

Gabriola Commons Coordinating Council

Notes from June 4, 2013

Present: Maya Ruggles (Facilitator); Stef Marrie (co-Facilitator); Shelagh Huston, Mary Wilson, Patsy Ludwick, Patrick Roux, Jinny Hayes, Rebecca Furnell, Muriel Wiens, Pat Maloney (PHC), Jood Heather, Hans von Kessel, Judith Roux (note-taker)

Next CCC meeting: 7 pm Tuesday, July 2, 2013

Recorder for next meeting: Sharing the Commons

Meeting Agenda:

1. 20-minute discussion - current: discussion process and usefulness
2. Team, Project & Group Reports
3. Follow-up from previous meetings
4. Additional items arising from this meeting

Follow-up Items from previous meeting - discussions outlined below:

- A. FMT mandate & food-sharing policy
- B. Creation of Conflict Resolution Team
- C. Website Update
- D. Archiving

Reminders & Action Items - will be followed up at next meeting:

- A. September 28th, 1:30 - AGM - please submit suggestions for future Trustees
- B. Proposal for Council presence on website attached - all teams consider
- C. Visit Commons website with mind to what people want to find out - all suggestions for changes welcome. Will prepare for focused 20-minute discussion down the road.
- D. Invite Rick Cranston to next CCC meeting re: sign design - Stef

Ongoing Discussion Items - for 20-minute discussions:

- A. Memorials (current, starting July meeting)
- B. "Personal Benefit" at the Commons
- C. Sustainability Building
- D. Signage
- E. Formation of a Conflict Resolution Team
- F. Recognizing contributions
- G. How do we decide what gets sent out to membership?
- H. Website Update (will receive information package from Hans/Heide)
- I. Consensus process
- J. How do we orient people to the Commons?

1. Notes from 20-Minute Discussion

The "Twenty-minute discussion" question:

Do we continue the 20 minute discussions as a regular feature?

Recap: A topic is chosen for discussion during the first 20 minutes of Council and analyzed through the grid: CHEAP BFV's (Concerns, Hopes, Expectations, Assumptions, Priorities, Beliefs, Fears, Values). The discussion may continue through subsequent Councils, as required for satisfactory consideration of all aspects of the question.

The first topic: began as "The Hedge" and expanded into a recognition that the whole frontage of the Commons along North Road needs to be considered/designed as welcoming and beautiful. (Recognition of the need for the Long Range Planning Team.)

Current topic: The "20 minute discussion" was recognized by all as "extremely helpful".

Summary of comments: The 20-minute question leads to rich discussion of "large, looming issues", avoids the polarization of an issue into opposing positions and lets all be heard.

Observations:

- Team reports may be compressed to allow time for the 20 min. discussion, but this in turn leads to greater discipline in reporting only the salient issues. (Note: It is important for full team reports to be attached to Council notes for those interested in the details. See "archiving" below.)
- When is the discussion finished? Does Council have a role in going further, initiating action? General understanding that Council only provides the forum for discussion. In the first topic, the Long Range Planning Team was recognized as an appropriate body to carry the issue further, enriched with the comments gleaned from several months' discussions.

Decision:

- ▲ Council decided to continue with the 20 minute discussions, covering 'Memorials at the Commons' next.

2. Team/Project Reports:

- ***Property Management Team:*** (Mary Wilson)

Meeting notes concern details (driveway upkeep, sustainability building, need for new tools/tool repair, toilet paper).

Bookings: Note that Commons' tents, tables and chairs are occasionally made available for community events (e.g. Oceans Day), with a donation suggested to cover repair/eventual replacement.

See PMT report (which will fill in the details and indicate a date for next meeting.)

- ***Communications Team:*** (Patsy Ludwick)

Great article (Shingle) was published on the Community Kitchen, written by Davy Bouvier in response to Comm. Team's request for volunteer writers.

- ***Community Kitchen Project*** (Patrick Roux)

Big workbee upcoming on June 22 to advance work on siding, trim etc. Everyone welcome (there will be jobs for all!)

- ***Gabriola Commons Foundation*** (Jinny Hayes)

There continue to be 2 meetings per months (fundraising/business)

Glowing tribute to Treasurer Deb Ferens for her skill in unpacking financial statements!

Note that a major donation of \$22,000 from the estate of Yetta Lees Strasdine was made to the Commons. This brings the mortgage below the \$300,000 mark.

Note: The "Fundraising Team" has been recognized as superfluous, since the whole GCF Team works on planning fundraising for the "mortgage elimination project", while the Grant Writing Team searches for funding for other projects.

Further note: The GCF "Trustees Handbook" may be reconfigured, with the Policy portion called: "The Commons Book of Agreements" to recognize that information contained within is available to all and "policy" is a term from hierarchical management.

The Covenant Team (part of GCF) will be visiting the Galiano Conservancy June 9 to explore possible connections.

The GCF AGM will be held on September 28 at 1:30. Please submit suggestions for future Trustees.

- ***Stories from the well*** (Muriel Wiens)

The idea of storytelling needs "retooling". Muriel will approach the seniors at the Rollo lunch on Thursday with a demonstration of the rich possibilities of story telling.

- ***PHC report*** (Pat Maloney)

A new initiative has been launched: the "Gabriola Housing Society", incorporated to provide affordable housing for seniors and families. (Until it receives charitable status, it will operate under the umbrella of PHC.)

The Board currently has 5 directors, with an invitation to interested community members to join. Next meeting: June 18, at 5 pm in PHC dining room.

First Project: Assisted living for seniors based on the Abbeyfield model. Start-up costs estimated at \$400,000. For long term capital funding analysis see the strategic plan on the PHC website.

- ***Farm Management Team*** (Judith Roux) (Next meeting Monday June 17 at 4)

For details on what is happening on the Allotment Gardens (Commons North and South and Namaste), as well as on the Orchard, Kitchen Garden and Little Field see report

from June 3 meeting. Current focus is on weeding, grass mowing and eventually watering! Come on Saturday mornings to take part in convivial work bees with soup!

▲ ***Scything Project*** (Mary W.) Mark Friday June 21 on yours calendars! First day of summer will be lived fully, beginning at 5:07 in the morning for scything (a learning opportunity!) in the meadow set aside for this demonstration. By afternoon there will be racks bearing drying hay. A discussion on haymaking will be followed by music, picnic supper and Balkan dancing (with Don Buskirk). Come and take part!

- ***Sharing the Commons*** (Judith) Next meeting: 10:30 Wednesday June 5. An application for a Boules Court was made by the Extraordinary Gabriola Boules Association (contact: George Szanto) and received unanimous support from the STC members. Lessons to come. (Funding through Recreation Society might be possible)

- ***Council Facilitators*** (Maya Ruggles)
Proposal that Council reports on main discussion items and agenda be shown on website, along with agenda of upcoming meeting. Format shown.
New diagram for Commons structure needed to be simplified and sent to Maya.

- ***Web site*** (Hans van Kessel)
Hans will work with Heide on reconfiguring the website to suit our needs.
Request that all visit the website with this in mind!!

- ***Volunteer coordinator and Events Team*** (Stef Marrie)
Next event: Commons Community Garage Sale July 13. This is an outdoor event with no food, no music, no fuss. Just \$10/table.

3. Discussion on follow-up items from previous meeting:

A. FMT mandate and food-sharing policy

The FMT has previously presented a slightly revised mandate along with a ‘Food Sharing Policy (see attached). Discussion expanded to consider whether such a Commons Team mandate should apply in its entirety to the Namaste Commons allotment gardens (and to allotment gardens in general).

There was a consensus agreement that this should be left up to the Namaste allotment gardeners and that they should be considered an “independent subsidiary” of the Commons. Policy intended to cover commons gardens (kitchen garden, little field, orchard).

B. Conflict resolution team creation

The report on decision-making at the Commons (shepherded by Rebecca) has been completed, with input by all, and accepted. A document will be produced and circulated

for general information (Note: “How do you make decisions?” is the #1 question asked by people curious to know more about the Commons.)

The issue of “blocking” in reaching for consensus remains to be addressed and will be coming up for discussion.

The broader topic of conflict resolution is one that Shelagh Huston is interested in pursuing, with the goal of maintaining a sense of peaceful well-being at the Commons. Discussion continued on the recognition that some people will leave rather than confront others. How to address this?

The need to welcome people “in” to the Commons led to broad discussion, with suggestions such as holding orientations several times a year and actively mentoring new people in. It was observed that the Commons is a culture within a larger culture, based on principles different from those of the dominant hierarchical, corporate model. “Entering the Commons is passing through a portal into a different reality and needs patience and persistence.” **This was recognized as a good topic for the “20 minute discussion.”**

C. Website update

From the early days of the Commons, Hans van Kessel has brilliantly taken on the role of Commons web master, giving hundreds of hours to the project while making it look effortless!

He would now like to set the stage for future discussion in order to get clarity on our priorities and needs. He and Heide are asking us all to play around, imagining what visitors will want to discover on the website and what information we need to find easily. How best to update information while archiving older submissions needs to be considered.

It’s crucial that we take part in this exercise now because making each subsequent change on the “menu” line requires painstaking changes throughout the many pages of the website. **So the task for all of us is: to go onto the website mindfully and play around! Imagine different needs and note problems encountered and ideas.**

Send your comments to: heidebro@telus.net with “website” in the subject line.

D. Archiving on the Commons

Two aspects to archiving surfaced:

- Current: What should be archived? How should Team and Council minutes be archived (hard copy and/or digitally in the “cloud”?) Perhaps a memory stick is the answer. We need to discuss this and make it systematic.

Note that teams have been (sporadically) sending their minutes digitally to a Commons email address. These need to be retrieved and saved.

- Past: We want to recover and save information about the past history of the Commons (including photos, with faces identified.) Many of us have personal hard copy and digital files that should be reviewed and saved.

We need to put our focussed attention on this.

Suggestion: retired librarians could help with some of this archiving.

- Need to determine what each team is responsible to keep, what needs to be kept and what format should be used.

4. Additional Items Arising:

A. Alternative Energy (Muriel)

B. Skateboard Park (Judith)

Next Commons Coordinating Council: July 2, 2013 at 7 pm.