

Minutes for Gabriola Commons AGM on Sep 17, 2011

Commenced: 10:00 am, Adjourned: 11:50 am

<p>Welcome & Approval of 2010 AGM minutes</p> <p>Judith Roux welcomed us with:</p> <p>A while ago someone asked, "What is the Commons really about?" And I've been thinking about that ever since. So, before we begin, I would like to share a definition of the Commons that has emerged for me over the past six years... Essentially it starts with recognizing what is important.</p> <p>In the old folk tales, when the ancient crone in the forest offered three wishes, it was actually about bringing to consciousness what really matters. The hapless wanderer who asked her for gold or power usually ended up in a ditch wondering what went wrong, whereas Jack saw the value of three beans and ended up with a sky-high beanstalk and food for a lifetime.</p> <p>Nowadays our consciousness of what really matters has changed and many of us would want to be able to wish away war or famine or the destruction of the environment. It's hard not to get a sense that the world is spinning out of control, that the guardianship of the planet has been placed in the hands of self-serving multinationals, richer and more powerful than many countries.</p> <p>Ecologist Paul Hawken (<i>Blessed Unrest</i>, Penguin, 2007) calls this the "corporatization of the commons". . . referring on one level to seeds, water, food, even airwaves. On a deeper level though, as he says, the commons that is under threat includes "culture, place, self-determination and democracy." Joanna Macy speaks of the "despair and apathy experienced in the face of overwhelming social and ecological crises". These are definitely "interesting times" to be living in, as the Chinese saying has it.</p> <p>But both Hawken and Macy are seeing something new in the transformation of our concern into positive collaborative action on a massive scale. There is a growing sense of being part of a global community of individuals who care about what is happening and want to do something about it.</p> <p>Hawken began to catalogue this world-wide consciousness in 2007 and found over 100,000 not-for-profit groups - a recent update puts that number at over one million - the most under-reported story the mainstream media won't touch. These groups have much in common: they are initiated at the grass roots, often by a small group of concerned people, unaffiliated with political or religious "-isms", all focussing on issues such as the environment, social justice, or the rights of indigenous peoples. .</p> <p>It's in the positive spirit of this vast "movement of movements" that the Gabriola Commons has come into being and I'd like to think we're making the ancient crone in the forest smile. So.....:</p>	<p><u>MC</u> Judith Roux <u>Secretary</u> Louise Amuir</p>
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<p>The Gabriola Commons is a public space, stewarded by all of us for generations yet to come. It is a place where we bring our energies and ideas to work together on projects which help our community flourish; where we come to celebrate with music and theatre; where we care for each other and for the land, respecting its ecology and growing food sustainably; where we experiment with sustainable building practices and explore alternative energy sources. It offers a way of being in community where all are welcome, where leadership is shared and what is valued is the intuitive wisdom we all possess, the experience we have gained and our willingness to get involved.</p> <p>The second question we are asked is "Who's in charge?"</p> <p>Our answer is "We all are!" and we'll be showing you just how broadly the management of the Gabriola Commons is spread.</p> <p>Approval of 2010 AGM Minutes. Moved by: Bob Andrew; 2nd by: Yetta Lees Unanimous approval</p>	
<p>Introduction of current Trustees: Co-chair Linda St Clair, Co-chair Bob Andrew, Victor Anthony, Hans van Kessel, Doug McKnight, Shelagh Huston, Judith Roux, Secretary/Treasurer Christine Purfield, Financial assistant Christine Gagnon. (Neither Christine is on the island right now.)</p> <p>Thank-you to the 4 retiring trustees: Bill Pope, who actually retired a while ago, was invaluable as Secretary. His legal background and sense of humour contributed a great deal. Bob Andrew, Co-Chair, has been with the Board since the beginning. He contributed understanding of governance and local government issues, vision, and a friendly spirit. Linda St Clair, Co-Chair, was with the Board for a long stretch and several terms, and brought persistence, good humour and superb organizational skills. Judith Roux, also with the Board from the beginning, has put in uncountable hours in all areas of the Commons. If we had such a thing as an executive director, she would be it.</p>	<p>Judith Roux</p> <p>Shelagh Huston</p>
<p>Report from the Co-Chairs Bob Andrew: It was his great pleasure to co-chair with Linda and to work with the Board. Thanks to this dedicated group – they care! His three points include 2 major leaps forward.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Land Use Bylaw in the OCP has affected not only here but is being looked at by other islands 2. the title transfer June 2010 from AGES to the Gabriola Commons Foundation (AGES mission quote). For him, the Commons is about 	<p>Bob Andrew/ Linda St Clair</p>

<p>making sense of the world.</p> <p>3. Two hundred or so monthly donors support this place. The new trustees' mission is to raise money to pay down the mortgage.</p> <p>Linda St Clair: It was fun to work with Bob. The trustees are an awesome group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking ahead – she advises that trustees continue to turn to the community at large to ask where should we go? How's it been? The Visions & Voices meeting with its undefined agenda brought forth all kinds of things we didn't expect. The Visions & Voices session brought new ideas such as the "Learning Opportunities" team and reinforced some earlier proposals such as providing housing on the Commons. 2. Partnerships – definition a) one who shares. b) one of the timbers that strengthens the deck for the mast. Our partners are PHC (Victor Anthony to be the new liaison), Poetry Gabriola for artists, Island Futures for connecting with other islands, Lulu, Dancing Man, Gabriola Emergency Social Services 3. Commons Council – we struggled at the beginning with governance. The Commons Council gathers monthly to raise issues, talk, listen, discern, share ideas. It is a wonderful dream that is coming into reality. 	
<p>Treasurer's Report</p> <p>FISCAL YEAR: APRIL 1, 2010 – MARCH 31, 2011</p> <p>The financial highlight of the year was obviously the transfer of ownership of the building and land from AGES to the Gabriola Commons Foundation. We were fortunate to have several generous "Commoners" step forward and assist in the mortgage approval process by agreeing to sign a debt service agreement to keep our lender (VanCity) happy. We are also grateful to VanCity for advancing us sufficient funds to complete the transfer and for allowing the Commons to make lump sum payments, without penalty, at any time. Any additional lump sum payment is applied directly to the principal thereby helping extinguish the mortgage quicker.</p> <p>As of the time of writing, we have been able to reduce the long-term debt on the property by \$45,042 in just one year! A terrific achievement.</p> <p>Our generous donors continue to ensure our existence through monthly direct debits to their bank accounts, donations through The Land Conservancy (TLC), and Canada Helps, as well as one-time personal and corporate donors. During the fiscal year we received \$36,288 in monthly donations. This is an amazing amount for such a stagnant economy, but we will see an estimated 2% reduction this fiscal year based on recent cancellations due to donors' changing personal circumstances.</p> <p>Our total gross income for the year was \$245,544 – this includes a deemed donation from AGES of \$156,098 representing the difference between the 2010</p>	<p>Hans van Kessel (for Christine P)</p>

<p>assessed value of the property and the outstanding debt at the time. Net income excluding this donation was \$18,575.</p> <p>Our external accountant provided us with an unqualified review engagement opinion and noted no deficiencies in our bookkeeping or internal accounting controls.</p> <p>I regret that I am unable to attend the AGM, but do plan to be at the October Council meeting and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns at that time. I can also be reached at 250.247.8659 or cpurfield@shaw.ca anytime after my return from vacation on October 2nd, 2011.</p> <p>Christine Purfield, CGA Treasurer, Gabriola Commons Foundation.</p>	
<p>Notice of Motions for the 2011 AGM:</p> <p>#1. The Board of Trustees of the Gabriola Commons Foundation recommends that Bylaw Part 1, 3(e) be changed from “Community Service: The Gabriola Commons is a community legacy, serving community needs.” to “Community Service: The Gabriola Commons is a community legacy, serving community needs, and operated and developed primarily by community volunteers.”</p> <p>Moved by: Shelagh Huston, 2nd by: Oscar Reeve</p> <p>There was a motion for an amendment to add the sentence: “This is not to exclude the occasional use of paid services.”</p> <p>Moved by: Hendrik deWilde 2nd by: Mary Rose Agree: 2 Oppose: 19 Abstain: 4 Amendment defeated.</p> <p>There was another motion for an amendment replacing “and operated and developed primarily by community volunteers” to read “operated collectively.”</p> <p>Moved by: Muriel Wiens, 2nd by: Mary Wilson.</p> <p>Muriel withdrew the motion as the discussion went on (the sense being that “operate” is a governance sort of word)</p> <p>The original motion (#1 above) was put to the question. Agree: 0 Opposed: ALL Motion #1 was defeated.</p> <p>It was suggested that a group of interested folk convene and look at this bylaw again. The word “volunteer” was not agreeable to some.</p> <p>#2. The Board of Trustees of the Gabriola Commons Foundation recommends that Bylaw Part 5, 21 be changed from “The number of trustees must be 9 or a greater number determined from time to time at a general meeting.” to “The number of trustees must be at least seven and no more than ten.”</p> <p>Moved by: Hans Van Kessel, 2nd by: George Szanto Agree: ALL Opposed: 0 Abstain: 4. Motion #2 was carried.</p>	<p>Judith Roux</p>

<p>Election of New Trustees</p> <p>Based on the deliberations of the nominating committee, the Board recommends that Rebecca Furnell, Jinny Hayes, and George Szanto be elected as new trustees for a three-year term.</p> <p>Based on the newly revised bylaws a total of four new trustees may be elected. Nominations from the floor were proposed by a number of people, but none of the nominees was willing to stand at this time.</p> <p>Motion to accept 3 new trustees: Rebecca Furnell, Jinny Hayes & George Szanto Moved by: Linda St Clair, 2nd by: Mary Wilson Agree: ALL</p>	<p>Doug McKnight</p>
<p>Council, Team & Group Reports: Slideshow</p> <p>(The full slideshow will be made available separately on the Gabriola Commons website.) It was noted that both the Special Events and Property Management teams would like more members. The Fundraising team also needs a champion.</p>	<p>Judith Roux</p>
<p>Visions & Voices Report</p> <p>Victor introduced the V&V report noting that the focus from the community was on wanting to learn stuff and interact with each other. The report is still being worked on and will be on the website eventually.</p> <p>Mary Wilson is leading a workshop on workshops Oct 1/11; 10 am-3 pm so the new Learning Team which came out of V&V can get busy learning and interacting.</p>	<p>Victor Anthony</p>
<p>Questions from Floor</p> <p>Appreciation from Muriel Wiens to Covenant Team working with new language. Appreciation from Guy Mireau to the Camp Miriam campers who came out all last summer to eradicate invasive species. Could we put on a music night for them?</p>	<p>Judith Roux with help from other trustees</p>
<p>Adjournment</p> <p>Moved by: George Szanto (no second required) Agree: ALL</p>	<p>Judith Roux</p>

Teams Reports Submitted For Inclusion in AGM Minutes

Included below:

1. Communications Team
 2. Covenant Group
 3. Elder Eco-Village Project
 4. Farm Management Team
 5. Grant Writing Team
 6. Share the Commons Team
 7. Trails & Green Spaces Team
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1. *Communications Team*

Team Members:

Heide Brown (part-time), Jinny Hayes, Doug McKnight, Heather Menzies (part-time), Richard Pullano (photography), Maya Ruggles, Hans van Kessel

Mandate:

- To create awareness about the Commons by:
 - enhancing and maintaining the Commons website and Calendar;
 - editing and publishing the seasonal Newsletter; and
 - functioning as the primary point of contact with the media.
- To encourage the exchange of ideas, concerns and hopes for the Commons by:
 - providing feedback opportunities through our website and at events;
 - gathering feedback at periodic events and through surveys; and
 - setting up and maintaining a Billboard outside the Commons main house.
- To invite participation in the evolution of the life of the Commons by:
 - inviting public attendance at Team and Council meetings;
 - facilitating promotion of open houses and events at the Commons; and
 - encouraging the involvement of community volunteers.

Activities in 2010/2011:

A. Commons Administration and Functioning

COM members **take notes** at every Commons Communicating Council (CCC) and have more than taken our turn at **co-convening** these monthly meetings.

COM Team meets monthly, generally on the Monday AMs immediately prior to the CCC meeting. In an effort to be informed about other teams' activities, COM team members are also **represented on most other Commons teams**. We are always encouraging updates from all teams for regular Updates and publications.

B. Facilitating Information Flow Within the Commons Community

1. Website and Commons Lists Maintenance

Hans van Kessel continues to do these big and quite challenging jobs. Off-shoots are posting of events, Teams' meetings, special events, etc. **Note** that COM does not so far facilitate the Commons FaceBook page as this is done by Becky Furnell and others.

2. Weekly e.Updates

Maya Ruggles is doing a great job with these, and teams, projects and events are improving in getting information in for these (and website and other COM publications).

3. Projector & Screen for Big Meeting Room

Donations were obtained from Gabriola Mac Users Group & UVic

4. Assisting Teams and Event Organizers to Design Posters

Thanks to Tsiporah & Paul Grignon for this service.

5. Checklist for Events Planners

This is in draft, to be finalized shortly.

C. Promoting the Commons in the Gabriola Community

1. Brochures

Two versions have been revised and printed this year. They are available at Commons house door, Visitor Centre tents, Welcome Wagon, and occasional table at Saturday market.

2. Newspaper writing

Articles in *The Flying Shingle*, *The Gabriola Sounder*, and *Harbour Living*. Thanks to various Team writers and editors of these local newspapers. Please the *Sounder's* "Commons Corner".

3. Trifold Displays

We have our own general trifold that covers the main concepts of the Commons; this be easily transported to various events as a portable information kit of Commons principles, map, other visuals. We have designed a second "blank" trifold which can be modified to various specific display needs using Velcro applications. Please let us know when you need to use one of these.

4. Commons Signage and Bulletin Board(s)

Team facilitated discussion of these topics for some months in 2011; transferred to Council.

5. Commons Logo

Call was put out to art community, so far without response.

2. Covenant Group

Mandate

The Covenant Team is an ad hoc group formed to assume responsibility to create several documents, centred about a Gabriola Commons Covenant, which will hold, protect and steward the property on Gabriola Island known as "The Gabriola Commons" as a public amenity, for the use and enjoyment of Gabriolans in perpetuity. More than a conservation covenant, this Commons Covenant will enshrine not only the land it buildings, but also the vision of the Gabriola Commons as detailed in the Commons Charter.

Highlights

1. This year the first draft was reworked to strengthen the dual focus of the conservation and cultural components of the Covenant. The response to the first draft clarified even further the commitment to affirm the relationship between the land and the community and to rewrite the Covenant so this relationship was undeniably transparent.
 2. The rezoning of the Gabriola Commons to include a definition of “community commons” (Gabriola Local Trust Committee Bylaw 258) anchored the responsibility and determination to create a covenant that not only protects the land but is rooted in the essence of the community itself.
 3. Distilling this inseparability means finding language that replaces older conservation models of regulation and enforcement with systems of self-governance and sustainability. The unprecedented nature of this task requires the covenant be created out of the context it is situated in and not duplicate dominant models of control and authority.
 4. The goal for the final copy of the Covenant and its associated Management Plan is March 15th, 2012.
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3. Elder Eco-Village Project

Inspired by the Visions and Voices Workshop in June, the EEV group began meeting again after a one and a half year hiatus, with the addition of some new and enthusiastic members. There is ongoing work on group process and structure and meetings will soon be advertized on the website.

The EEV is updating research on Islands Trust and VIHA requirements, island demographics, sources of funding, and ownership options (co-op instead of private).

Topics for future meetings include: a design churette; VIHA licensing etc.; Videos on community; Obstacles to completion; Visioning workshop.

4. Farm Management Team

- Projects in the ground:
 - Blueberries (with overhead netting) and apples ready for new Farm Gate Stand
 - 100 asparagus crowns planted
 - Continued development of gardens and orchards
- Building projects:
 - Greenhouse
 - Composting Toilet
- Community connections:
 - Community Allotment Gardens, Plots for kids, for Guides.
 - Field trip to Pender and Galiano on local food issues (giving rise to Island

- Connections project with Island Futures)
- Saturday Work Bees open to community (with soup & conversation)
 - Initiating Future Gabriola Grain Co-op
 - Spring and Fall Fairs (with Seed Exchange)
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5. Grant Writing Team

1. There are fewer and fewer grants available for a project such as the kitchen, but the Grant Writing team has found several that are possible.
 2. The GWT has applied to Farm Credit Canada's AgriSpirit Fund to further the Community Kitchen project, specifically to purchase and set in place all materials for framing, insulation and the exterior wall, which constitutes Phase 5 of the project. The amount requested is \$23,500. We will be notified of the outcome of the competition in November.
 3. The GWT is in the process of making an application to the VanCity/Real Estate Foundation Green Building Grant Program for phase 6 of the project. Phase 6 will bring the project to completion.
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6. Share the Commons Team

Revised our mandate, objectives and strategies especially to include referrals to the Infrastructure, Farm Management and Trails and Green Spaces Teams.

Worked with Poetry Gabriola as they successfully moved on to the Commons with the placement of a Yurt designed for practices and presentations.

Reviewed and provided a liaison person(s) for such projects as the Future Kitchen, Labyrinth and Sustainability Centre.

Addressed a number of requests from PHC ranging from the approval of the Commons under the B.C. Government's "Extreme Weather Response" to expansion of storage space and other adaptations/improvements.

Met with many individuals who had proposals for land or building use over the year and which resulted in many programs.

7. Trails & Green Spaces Team

Highlights of the past year's activities

- **Mapping**

First draft of the Base Line Report mapping of the Gabriola Commons eco-systems:

- Accurate siting of the elements of the plan, using surveyor's transit and GPS
- Initial identification of the native trees, shrubs, flowers, berries and ground cover (to be augmented on an ongoing basis); preliminary listing of some of the fauna (aided by local scientists)
- Network of principal trails sited and placed on plan. Further trails in future planning.

- **Planning**

Invasive species: action plan to combat massive invasion of Daphne Laureola and Scotch Broom:

- Consultation with GaLTT
- Grant obtained (from Evergreen/Walmart)
- Weekly workbee forays throughout the year into the western half of the Commons
- Disposal of uprooted plants - a work in progress

Potential Conflict resolved:

- Agreement reached on issue concerning the Sustainability Centre Team, Poetry Gabriola and TAGS (concerning large Douglas firs casting shade in winter over SC structure.) A decision was made not to fell healthy trees larger than 45 cm. (at breast height), but thinning of branches may be considered as an option

- **Community Outreach**

Working with Camp Miriam

- Campers require community service activities and the Commons fits the bill!
 - For a second year, busloads of campers from 8 to 16 arrive over the summer to attack the Daphne with amazing enthusiasm.
 - The entire north west quarter of the Commons has been cleared of the original growth of Daphne and broom!
-