

**Commons Coordinating Council (CCC)**  
**gabrielacommonscouncil@gmail.com**

**Notes for Meeting of Jan.7, 2014**

Present: Michael Mehta, Judith Roux, Robbie Huston, Sheila Brooke, Alison Fitzgerald, Mary Aitken, Patrick Roux, Dave Neads, John Peirce, Nancy Hetherington-Peirce, Rebecca Furnell, Jinny Hayes, Steve Berthelot, Brenda Fowler, Guy Mireau, Cheryl Bailey, Fay Weller, Aidan Simmons, Deborah Ferens, Muriel Wiens, Stef Marrie, Bob McKechnie, Kit Szanto

Co-facilitators: Stef Marrie & Muriel Weins

Recorder: Share the Commons – Kit Szanto and Judith Roux

**Next CCC meeting: Feb. 4, 2014**

**Recorder for next meeting: Conflict Prevention & Resolution Team**

**Meeting Agenda:**

1. 20-minute discussion: An Informal discussion about the water systems on the Commons, by Patrick Roux.
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:**

**1. Financial Report – Deb Ferens**

Deborah distributed a new chart, including the new anonymous donor's money for Property Management priorities, bringing the total up to \$14,486. In the February meeting each team is asked to make clear their priorities, and – with luck – we will finally, collectively, establish what this money should be spent on. (Reminder, teams have been asked to present their priorities so we could decide this at Council for many months now.)

- 2. GabEnergy** – Invitation to attend the CCC meeting to introduce a proposal for alternative energy at the Commons, presented by Michael Mehta, Aiden Simmons and Dave Nead.

Gabriola Energy, a large grass-roots group, some of whom spoke at this CCC meeting to present a proposal to produce energy on the Commons. Using solar panels, the Commons could demonstrate the viability of producing electric power locally. This may become a community based project, in which the Commons would host this learning and teaching event.

Michael Mehta began by explaining there has been a dramatic drop in the cost of solar panels, and a continuing increase in the cost of electricity from Hydro, as well as a willingness by Hydro to buy back any excess power not used by the private provider, over a year, for 9.9 cents per kilowatt hour. The value of the Commons generating electricity with solar power and attaining “grid parity”

was the main focus.

Aidan discussed the appropriate size of the solar panels needed, 10 kw, which would cover 1000 square feet, approximately the size of two buses. (It became clear in the discussion following that this was the minimum size that would be feasible to start with.) Michael had suggested we should leave space to add more panels as the need arose. It would save \$2-3000 a year in electricity, and would repay its cost in 8-10 years, at current rates, but given the likelihood of rate increases, it might well repay costs even sooner.

Dave Neads spoke about his many years experience with solar power, and noted the value of the Commons being a model for the whole community, and the possibility of greening not just the Commons but also the whole island. Bob added that we could do this without allowing smart meters and just use the power generated for our needs or to turn the meter back somewhat, reducing costs. It was also noted that roof top panels would not be as effective as ones which can be adjusted manually to maximize the sun's rays in each season, since the sun's angle differs so much as the months pass. Some concern was raised regarding the space required. The group said they were looking at various possible sites for the panels and there would be a full discussion about which might be best. With a cost of \$20 - \$25K for installation, funding is another stumbling block. Judith noted that there may be some funds available to help with this project.

It was hoped that the project could be up and running by May or June of this year. Michael spoke of a long-term vision of interconnected micro-electrical grids, sharing power with the school or the village. Patrick spoke of the need to ensure power to the Community Kitchen during a power outage (need for a generator or batteries – but batteries were viewed as expensive, not energy efficient and not environmentally friendly.) We should aim to reduce our consumption of power to stay below Hydro's high rate.

The discussion was concluded with an offer from GabEnergy to conduct a feasibility study, to determine whether this project should or could proceed at the Commons.

### **3. Smart Meters at the Commons - more consideration and discussion**

Smart Meters, continued. The discussion of the solar panels had been mixed a bit with discussion of whether we need smart meters on the Commons – but we tried to keep this discussion for the end. It is clear some people are opposed to having smart meters on the Commons despite the fact we will apparently need a new meter soon and it will have to be a smart meter, according to BC Hydro Policy. There was some discussion of the thought that Hydro is not likely to be able to charge \$35/monthly for each meter, and of the connection to the solar panel discussion – whether we would want to connect to the grid if we do use solar. Robbie asked why those opposed to smart meters are opposed, and asked them to explain why the Commons should not have smart meters. The meeting ran out of time before any of the opposed responded to Robbie. This discussion will be continued next CCC.

### **4. Roxy Theatre at the Goat Barn – Steve Berthelot**

Steve B. has attended a meeting with Share the Commons to propose the use of the Goat Barn to house the Roxy Theatre. He was invited to Council to discuss his ideas for the Goat Barn. A group of 4 people are working on the details, and are very aware of the importance that the project follows the land use guidelines. Steve hopes that the money could be raised by volunteers and grants obtained for providing a larger assembly space near the village core for concerts, parties and the sort of events the original Roxy hosted. Rents from these events would help to repay the costs of renovation. The process followed for this project involved a meeting with Share the Commons, with Long Range Planning, with the Trustees, and now at the CCC. He thinks the work may cost \$25-50,000 and hopes he may fund his own work by renting out the Roxy equipment to the Commons for a small percentage, perhaps 1% of its value, in return for his own labour for likely 30 hours a week in setting up this new space. Once approved, the work would begin with clearing out the Goat Barn of the various stored items. There was some discussion about organization of removal of items from the Goat Barn, and perhaps renting an off-site storage unit. Patrick asked that a financial plan be furnished for the Roxy at the Commons.

- 5. Allocation of \$4000.** (Potential list attached, to be sent to all teams. **Feedback requested**)
- a. "You are here" site plans at 3 or 4 entry points to the Commons (plus small handout versions)
  - b. Septic field for Community Kitchen completion
  - c. Finish east/west connector pathway
  - d. More exterior lighting
  - e. More welcoming and informative entrance
  - f. Beautification of building interior, include interior lighting
  - g. Elevator
  - h. Farm gate stand
  - i. Party

All teams are asked to return to the February meeting, or send by proxy, a list of their top 3 priority projects for the use of the Project Funds identified in the Financial Report. The projects are not limited to those currently listed.

- 6. Communication** (report from group reviewing Members list) *No discussion.*
- 7. Website** (report from group working on page by page review). *No discussion.*

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

- a) All teams are asked to send or attend with top 3 priority projects for use of the donated project funds. Decisions will be made at the February meeting.
- b) All members will be invited to attend February's meeting to discuss their informed opinions on Smart Meters.

## **Ongoing Discussion Topics - for 20-minute discussions:**

- A. How to function without a Communications Liaison until someone steps into the role.
- 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?

## **Notes from 20-Minute Discussion:**

### **Current topic: Water Systems at the Commons – Patrick Roux**

An informal discussion about water systems on the Commons - Patrick Roux. Patrick began with a slide show of beautiful photographs - first of the pond, its inhabitants, and spoke about their need for the water. (The garden allotments draw from 6 to 800 gallons a day in the summer so people with allotments will have to be aware that if the level of the pond drops too low to benefit the wild life, the water for the allotments may be cut off. We need to be careful with our water supply to maintain enough for both wild life and gardening needs.) The water system (both well and pond), the electric system were illustrated and discussed.

The slideshow continued, with photos celebrating some of the high points of the past year at the Commons: people working on the kitchen, the trip to Galiano for the Covenant Team, the Commons participation at the Islands Conference, Camp Miriam kids helping with Daphne pulling.

## **TEAM Reports:**

Due to the amount of new business on the agenda, Teams were asked to waive reports this month, unless there were any pressing issues that required immediate attention. STC reported that the meeting scheduled for Jan. 8 was postponed until Jan.15. After the introductions of Teams and attendees, Robbie was asked for additional information about the upcoming **Long Range Planning** Workshop, Steve B reported on the proposal to move the **Roxy Theatre** to the Goat Barn and Stef Marrie reported for the Events Team regarding the lack of a **Trade Fair** this year.

## ***Commons Coordinating Council***

### ***Communications***

#### ***Covenant (rep:***

***Event Planning and Volunteers:*** Stef Marrie reported that there is currently no Trade Fair planned for 2014. The waning interest from Trades participants and lower attendance at the 2013 Trade Fair seemed to indicate that this event may need to alternate with another type of industry fair. I felt that a Health and Wellness Fair would be a good alternate; however, it was announced during 2013 that an outside group of Gabriola Healers wished to host a Healing Arts Fair. The group, lead by Michele FireRiverHeart had booked the space at the Commons and PHC, as the venue for their event. This event will be held Sunday, Feb.9, 2014, and will be informative in nature, with free sessions offered to attendees. There will be no business conducted at this fair.

#### ***Farm Management***

#### ***Grant Writing***

#### ***Infrastructure***

#### ***Learning Opportunities (rep:***

#### ***Property Management (rep:***

#### ***Share the Commons (rep:***

#### ***Trails and Green Spaces (rep:***

#### ***Trustees for Gabriola Commons Foundation***

#### ***Long Range Planning:***

John Peirce began with reporting about Long Range Planning's Workshop on January 18, 2014, 1-4 pm. Robbie distributed a draft agenda for it, and gave a brief discussion of the intent of the meeting, and the need for input.

## **PROJECTS:**

#### ***Community Kitchen (rep:***

#### ***Island Connections (rep:***

#### ***Labyrinth (rep:***

#### ***Sustainability Centre (rep:***

July 3, 2012 – Council Notes **Update: Jan 7/14 - Council**

Proposals for allocation of **50K** \*\* for projects and maintenance on Commons. Used criteria of Safety, Timing, Visibility, Synergy, Aesthetics, Completion and Green.

ITEM	BUDGET	SPENT	REMAINING	STATUS	TEAM
Deck: estimated to finish: 10,000 and 5000 already raised	5,000	5,000	—	DONE	PMT
Community Kitchen (for outside walls, doors)	25,000	12321	12679	In Progress	CK
Site Map (will need four but one for now)	2,000	86	1914	In Progress	TAGS
Goat Barn Roof (Temp. solution to leaking roof) 5-10,000?	10,000	8,413	1,587	*DONE	PMT
Sustainability Centre (re finish Timbers, create picnic space)	2,000		2,000	In Progress	SC
Board walk extension (80 feet)	200	200		*DONE	TAGS
East west Connector	1,000	572	428		TAGS
Woodworking Shop First Aid Kit	100	100		*DONE	PMT
Entry Pathway (hedge to house) gravel and lighting	500	158	342	*DONE	PMT
Repair Cob Wall	1,000	165	835	Done	PMT
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46,800</b>	<b>27015</b>	<b>19785.</b>		
TOTAL ALLOCATION as per donor	49,133.29				
Remaining for allocation from original account	2,333.29				
*Funds remaining from completed projects	2,764.00				
Total for further project consideration		5097			
2 <sup>nd</sup> Anonymous Donor		9389			
<b>TOTAL FOR ALLOCATION</b>		<b>14,486</b>			
<b>PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION</b>					
Farm-Gate Stand/Info Centre	5,000				FMT
Barn Storage System	2,500				?
Parking lot expansion	2,000				?PMT
Blinds for Upstairs room (to permit dark out)	5,000				PMT
Chipper	1,600				FMT
Upgrade Water System with new UV filters	1,200				PMT
New Parking area between Barn and Road	2,000				?PMT
<i>Total</i>	19,300				

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