

## Gabriola Commons Coordinating Council

Notes from February 5, 2013

**Present:** Bob Andrew (Facilitator); Stef Marrie (co-facilitator); Judith Roux, Mary Aitken, Sheila Brooke, Kit Szanto (recorder), Robbie Huston, Patrick Roux, Muriel Wiens, Deborah Ferens, Jinny Hayes, Rebecca Furnell, George Szanto, Heide Brown, Stephanie Rossol (acting director, PHC), Michelle Benjamin (PHC Board member).

**Next CCC meeting:** Tuesday, March 5 at 7 pm.

**Recorder for next meeting:** Communications (Heide Brown)

### **Actions/Questions to be addressed:**

- A. **Heide** to prepare to lead discussion of front yard
- B. **All teams** should discuss Tree Task Force report (see below) and be prepared to contribute ideas to a group discussing which trees should be felled and which saved.
- C. **Deb** to send update of projects budget to **teams** for consideration and additional prioritizing
- D. **Deb** to send press release of donations and project highlights
- E. **Teams** to review and discuss proposals from facilitators from January meeting (see below under CCC)

### **Ongoing Discussion Items to watch for:**

- A. Current issue (starting March meeting): front yard
- B. "Personal benefit" on the Commons
- C. Sustainability Building (in progress)
- D. Signage
- E. Formation of a Conflict Resolution Team
- F. Recognizing Contributions
- G. How do we decide what gets sent out to membership?

### **TEAM Reports:**

**Commons Coordinating Council :** Maya will continue another 6 months as facilitator (with Bob continuing co-facilitation for another 3 months.). Suggestion: Let discussion items be known in advance on the Commons website.

Report from Bob/Maya - Commons Council (Feb 2013)  
Please provide feedback

### **January 2013 version of Council Note-taking Template:**

We've added a few sections to the beginning of the template. Please let us know what you think.

- ⤴ The 'Actions/Questions to be taken/addressed' section is meant to highlight those actions and/or questions that came up during the meetings that are meant to be followed up with by a team, all teams or an individual. We hope this will provide Council an easy reminder of the specific actions/questions to be taken/addressed in order to move forward. We realize that these items may not be taken or addressed by the next meeting, but we will revisit them until they are.
- ⤴ The 'Additional Agenda Items' section is meant to highlight the items that came up during team reports and were discussed during the meeting. The space for further elaboration of the discussion is at the end of 'team reports'.
- ⤴ The 'Ongoing Discussion Items' section is meant to highlight those items that are still up for discussion at Council, but have not had an airing or been resolved. See proposal 1 below.
  
- ⤴ We would also like to add a section for reports from 'research groups'. These are groups (e.g. Long Term Planning group) that are not teams (yet), projects (such as the Community Kitchen), or groups (such as Poetry Gabriola). 'Research Groups' would relate to groups that are preparing reports.

### **Two Proposals:**

- ⤴ Proposal 1
  - (a) set aside first 20 minutes of Council to address ongoing discussion items (items to stay on the list until 'resolved'; may take more than one 20 minute session).
  - (b) post ongoing discussion items on website
  
- ⤴ Reasoning: It is our understanding that the consensus model of the Commons is premised on providing opportunities to voice concerns and engage in information-sharing/discussion about proposals coming from teams and individuals. We also see that Council offers one of the only opportunities for Commons' members (potentially everyone on Gabriola) to engage in this process without committing to other Commons' work. While it's important to instill a sense of communal responsibility (by contributing in some practical way), we believe it's also important to 'practice' Council so that its openness is protected. As such, the opportunity that Council offers to the community to be involved in issues that they are concerned about needs to be demonstrated. Our proposal involves two steps in that direction. It will always seem slow getting through 'big' issues, but better that we take the time we need than to rush through them or let them lie unaddressed. We hope these steps will facilitate in opening up these 'big' issues to Commons-wide discussion.
  
- ⤴ Proposal 2  
Open an email account for Commons Council ([gabriolacommonscouncil@gmail.com](mailto:gabriolacommonscouncil@gmail.com))

- ⤴ Reasoning: With both facilitators and note-takers changing on a regular basis, it would be helpful to have continuity for communications between facilitators, note-takers, Council attendees and team reps. Because the @gabriolacommons accounts are forwarded to a representative with longer standing, this doesn't allow for as much regular change as is needed with Council.

***Communications*** (Rep: Heide)

HIGHLIGHTS: same as last month:

- Send to Heide: anything for Imogen --- Common's Communique -- and for Hans for the website.
- Remember to send Heide anything you want in the papers, and deadlines are Monday for both papers.
- NEEDS: I still need someone, by mid-April, to share what I do so I can be cloned when I'm away --- required tasks include going to council in May and June and making brief notes for stuff that needs to go to Imogen for the Common's Communique or for Hans for the website, or for the papers.
- Meeting with Hans soon, when he has a chance, to work on website.

***Event Planning*** (Rep: Stef)

Next event: Trades and Services Fair. March 2 (Saturday 10-2)

- Stef needs help with set up, and take down (which has to be quick since the room is needed at 3 pm, that day) as well as being a Commons rep at our table.

***Farm Management Team:*** No report this time

***Fundraising:*** No report this time

***Grant Writing:*** No report this time

***Infrastructure:*** No report this time

***Learning Opportunities:*** (Rep: Robbie Huston)

1. We have (via Doug McKnight) had some discussions with individual teachers at GES about potential field trips to the Commons. We also have a survey ready to be completed by teachers, offering them a range of options for things to do at the Commons, when Doug thinks the time is right.
2. The Commons proposal to the Island Studies conference was accepted. We proposed a 30-45 minute panel presentation, backed by a slide show of Commons images and presented by multiple people, to be followed by a field trip to the Commons some time on the weekend. We do not yet have a scheduled time; the conference is May 10, 11 & 12 at the Haven. Gloria Filax encourages anyone interested to register prior to Feb 15 for early bird rates -- \$50 for "those on a fixed income/pension or working with a non-

profit.” Meals are extra. See the website – [islandstudiesconference2013.org](http://islandstudiesconference2013.org) – for more details. We will discuss possible time for a planning session for the panel tomorrow at the STC meeting.

3. Susan Brockley is working with some teacher contacts in Nanaimo to get the word out that high school students who need volunteer hours for school courses are welcome to come to the Saturday workbees. Susan will draft a paragraph about this for the Communique (to be reviewed by Communications first), and something a bit more detailed for high school teachers at the Nanaimo secondary schools.

**Long Range Planning:** (Rep: Deborah Ferens)

- Draft Mandate, Goals and Objectives:

**Mandate:**

To develop collaboratively a long-range plan for the Gabriola Commons through a 30 year lens: as a physical place, as an organizational structure with projects to be developed and in its relationship to other organizations on Gabriola and Gulf Island communities.

**Goals of the Long Range Planning:**

1. The plan guides the Gabriola Commons over the next 30 years.
2. The plan reflects broad community engagement.
3. The plan fulfils the Guiding Principles of the Gabriola Commons.

**Objectives:**

(for Goal 1: The plan guides the Gabriola Commons over the next 30 years)

- to create a 30-year critical path
- to create a process to review and monitor the plan
- to avoid crisis management

(for Goal 2: The plan reflects broad community engagement)

- to collaborate with Commons teams and Council
- to engage the entire Gabriola Island community
- to invite the input of the Gulf Island communities

(for Goal 3: The plan fulfils the Guiding Principles of the Gabriola Commons)

- to balance protection of the land and land uses
- to ensure the permanence, health and legacy of the Gabriola Commons
- to celebrate the ongoing life of the Commons

**Property Management:** (Rep: Patrick Roux)

- PMT meeting Feb. 11, Mary, Sheila, Raymond, Patrick

- Parking: PMT would like Council to discuss parking. What are the concerns? How dangerous is the current parking? Do we want to link it to a new one behind the barn? How? What impact does a parking lot have on the land? PMT hopes that Long Range Planning might take on the parking question.
- One post is up (Commons side of the path from the tennis courts) for Rick Cranston's Commons sign.
- Safety: demonstration of fire extinguisher. We can have Rick Jackson do a public demo for us at the Commons. (1. Pull pin, 2. Aim, 3, pump)
- Priorities: clean-up for Trades Fair, clean up Goat Barn for ESS PALS, finish roof on Sustainability Centre, which can be used for dances, parties, etc in summer.
- One dead tree to take down near PHC entry.
- VCR and TV are gone

Next meeting Monday, March 4 at 1:00

***Share the Commons:*** (rep: Kit Szanto)

- STC has a new facilitator, Susan Yates, since Linda St. Clair is on a 6 month "sabbatical" from the Commons until July.
- STC supports the idea of the Kitchen Stewards group forming a team, and having a rep come to Council meetings.
- We discussed the green bikes program and what we might do to assist Victor with this task. Kit was asked to contact Victor, and did. Victor will go through the bikes now assembled, cull the ones that are not worth keeping, and see how he might store them in the goat barn, probably along the wall, so as to free up the floor space in the goat barn, making it available in case of an emergency.
- STC suggests forming a History and Archives team (HAT), to record major events on the Commons, in particular ones not mentioned in the papers and therefore not collected in Annette Sweeney's scrapbook of the Commons. We began by thinking of the memorials for Kelly Berthelot and Hank Sirlin, and expanded beyond memorials to other events, Fall Fairs etc. We agreed the binder for memorials should be separated from other events, and that there should be information about the person, explaining who they were and why the Commons memorialized them at this time. (Kit contacted Victor to suggest he and Joelle begin thinking about collecting material together for the memorial about Kelly, but to keep it until HAT may be formed.)
- On the agenda last month for CCC, the question of how the Commons might celebrate volunteers was listed. STC is unanimous in feeling there should be no formal recognition of any particular volunteers.
- STC recommends that one function of CCC might well be to make sure there is some form of conflict resolution if and when the need arises. Robbie volunteered to ask Shelagh Huston if she was willing to get that idea restarted. Muriel indicated she would be interested in such a team.

Note: Special STC meeting with others to plan for the Commons presentation at the Islands Studies Conference – at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 13. Those participating, please attend.

Next regular STC meeting: February 6, at 10:30 am.

***Trails and Green Spaces:*** (rep: Kit)

- Tree Task Force: Meeting on Jan. 19 (10 am) was useful and the report on it follows. We will need another such meeting soon to discuss the trees whose future is controversial, hoping to reach a mutually satisfactory solution.

Commons Trees task force - walkabout January 19, 2013

Raymond Tremblay, Tom Cameron, Maureen Wilde, Susan Yates, Heide Brown, Mary Aitken, Robbie Huston, Judith Roux, Bob Andrew, Kit Szanto

It should be noted this is an ongoing discussion. Few trees were defined as ones to take down, or even ones to save – apart from the TAGS (Trails and Green Spaces team) agreement about trees over a certain size (15” diameter) will not be cut, unless they pose a danger. This group may soon mark trees we agree should be taken down and then bring this proposal to cut them to the CCC. Then we will organize a group, find volunteers to do the cutting, decide when and how, and what to do with the trees, the branches etc.

On Saturday, January 19, 2013 a group of people from the Commons who are interested in the questions concerning which trees need to be “culled” (that is, cut down), which pruned appropriately, which left as they are – either for now, or forever (unless a problem develops) all met for a walkabout at 10 am Saturday morning. We were accompanied by Tom Cameron who not only knows a great deal about tree ecology and maintenance, but also has been active in GaLTT (Gabriola Lands and Trails Trust) and in working with the Poetry Gabriola yurt, and the space around it, landscaping, tree pruning, etc.

We began near the top of the parking lot, with Tom explaining that if we wanted to preserve the large handsome Arbutus tree to the west of the goat barn, we would have to remove the fir trees that surround it and are close to it since they are taking the water the Arbutus will need. Raymond, speaking as a PMT member, noted that the two large firs, closest to the parking space on the west should likely to be taken down.

We then discussed the future drive (“lane”?) that PMT may be considering as a connector to the parking area to the west, with parking along the side of this connecting lane. There are a lot of young firs growing close to the fence line, which, if the “lane” is developed will have to be taken down. The suggestion was made that these trees block much view of the Commons and that this is, in itself, unwelcoming so we might take down some of the trees to open up the view.

Part way along the walk along the north side of the Commons we stopped to discuss one significant issue, and one on which there is a variety of opinion. Judith explained that when the Commons was first being developed, the view from the spot where we were, looking down past the arbutus (to the east of the yurt) was originally a lovely pastoral view of the pond and beyond. Now the once tiny firs have become tall enough to block this view and, for many people, have

cut off one of the original pleasures of this expanse. On the other hand, Mary Aitken explained that for her and others, these trees provide a sense of privacy and of magic for those going to the labyrinth.

We proceeded then to the East-West connector trail where the school kids trail angles up toward the north avoiding the group of small trees which stands at the point where the E/W trail merges with the clear area west of the Sustainability Centre. We chatted a bit about the two trails, whether the trees pose a security problem, and Tom reminded us all we should plan the trails as we want them, NOT with regard to where the trees are now since trees grow quickly here and we can put them where they fit AFTER we have the trails set.

We noted the need to resolve appropriate parking soon to avoid having vehicles driving randomly across the Commons.

We then went toward the yurt. The question about which trees to remove from around the yurt was discussed. Tom felt all the young firs behind the yurt should probably be taken down as well as many of the ones beside the yurt, both for access to sun and for protection of the yurt itself. Susan Yates will connect with PG members about this, and then they will connect with the Commons. PG needs a woodshed, simple is fine, to store firewood in, NOT under the yurt. (Susan Y. offered to pass this info on.)

We then walked down toward the labyrinth, discussing the trees that Mary A., Maureen W. (and others) hope to preserve, the ones that likely are part of what blocks the view. Mary suggested saving 4 or 5 near the trail, but that the trees further toward the forest might well be cut or some of them thinned and we might see if that could be a compromise between the “loved the view” group and the “request for privacy, shelter along the route to the labyrinth” group.

It was noted that a moderately large fir beside the orchard (west of it) should be removed since it shades the orchard. Consensus about that.

We looked at the pond and many people expressed a desire to cut down several of the rather bushy firs now close to the water and blocking the view. Bob mentioned TAGS had a “No Touch” policy for 100 feet around the pond, to protect (among other creatures) the rare red-legged frog. It is not clear that tree removal would violate the TAGS policy re protection of the pond.

We walked east below the blueberry field then up toward the “little field.” Several of the firs south of the blueberry field and south of the little field were noted as ones we might well have to cut or thin soon so they don’t block too much sun from the gardens. The firs west of the little field also need to come down. General consensus on that.

Response from Tom Cameron:

Thanks for the report. It is so good to document work/progress or it just gets lost.  
Re Tom’s background: I am trained as a plant ecologist but most of my work was plains and boreal. But ecology is ecology and I now have almost a decade experience on the island. I did work as a horticultural planner for several years. When it comes right down

to it, when in doubt get one of the local arborists to give their opinion.

I do have a few principles or concepts that may help to guide decisions:

\*Growing conditions are very good on the Commons. Rapid growth can cause problems if it is not taken into account. It is far easier to do things with trees when they are small. If too many are taken out they could be replanted in the future. Most people underestimate how much space an individual tree requires as it matures by a huge amount.

\*Specimen trees really do require a lot of space to realize their full potential. A healthy tree is less susceptible to disease, etc.

\*Douglas fir will outcompete arbutus within a generation. An arbutus does best with sunlight and when conifers are not growing up into the crown.

\*Thinning a grove of mature trees (we weren't talking about mature trees for the most part) is problematic, it is so much better to thin while they are young. The Commons needs to make decision relatively quickly and get it done. Waiting even five years is unwise.

I am more than willing to continue working on this project in the future. Thanks, Tom

And later, responding to a question from me, Tom wrote - Kit, Thanks for the phone call re the arbutus. I did leave a message for you on your answering service. On the walk-about essentially I was careful not to talk about the zone of protection around the arbutus because I wasn't really sure. But I did a little research on the net and the municipalities further south on the island do have tree protection bylaws often related to construction. They talk about a zone of protection of 18x the diameter. On phone I said converting from radius to diameter was easy but what I meant to say converting circumference to diameter is relatively simple. I do have a DBH tape around here somewhere that does the conversion directly if it would be useful to your group.

So the tree protection bylaws talk about a zone of protection from trampling and especially vehicles. I also was talking about a zone of protection from root competition. I think that for our purposes we should just assume they are the same. It is totally a problem if the firs reach into the canopy because of mechanical damage and from shading eventually. I am so glad that the Commons group appreciate the significance of this tree. It is a beauty and given its location a wonderful feature of the Commons.

I too really liked the idea of getting innovative about that hedge! All for now, Tom

- Note: TAGS meetings happen during weekly Saturday walkabouts (10 to noon). Newcomers always welcome.

***Trustees for Gabriola Commons Foundation*** (Rep: Jinny Hayes)

- One of Yetta's ideas, having a 4 hour planning meeting to set goals and strategies, happened at Heide's, and was very good, sadly too late for Yetta to attend.
- Trustees agreed to meet every two weeks, one meeting to focus on finances, getting the mortgage paid down, the other to deal with regular business.
- A major task is to find someone to be treasurer.
- Appoint someone to fill Yetta's place on the Board.
- Treasurer's report from Deborah Ferens:
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*July 3, 2012 – Council Notes                      Update: Feb 5/13 - Council*  
*Proposals for allocation of 50K \*\* for projects and maintenance on Commons. Used*  
*criteria of Safety, Timing, Visibility, Synergy, Aesthetics, Completion and Green.*

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>SPENT</b>	<b>REMAI N- ING</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Deck: estimated to finish: 10,000 and 5000 already raised	5,000	5,000	—	<i>DONE</i>
Community Kitchen (for outside walls, doors)	25,000	2,908	22,092	<i>In Progress</i>
Site Map (will need four but one for now)	2,000		2,000	
Goat Barn Roof (Temp. solution to leaking roof) 5-10,000?	10,000	9,007	993	<i>DONE</i>
Sustainability Centre (re finish Timbers, create picnic space)	2,000		2,000	<i>In Progress</i>
Board walk extension (80 feet)	200		200	<i>DONE</i>
East west Connector	1,000		1,000	
Woodworking Shop First Aid Kit	100	185	(85)	<i>DONE</i>
Entry Pathway (hedge to house) gravel and lighting	500	66	434	<i>DONE</i>
Repair Cob Wall	1,000	185	815	<i>In Progress</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46,800</b>	<b>17,351</b>	<b>29,449</b>	
TOTAL ALLOCATION as per donor	49,133.29			

Remaining for allocation from original account	2,333.29			
<b>PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION</b>				
Farm-Gate Stand/Info Centre	5,000			
Barn Storage System	2,500			
Parking lot expansion	2,000			
Blinds for Upstairs room (to permit dark out)	5,000			
Chipper	1,600			
Upgrade Water System with new UV filters	1,200			
New Parking area between Barn and Road	2,000			
<i>Total</i>	<i>19,300</i>			

**\*\* Actual Allocation: \$49,133.29**

Next meeting: Thursday Feb. 7 at 2 pm.

**Volunteers:** (Rep: Stef Marrie)

- Need for volunteers for Trades Fair, March 2.

## **PROJECTS:**

**Community Kitchen:** (rep. Judith Roux)

- The Kitchen Stewards team has a mandate, with goals and objectives:

### **Mandate:**

As a collaborative team, the Kitchen Stewards will manage community use of the Commons Community Kitchen, developing policies and procedures to ensure safe, clean and equitable use of the facility.

### **Goals/Objectives**

1. Develop guidelines that will ensure Community Kitchen use is equitable and accessible to all in the community of Gabriola.
2. Develop procedures/protocols to ensure safe operation of the kitchen and its equipment and adherence to relevant regulations and guidelines.
3. Develop procedures/protocols to ensure hygienic and sanitary conditions.

### **Strategies:**

1. Develop Procedures Checklists:

- for renters – a rental form to be filled out prior to rental and a duties checklist when entering and leaving kitchen
- for stewards – daily/weekly/monthly/annual tasks

2. Develop policies regarding use of fridge, freezers, cold stores, dry stores (need for locks?)

3. Rental contact info will be by phone and email  
[commonskitchenbookings@shaw.ca](mailto:commonskitchenbookings@shaw.ca)

The work is proceeding well, and the stripping of the old exterior walls has begun. The Kitchen Stewards are ready to be a team.

Next meeting: Wed. Feb.6 at 3:00

***Stories from the Memory Well:*** (rep. Muriel Wiens)

- The stories continue well, and it seems to be an ongoing project.

Next story telling: Thursday February 28, at 1:30 (upstairs in the Commons).

## GROUPS

***People for a Healthy Community*** (rep:Stephanie (acting director) and Michelle)

- Asked about the lease getting signed, soon. Items discussed:
  1. the whereabouts of the cots, which they need to take somewhere where they can be used for emergency shelter
  2. access to the toolbox in the workshop issue - they will be shown where the key is by Patrick, so they can access them. Patrick requested that they ultimately find a new home for them. Workshop can't be used by PHC people yet (for safety reasons).

- Next Board Meeting: ?