

Commons Coordinating Council (CCC) Minutes – May 5, 2015 (LRP Team)

1. 20 Minute Discussion (Commons Field Guide – Trustees)

Commons Field Guide deferred to next meeting and incorporate with
“Orientation to the Commons”

This 20 minute period was devoted to the CPR report

2. Reports: Teams, Projects and Groups

NB There was an omission in the April notes which should have said that the CPR Team would draft an apology to Mary Aitken.

a. CPR (report attached)

Draft apology letter to Mary Aitken – accepted with edits.

Letter to be signed by co-facilitators on behalf of Council.

Thank you to CPR Team for the reflection and drafting of letter.

Some discussion points on letter & follow-up (to be discussed further as Council options):

- Creation of a new “green” team as suggested in the letter – does it duplicate TAGS? Further discussion about mandate & call out for team members for future agenda
- Share more information happening at Council through the Communique.
- Deepen the inquisitive culture at Council- come up with some key questions that would deepen & broaden discussion at Council after Team Reports.
- A Project Task Force might help to defray concerns about on-the-ground activities by providing more overview of projects

Next CPR Meeting May 13 at 10am.

b. Communication Team (report attached)

- Call out for more Team input re: Commons logo/tagline.
 - Website still in progress
 - Thanks to Steph for great communiqués
 - call out for submission of newspaper articles – can be more than just reporting team activity or upcoming event, how about “what moves us about the Commons, expertise on some subject, etc.
 - Team Mandates (update/revisions) 8 out of 15 received
- Waiting for Covenant, Trustees, Infrastructure, Learning Opportunities, Events, Kitchen Stewards, Labyrinth.

- Thanks to everyone for helping out at the Commons table at the Spring Fair.

c) Farm Management Team

- Spring Fair went well

- Mid week market opening postponed to May 19
- issue of temporary goat herd at the Commons referred to Sharing the Commons Team.

FMT next meeting: last Monday of the month at 9:30 am

d) Infrastructure Team

- As a result of some advertising at Spring Fair – some interest has emerged to re-activate the Team.

e) Trustees

Grant Writing Team

- Shared information re: RDN request to the Commons to apply for funds to buy children's playground equipment for Huxley Park. The funder can only fund a charitable organization not a government body.
- After discussion, it was agreed that George & John will meet with Howard Houle (RDN Director) and inform RDN that the Commons is not supportive of following through on this request.

Next meeting: Thurs May 7 at 2 pm

f) Muriel (invisible crisis document – will be attached when available)

Muriel's statement discussed how much Patrick and Judith Roux do for the Commons and the difficulties that arise when decisions have to be made promptly and only they have the background information to inform those decisions, e.g., the placement of the septic field.

g) Property Management Team

- Solar panel project and septic projects progressing.
- A second quote was pursued and received regarding the septic field and as a result, the septic field may be located so as to avoid taking down the trees near the labyrinth.

h) Trails & Green Spaces

- long term planning for planting native plant species which may have need for fencing to protect from deer – more to come

Next meeting: Sat workbees –virtual team

i) Share the Commons

- Victor Anthony gave away 15 bikes at the Spring Fair.
- Community Kitchen use in light of booking procedures and security of equipment (much of which is now being purchased in anticipation of opening).

- Need for alternative parking has been identified.

Next Meeting: May 20 at 10 am

j) Long Range Planning

Next Meeting Tues May 26 at 9:30 am

k) Covenant Team

- Heather Menzies is a keynote speaker at the International Association of the Commons (?) in Edmonton May 25 to 29. Was hoping that someone (female to share the room) from the Commons could join her if they can afford to go.

3. Follow-up from previous meetings

a. New facilitators needed:

1. June-Aug 2015 John Peirce and Linda St Clair
2. Sept – Nov 2015 Linda St Clair & Muriel Weins
3. Dec 15 – Feb 2016 Muriel Weins & ????
4. Mar – May 2016
5. June – August 2016

Deborah will provide John with some more names of interested community folks who were approached over a year ago.

b. More volunteers on Property Management Team

- John will assist with the water system'
- clarify operating procedures and maintenance needs to help potential new volunteers focus on what needs to be done.

c. New coordinator for Commons Booking System

- Gloria Filax needs a back-up
- call out through the communiqué

d. Follow up meeting with Gabriola Teachers re using Commons as a field site

- John, Kit & Susan met with the principle and most of the teachers.
- Many were not aware that PHC and the Commons are two separate organizations.
- They were encouraged to use the Commons at any time as a field site. If coordination with the Commons, Susan Yates (STC) will be the contact person for now, until STC appoints someone else.

4. New Business

a.. Security at the Commons – in face of damage/theft incidents

- after discussion, this issue will come back to the Council for further attention.

b. GERTIE – long term home on the Commons

Fay will provide an update at a future meeting on fall referendum details and how that may affect GERTIE's long term needs.

5. Next Meeting: June 5, 2015

Ideas for Upcoming 20 minute discussion:

June: Orientation to the Commons and Commons Field Guide (Trustees)

July: Signage/Communication (Communication/Signage Task Force)

Note takers for Council Meetings:

June: TAGS

July: Covenant

Aug: Learning Opportunities.

Attachments:

1. CRP Team Report
2. COM Report
3. Invisible Crisis

1. CPR team report May 5, 2015

I anticipate that we will present the draft apology to Mary from Council, and ask for Council's feedback and approval, right after the 20-minute discussion, and that the report as written below will be presented (by me this time) in the usual way as our Team report.

DRAFT APOLOGY

Dear Mary

The Commons Council would like to acknowledge the hurt and sense of betrayal felt by you when your concerns regarding protection of the treed pathway to the labyrinth were not respected in the decision made regarding the placement of the septic field.

We apologize for the breakdown in the decision making process which led to this rift.

This is a wake-up call for us to strengthen and respect our decision making process and in addition, to make a commitment to treat the land with conscious respect each time we create change. We anticipate that one of the positive outcomes which may result from this upset is to follow up on your suggestion, Mary, to create a new team, "Voices of the Land and Environment" (VOLE). This team would counteract our tendency as a culture to forget our ancient, deep relationship with the land and would be an obvious participant in any decision around landscape alteration.

CPR TEAM REPORT

(a) Apology

In accordance with the Council's request to the CPR team at our last meeting, we drafted this apology (as discussed earlier) mainly to cover the hurt experienced by those who discovered that a decision had been made around locating the septic field without consultation with the Labyrinth team, nor with those who had previously expressed concerns around tree-cutting. We much appreciate Council's recognition of the omission of good process, and its willingness to offer a sincere apology, as mentioned in the minutes of the April meeting.

(b) Thanks

The CPR team also wishes to express appreciation for the change of decision around the location of the septic field. We are delighted to hear that it may be possible after all to protect the pathway to the Labyrinth and the trees along it, while finding a different but suitable location for the septic field. We offer our sincere thanks to everyone who worked to make this possible.

(c) Decision-making

We do note that the welcome issuance of the apology does not complete all of the concerns that arose from this event. The minutes of Council's last meeting also mentioned that our April discussion raised two important questions:

1. With long term thinking in mind, how do we weave human activity into the natural landscape?

As mentioned in the apology letter, we have received a suggestion to create a new team, "Voices of the Land and Environment" (VOLE). This team would counteract our tendency as a culture to forget our ancient, deep relationship with the land and would be an obvious participant in any decision around landscape alteration. We would like feedback from Council on this suggestion.

2. What process do we put in place to prevent this from happening again?

We continue to be concerned that we failed collectively to follow our own intentions around ensuring the participation of all concerned voices in making such decisions. We would like to ensure that urgency, as in this case, or other future circumstances, do not derail good process. These future circumstances could possibly include ignorance of the agreed processes, impatience with the time and effort involved, or disagreement with the consensual model, as well as many pragmatic considerations.

One suggestion made was made to form a project task force for each project we undertake, to share the responsibility and tasks of project planning, so that these potentially urgent decisions can be made both expeditiously, and in accordance with our agreed decision-making process.

We also hold concerns that when process is not followed, abuse of power can arise, or (sometimes with equally devastating impacts) the *perception* of abuse of power. We may need to find additional ways to support our processes, to avoid these perils to our collective thriving. We note, as a member of CPR pointed out, that every group (or partnership) needs to adapt and refurbish its process repeatedly – it's never a finished product.

We would appreciate suggestions from Council about next steps in supporting good process – especially process for supporting good process.

2. COM Report to Council - May 5, 2015

1. Tagline & Logo: Just a reminder, please, for all teams and individuals to discuss whether or not it is timely and appropriate for the Commons to adopt a change from “A Place for Everyone” and the bucking goat, and to let COM know what you think. If you think it’s time for a change, please submit suggestions to COM (Jinny or the COM e.address on the website).

One good example from Deb Ferens will go to COV tomorrow and Trustees on Thursday this week.

2. Website: Sorry, no progress in corrections to current site and the change the site to WordPress with its new look, etc. Jinny would like to get changes in prior to going away in mid-May and then she can start learning WordPress in June when she returns.

3. Promotion of the Commons: Great Communiqués going out (thanks Stef!) and also thanks to all for recent articles in the *Sounder*. Correction to last Council notes: we would like to collect articles for a regular, 250-word “Commons Corner” in the *Sounder*: we would like articles on any topic that arises from expertise of your team members, NOT simply about activities, eg, How-to’s, observations, excitements, interesting factoids, etc. Think of this as our gifts to the Gabriola Community.

4. Team mandates: Jinny has received 8 of a possible 15. Thanks for those submitted! Missing ones are likely missing for a reason, so checking on: Coordinating Council, Covenant, Trustees, Infrastructure, Learning Opportunities, Events, Community Kitchen, Labyrinth.

5. COM had a major role in “humaning” the Commons table at the Spring Fair – thanks everyone who helped out!

6. Gertie on the Commons: Discussed by e.mail; more info obtained from Gertie Team (Fay and Judith).

7. Good process for intra-Commons communication: TBA

8. COM role in getting Council Notes out: Rebecca has come up with a plan:

Appendix I to Facilitator Doc: Council Notes Process

- Note taker sends notes to one of the facilitators
- Facilitators add any attachments, missing info, etc and makes any needed corrections
- Facilitator sends to Hans for the website
- A designated COM team member will send a reminder to the Council Reps email list once the Notes are on the website, and lets Facilitators know when the Notes appear on the website

Note: Proposed that we no longer use the gabriolacommonscouncil@gmail account to

send out the Notes (saves each new person learning the password and process for blind-copying the whole list). Proposed that a "council@gabriolacommons.ca" address be set up to automatically go to a COM team member to vet enquiries, corrections to Notes, etc.

3. Invisible crisis

When a problem exists but is "solved" by one or two people on behalf of the rest of a group, the group usually sits back and lets them do it until they get tired, or fed up, or leave. Then the problem hidden under the heroic effort of those few people becomes visible, but no one is prepared or able to deal with the missing and necessary functioning so the organization then goes into crisis.

It would be wise, under such circumstances, to acknowledge the huge efforts of those few, and to begin to plan for when they have to, or want to, stop working so hard. What will then have to change, in the system, to make it functional? Would it not be a good idea to start those changes, now?

The "overfunctioning" of a couple of individuals is not the problem. It is the symptom. They have had the energy and the time and the dedication to fill in a lot of "holes" in the practical functioning of the Commons, and their replacements may not be as dedicated or as essentially good hearted as they, and may see their role as executive rather than as part of the whole. So. What now?

Perhaps, as well as to Mary, we owe Patrick and Judith an apology, for taking them for granted and not looking straight at the problem they have been inadvertently solving for the Commons.