

**Policy Intent:** To clearly and concisely communicate what type of accessory commercial activity is allowed on the Commons in order to maintain compliance with the Island Trust Zoning Bylaw, the charitable status of the Gabriola Commons Foundation and to uphold the Commons commitment to avoid competing with island businesses who provide retail sales spaces in our community.

**Commons Accessory Commercial:** This policy may, or may not, be more or less restrictive than what the zoning allows, but it is our best take on where that line is and acknowledges that it may need to be adjusted from time to time as activities and events evolve on the Commons.

According to Islands Trust Zoning bylaws, the Commons is allowed Commons Accessory Commercial use, which means commercial activity that is ancillary, secondary and exclusively devoted to a principal use, and that is intended solely for the benefit and support of community initiatives and community organizations based on the property.

Below are examples and rationale that demonstrate our understanding of this bylaw.

#### **Examples of Permitted Accessory Commercial Activity**

In the case of seasonal community events **hosted** by the Commons (the Christmas craft fair, spring fair, fall fair, and the community garage sale) in which the main purpose is to raise funds for the Commons (table rentals) and to provide community benefit by bringing people together, the ancillary profit/income/revenue realized by the community participants (table renters) is permitted.

In the case of the Farmer's Market, hosted by the Commons Farm Management Team, in which the main purpose is to support agricultural initiatives and activities along with raising funds for the Commons (table

rent), the ancillary profit/income/revenue realized by the community participants, the farmers (table renters), is permitted.

In the case of the Community Kitchen, individuals and groups rent the space from the Commons Kitchen Stewards Team in order to prepare food for personal use and consumption, cook together and share meals, offer food preparation/cooking workshops for the public, provide a concession to a Commons hosted event or another non-profit society event. Individuals can rent the kitchen space, prepare food/food products and must take it off the Commons property to sell. Events such as weddings, anniversaries, birthday parties can rent the space to prepare & serve food for their guests at no cost to the guests. The only accessory commercial activity permitted in the community kitchen would be the income realized by a workshop provider charging participants to learn a food/cooking/agricultural skill. The workshop provider is renting the space (Commons Kitchen income) and in turn receiving workshop fees for their expertise/skills/leadership.

In the case of a workshop presenter who is charging fees to attend a workshop – the rental of any Commons space would be permitted (revenue for the Commons) provided the purpose of the workshop is related to either agricultural/farming purposes or institutional purposes (related to the activities of a non-profit organization or charity). The fees collected by the workshop presenter is permitted as is it ancillary or secondary to the main purpose of the rental.

In the case of the Poetry Yurt (which is the property of Poetry Gabriola Society PGS– a non-profit charitable organization), the space can be rented by individuals and groups thereby providing revenue for PGS. Workshop presenters charging fees for a workshop in the Yurt fall in the same category as workshop presenters in the previous example – but they must rent the space from the PGS in order to offer the workshop. If Poetry Gabriola Society is directly offering their own hosted workshops, events and activities in the Yurt – of course they do not need to “rent” from themselves.

### **Examples of Commercial Activities NOT PERMITTED**

In the case of a travelling rug selling business (which actually occurred several years ago and for which a bylaw violation was reported and investigated against the Commons) – the rental of Commons space was not permitted as the purpose of the rental was for business/commercial profit and was not related to either agriculture or institutional purposes (i.e it was not considered to be providing community benefit or educational or charitable services).

In the case of the Community Kitchen, it is not permitted for an individual to rent the Kitchen, prepare food or food products in the Kitchen and then sell it from any space (indoors or outdoors) on the Commons. This is considered retail activity which is not permitted by the Commons zoning. Limits of space and time for food preparation to be sold off-site could conceivably be imposed in order to ensure there is equitable access to the kitchen by a wide variety of groups and individuals and that the agricultural and institutional principle uses of the Commons zoning are upheld.

\*Commons Institutional: means the provision of special purpose services including educational and interpretive activities, without the purpose of gain, provided by non-profit or not for profit enterprise for the benefit of residents of Gabriola Island.