

Commons Council Notes

June 6, 2017

Present: Facilitators: Sharon Pattison, John Peirce

Kit Santos, Bob Andrew, Muriel Wiens, Jinny Hayes, Deb Ferens, Judith Roux, Patrick Roux, Fay Weller, Charles Silva, David Lightly(Recorder)

Note. A facilitator still needed for July to Dec. Deb Ferens will fill in for July. John needs a replacement for August because of family commitments.

Notes for July 6 to be taken by Special Events

Upcoming 20 minute discussion topics:

July Smoking (Linda St Clair?)

Aug Storage at the Commons (Judith R?)

- What process do we put in place to invite and respect all input and at the same time move from the community input stage of planning to the decision-making of action?

- Can the Commons be the long-term home of GERTIE?

20 min Discussion Security/ Key situation.

Facilitated by Jinny Hayes

Security Questions:

- 1) How secure does the Commons need to be? Tension between Security and the open nature of the Commons.
 - a) Parts need higher security
 - b) Community Kitchen is a problem, particularly washroom. Used by many people. Could affect food safety and security of kitchen gear. Need a public washroom not attached to kitchen?
 - c) Break-in at main house occurred – appeared to be an isolated incident.
 - d) Judith – over last eleven years there has been very little theft or vandalism.
- 2) If security is an issue, what level and how will it be achieved?
 - a) Commons archives are important – should be protected.
 - b) Keys need to be rationalized. Label those matching known locks. How to deal with unknowns? Throw in box or throw out. Coded entries have reduced need for keys. Locks in use need maintenance (lubricate)
- 3) Who will be responsible? Open question.

Big question is how secure does the commons need to be? Rough consensus seems to be that it is about right.

Bigger question is about security of people on the commons. People have felt insecure in the past. Problems in past with threatening behavior. More people around reduces risk. Needs further work. This is tied into the overall stewardship of the commons.

Hedge

Recap of the two 20 min “six hats” discussion at council. Useful, but did not lead to consensus. Louise led an initiative to focus on the issue at a workshop of interested parties. Louise promoted this at the spring fair – worked well.

Summary of Hedge Workshop

Discussion About the Future of the Gabriola Commons Hedge

May 13, 2017 1-3 pm

Attending (15):

Maggie Aldous, Louise Amuir Tom Archdekin, David Arnell, Pat Durrett, Sheila Haniszewska Freddy Harris, Jinny Hayes, John la Marquand, Dave Lightly, Catherine Robertson, Judith Roux, Patrick Roux, Kit Szanto, Jen Turner

Process: Edward de Bono’s Six Hats

1. FACTS

planted 1980-ish. needs to be maintained. time consuming, labour intensive, less maintenance than NOT doing hedge, unsafe for women, can cut in half and it'll be fine, grows 1 foot a year, *pseudo picata* (hybrid of Western Red Cedar), if cut in half will grow back in a few years, people never prune it tight enough -needs to be almost all the way back, keeps noise, dust, exhaust out, more usable space, refuge for birds (is there a survey?), landmark, leaving it to go wild is a dead end, it'll fall apart in a good snowfall and break, fall is the best time to cut in this climate, lifespan 100 years, if we paid someone budget 40 hours for pruning and another 20 for cleanup, too tall for volunteers to be on ladders, 8' would be optimal and ok to cut it back to, complaints that vision is obstructed turning on to North Road, if any of the trees are removed, it will leave an ugly scar, circles and shapes will leave an ugly scar, if we do cut the sides cut on the eastside so it grows back faster, doesn't need soil amendment but does like water, was much higher 10 years ago, how does Rollo like it?

2. FOR

landmark, place for birds, noise, dust, exhaust filtration, keeps kids corralled, defines space, feel protected inside hedge, magic garden, aesthetics, privacy for clients of food bank, BEAUTIFUL hedge, will draw people here, don't have to worry too much about what's behind -hides a multitude of sins, comforting, tradition, welcome, warmth, sound barrier both ways, temperature regulation, microclimate/shade, sense of sanctuary, conservation, if gone more work on lawn, Baronial, without the hedge suburban sterile mall-like.

3. AGAINST

difficult for Doug to mow lawn, maintenance, time consuming, can't figure out where the commons is, intimidating, RCMP suggested we remove it for ease of patrolling, some people won't go behind the hedge, differentiation difficult between PHC and Commons, in the dark it's scary for new people, sense of either insider/outsider, Baronial, visibility getting on to N. Rd, need equipment, commitment, volunteers, job for an expert? whereas lawn might be ok for regular volunteers, hedge took 8 or 9 volunteers x 7 days + 40 hours of John la M, barrier to volunteers, we're getting older, cost, fundraising, what's in there?

4. FEELINGS

LOVE IT!

Cutting it is BAD! and indefensible! venerable, magnificent, heirloom, heritage, hi-maintenance love affair (it's complicated), scary, intimidating, unwelcoming, how do you get "in?", isolates between parking lot and house, daunting.

5. BEING CREATIVE

have a budget and get some younger arborists involved, lower it considerably on kitchen side, crenellated at various points, Maggie making a donation, Tom good to help (professionally \$40 per hour), David A offers to help (especially if he can chain himself to some part of the hedge in protest), Susan Y also offered to help to lower it, those that love it can help pay to maintain it. VFM fund in the future?, lawn underused, road access via Rollo road right of way? get school kids involved with stories, want to be able to see around, wider entrances, leave it 8-10' along road and lower everywhere else, drive through drive way and elevator for accessibility, safety at N. Rd, if removing some of the cedar we could replace with flowering shrubs in some of the scarred areas, FEDGE (food hedge) filling in scars at removal points will 2 allotment garden-style demonstration project, arch or gap in the middle (if practical), entrances for pedestrians rather than just drivers, consider relationships with Rollo and school and make openings to facilitate closer relationship, also consider relationship with PHC and deliveries, hedge fund happy to accept donations of money and volunteer labour, it's a design problem -needs to be beautiful and welcoming, suggest engaging a hedge designer.

6. PROCESS & CONSENSUS

it should be lower in many places

; bringing it down to about 8 ft is about right

we need a hedge fund (so far collected \$107)

we need a design for the hedge (perhaps funded by the hedge fund?)

openings should be wider and more numerous

we want it to look more welcoming

Gabriola Sounder article

To Hedge or Not, That was the Question

Submitted by Louise Amuir for the Gabriola Commons

Fifteen people gathered at the Commons on Saturday May 13 to consider the future of the landmark Commons Hedge. A "6-hat exercise" was used to work through the facts and issues and come to a decision. The idea of the 6 hats process is that every participant "wears" each of the hats in sequence so that a topic is covered thoroughly, systematically and without rancour. Here is just a taste of our 2 hours together:

We started with **The Facts**, helped in large part by John la Marquand who taught a volunteer crew to brave the ladders two years ago. It is hybrid of western red cedar, and was planted in about 1980. It is currently 14' high and would still flourish if lowered to 8'. Left untrimmed, it will "fall apart" in a couple of years.

Our next "hat" was **For the Hedge**: A Gabriola attraction, it's beautiful, keeps dust and noise down, is home for birds, creates a feeling of sanctuary. It may be less work to maintain the hedge than the space immediately behind it.

Against the Hedge: This "hat" revealed that the hedge is intimidating to newcomers, unwelcoming, and has a few safety issues, such as driver visibility entering North Road from the Commons.

Feelings About the Hedge: These ranged from love and honour, through to fear and anger.

Many **Creative/Brainstorming** ideas were generated, such as widening existing or opening new entrances, taking out some parts of the hedge, or turning it into a Fedge (food hedge). If sections were removed, insertions could be attractively built or flowering bushes used. We could start a "hedge fund" to cover paid maintenance and/or employ an expert to design the ideal modifications, and possibly create a drive-through for improved handicapped and delivery access.

Recommendations: All agreed that we need to make the Commons more welcoming, and that openings should be wider and more numerous. Also: lower the hedge to about 8 feet, start a Hedge Fund, commission a design for the hedge (funded by this Fund), and meanwhile, have a big Fall work-bee specifically for hedge maintenance.

There is already \$107 in the Hedge Fund! if you are passionate about this hedge, contributions can be made at <http://www.gabriolacommons.ca/donations.html>

It was a successful, productive discussion among folks with wide-ranging views. Thanks to everyone who gave time and thought to reach amical decisions.

For a complete transcription of the 6 Hat Process, please see the Home Page at <http://www.gabriolacommons.ca/>

Council Discussion of hedge

1. Circulate to teams, asking for feedback on results of the process so far.
2. The question of design was discussed. Ask Cameron for input? Ask for input from teams.
3. Good progress so far but needs specific design ideas.

Teams – please discuss and send any specific ideas to Louise Amuir.

Team Reports

TAGS

Kit - team rises and falls – down now but may rise again.

Trustees

Faye - All docs now in drop box – new people can access.

Mortgage payments now going to the right place.

Getting ready for AGM

Need to change bylaws to meet requirements of Societies Act.-membership? – take non-alterable clauses in constitution and put in bylaws.

Farm Team

Judith - Sun is good. New people are coming to help. Mid-week market has started.

Sharing The Commons Team

Outdoor events are expanding. Community is learning about the Commons. Canada day coming.

Tool library discussions taking place – receipt for donations are an issue. Unclear how the tool library and the commons will interact. This will be clarified as the situation resolves itself.

Pottery area is expanding.

Bookings needs a back-up for Gloria. Will require some training. Booking provide income for the commons.

Community (particularly the Lions) is asking for storage space.

Special Events

Spring fair was a success- has expanded into a major event.

Need discussion on issues arising from events.

- Dealing with garbage
- Wear and tear on equipment
- Rent

Will discuss at Sept meeting.

Property Management

Patrick R. - No meetings recently. Riding mover is dead – needs replacement.

Finance

Deb described how meeting work. First part is a hands-on session – bookkeeping- counting money – reconcile bookings.

Gathering info to tighten up bookings.

Fiscal year end is going to accounting. Any leftover funds may be available to share with others.

Tool Library came to team. Still working out how they will operate. Commons team? Separate society? Issue of Commons giving tax receipts for donations. This can only happen if donated items are owned by Commons Foundation.

Communications team

Jinny - Had good progress on logo. Have good designs – more to come.

Website being worked on.

Souder articles in works

Budget approved

Some sign in use. Entrance sign to come.

Community Kitchen Team

Sharon - Spring fair created interest in kitchen.

Open house June 19th – drop-in tour. Again 7-9 pm on the 20th.

Designing 3 workshops for the fall.

- Canning
- Fermenting
- Harvesting

Muriel suggests kitchen could be used to serve breakfast for hungry school children. School has a kitchen but it was never able to pass inspection with VIHA.

Kitchen team has many ideas for the kitchen.

Covenant Team

Deb - Moving on draft covenant. About to be sent to lawyer. Re-draft after.

Following will be attached to the covenant

- Baseline mapping report
- Stewardship plan

A draft will be ready to send to the lawyer soon.

New business

Deb suggests that council develop a closing procedure for the meetings. This could involve a recap of what happened or how people feel about what happened,