

# Gabriola Commons Council

## Notes from July 4, 2017

**Present:** George Szanto, Kit Szanto, Muriel Wiens, Sheila Huston, David, Szanto, Jinny Hayes, Judith Roux, David Lightly, Bob Andrew, Linda St. Clair, Patrick Roux, Louise Amuir, Heather Menzies, Alison Fitzgerald, Kim Kasasian, Brenda Fowler

Facilitators: Deb Ferens, John Peirce

### A. 20 Minute Discussion: **STORAGE** (intro: Judith)

Intention of discussion: provide information to permit review by teams and return with comments

1. **Review the specific zoning** for the Gabriola Commons Comprehensive Development Zone which permits the use of administration and storage space by community non-profits that support activities on the Commons. (example: the Gabriola Lions whose storage of chairs, tables etc. (currently in the SW corner of the Goat Barn) clearly supports Commons activities, and those of other community groups. (Note the eventual development of the Goat Barn will preclude the Lions' use of the space.)

The total area permitted in zoning for storage and administration is	4,300 sq.ft.
Total area currently engaged + future offices in Timber Frame)	2,346 sq.ft.

(Note that Equipment Storage has been included, but is an "agricultural", not "accessory" use.)

Note: Unique setback for the Commons along North Road: 14 feet  
Islands Trust requirement for screening of storage units

### 2. **Consider community need** for storage:

- Gabriola Lions (300 sq.ft.), Tool Library (100 sq.ft.) and GaLTT have applied to Sharing the Commons Team for storage. (GaLTT no longer needs the space)
- Gabriola Arts Council may request space for risers (for events on the Commons)
- GERTIE has requested space for admin. in Timber Frame (included in above calculation)

Note: the Lions have indicated a willingness to cover the cost of the storage unit.

### 3. **Nature of storage units**

- Shipping containers – waterproof including integral floor), lockable, minimal installation needs, very low cost. Need to screen from view, paint into invisibility
- Wood frame sheds - higher cost. Design would need to be approved.

### 4. **Possible locations** (consider need to access by truck, need for screening and electrical connection)

- Access from **main parking lot** close to North Road:
  - a) to east side** – cut through hedge into lawn area (include design of hedge and pedestrian entrance in this option) Hedge screens unit from street. Landscaping and painting would screen from lawn area)
  - b) to west side** – carve out "hidden" space within dense grove of D. firs along North Road.
- Access from **West driveway:** To west side, near North Road. Screening needed.

## **B. AGES donation for maintenance of House**

AGES has donated to the Commons a source of revenue to go toward paying down the mortgage, including \$297 / month for the maintenance of the house, with the proviso that “someone could be paid” to ensure that the house be kept immaculate.

The question: How to recognize the wishes of the donor and still conform with the Commons “volunteer culture” (i.e. keeping in the spirit of collective stewardship)

Discussion ensued:

- Which team should oversee this requirement?
- Property Management Team seems a logical choice
- Concern that the PMT budget could be easily exhausted on materials for maintenance.
- *Discussion needs to happen on “Volunteers vs Paid workers”*
- Perhaps covering the costs of maintenance equipment etc. could be appropriately covered with this fund.
- Keeping the house clean is of utmost importance – floors, windows and bathrooms.
- Note that our facilities are being used well (i.e. and therefore do get dirty)
- *Discussion needed on earmarking donated funds for specific purposes*
- There is a clear policy in the Field Guide to the Commons on “Volunteer vs paid work”. This is still active as a principle and would need to be discussed if we change it.
- This could unravel a lot of things. Why would some continue to work when others are paid? On the other hand, should we burn out volunteers on jobs which are not rewarding?
- Note that we do pay people for work which requires a certified worker.
- How can we accept the gift without complying with the conditions?
- Check the wording in the donor’s letter. Does it say “**could** be paid if necessary”? Clarity needed.
- “a labourer is worthy of his hire”
- Can we handle the casual cleaning we do now, but pay for deep-cleaning?
- Photo circulated of the Glass Guy who insisted on volunteering to clean all the windows in the house.
- The Kitchen Stewards are maintaining the level of cleanliness required by strict overview of cleanup by users (and by periodic deep cleaning sessions.)
- We need to ask that those renting space in the house to actually grab a broom and sweep.
- Does PMT want to take on this discussion (on paid/volunteer work)?
- Perhaps divide PMT in two groups – one for maintenance of the main house and another for the maintenance of the outside areas.
- Perhaps follow policy and use funds as required, including contracting out if needed.) Heather would help rewrite the policy.
- We need to recruit more people with energy and ideas.

ACTIONS:

1. Heather and Jinny will be a task force of 2 to review the volunteer policy in light of this discussion.
2. PMT will undertake to try to solve the problem with volunteers. This will require more help on PMT itself as well as people to do the work.

## **C. Review of the Hedge discussion (Louise and Dave L.) How to move this further?**

Recap by Louise of consensus agreement at special meeting (see website):

- Hedge could be reduced to an average of 8'
- Openings need to be wider
- Design needed.
- "Hedge Fund" to be created – for donations of money (\$107 in pot) and pledges of time
- Laura Jean and Cameron have signalled their willingness to assist with a design plan

This has been shared with teams. Feedback should be assessed from team reports.

Action: Louise, David and Patrick agree to form task force on the hedge to come up with a design and plan to bring back to Council for approval.

#### **D. Team Reports**

- **PHC (Brenda)** Community Food Centre Canada (a national movement focused on food) provides resources and a proven approach to partner organizations across Canada to create Community Food Centres that bring people together to grow, cook, share, and advocate for good food. Access website for info.
- **Process Team** (formerly "Conflict Prevention and Resolution") Muriel: team discussed the question: "What use is the Commons to the community?" and raised need in community for low income housing (look again at eco-village location on the Commons), affordable child care and communal meals.  
Need for volunteers to feel appreciated; need to avoid feeling of censorship.
- **Trails and Green Spaces:** (Kit) The invasive shrub, Daphne laureola, continues to offer satisfying ways of participating in the Commons. Ask for Kit at the Saturday morning workbees.
- **Farm Management Team** (Judith) FMT now meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 9:30
  - Active fundraising last year raised nearly \$1,300, bringing the restricted funds total to \$2,672 as of Mar. 31/17. These funds more than cover FMT costs!
  - Some of the fundraising events: Sales at the Spring and Fall Fairs, Mid-week "farm gate" sales, Kitchen concessions (including Christmas Craft Fair), sale of Commons Cookbooks, donations from "Tour de Coop" (netted \$570), workshops (and sales) in sauerkraut making and apple pie making; apple juicing.
  - Water: Signs will be posted advising gardeners to limit water usage and mulch well. With the current drought lengthening restrictions on watering may need to be applied again this year.
  - Field trip is planned to Salt Spring Island on Monday July 17 to Dan Jason's seed depot, Thimblefarm spices, Olive Farm for advice on 4 recently purchased trees.
  - **FMT Report back on Council issues:**
    1. Hedge: Agreement with consensus. We need new blood to be attracted to hedge task force. Promote Hedge Fund at the Saturday Market (where Trustees are taking turns promoting the Commons)
    - 2, Paid work? This would be a slippery slope on the Commons. Suggestion that we each ask someone to participate.

3. Smoking on the Commons: One clear “no”/risk of fire/ providing ash cans is an open invitation to smoke/ this is not ours to enforce/ this is a co-dependency issue/PHC could provide designated smoking area out of sight, with no fire hazard.
4. Security: are we responsible for the behaviour of others? Act positively to create an overall sense of community well-being without the role of “enforcers” Clear guidelines could be posted.
5. Storage discussion: don’t make it too visible (i.e. not in front lawn)/ who will take care of landscaping?/maybe cob or hemp brick screening/one clear “I hate containers”/location at west side of west driveway best of the alternatives discussed/ let the Lions work on beautifying the containers.

- **Property Management Team** (Bob) New ride-on mower was much needed. Other maintenance costs will be on hold till fund-raising rebuilds coffers. Suggestion: charge for rides on mower! (joke)  
Pond level is still OK, but monitoring is happening. Need to continue long range planning on water system.
- **Sharing the Commons** (Judith) Agreement with consensus on hedge  
Discussion on storage was shaped by discussion at STC team.  
Outdoor events on the Council – discussion still needed on charging for use of space (toilet, parking, water etc.) Next event: Rainforest Circus Camp coming to Gabriola Commons: July 17 to 21<sup>st</sup> – from 10 to 4 .
- **Communication Team** (Jinny) Agreement with consensus on hedge.  
Work on website progressing thanks to David Szanto (also involved in logo design)  
Derek will publish articles on Commons if we give him 10 articles in advance. (Nancy is now coordinator of articles for the Sounder)
- **Finance Team** (Deb) Agreement with consensus on hedge but asked that we cover costs.  
Reconciliation of rental accounting is still in progress. A new form has been devised to reflect new policy.
- **Special Events Team** (Judith) **Garage Sale on July 8!** Help always welcome.  
Some funds raised at different events are allocated to help teams having no way to fundraise, while keeping \$1,500 in the restricted fund. All agreed to support decisions of Finance Team on re;ocation of the “surplus” of Special Events Team to other teams. The amounts re-allocated are \$2000 for Property, \$1000 for Community Kitchen and \$1000 fpr Communications.

Planning for the Fall Fair is underway. Interested? Contact Stef Marrie, Rebecca Furnell or Judith Roux

- **Covenant Team** (Deb) The Team is appreciating the presence of Environmental lawyer Tim Leadem at the table to read through the draft Covenant and advise on possibilities. This is getting very exciting!

Next Council: Tuesday, August 1 at 7 pm

Notes by Property Management Team

20 Minute Discussion – Smoking at the Commons (Linda St. Clair)