Commons Council Notes
June 4, 2019

Pullout of items needing to be addressed by teams:
1. Fundraising for reservoir. How can each Team help?
2. Question re library: Do we value a catalogued library at the Commons?
3. Infoboards on Commons (See attachment)

Present: Bob Andrew, Christina Baerg, Lynn Bowerman, Cam Dodds, Deb Ferens, Brenda Fowler, Jinny Hayes, Kim Kasasian, Laura-Jean Kelly, Patsy Ludwick, Marshall Mangan, Mitch Miyagawa, Melissa Nobels, Laura O'Brien, Judith Roux, Patrick Roux, Maya Ruggles, Linda St.Clair, Don Smardon, Terry Stonehouse, K.Louise Vincent, Stuart Wulff

Facilitators: Louise Amuir and Dave Lightly
Note taker: Sharing the Commons Team

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. Dave expressed the need to make this acknowledgement meaningful. K.Louise referred to the recent federal recognition that First Nations women have been victims of genocide. She also observed that the First Nations' practice of stewardship of the land and culture is one the Commons is patterned on.

The twenty-minutes discussion: WATER.
(Bob, Linda, Patrick, Judith)

1. Brief outline of <u>sources and uses of water</u> on the Commons:

- **Well** - provides Farmhouse and Commons Kitchen with drinking water (regularly tested) and also extends to irrigation of Kitchen Garden. (Note that the wellhead (just north of woodwork shop is vulnerable in parking lot.)
  The well has never run out, but a well-watcher will be installed to monitor it and determine the recovery rate.
- **Pond** - dug by previous owner "to provide for the critters" (wild flora and fauna)
  Initial capacity estimated at 800,000 gallons. The Commons holds the water licence for the pond.
  This provides "irrigation" quality water to the North and South Allotment gardens , Little Field and Orchard as well as to the landscaping around the Farmhouse. A measuring stake was installed in 2005 and is occasionally replaced when removed by beaver.

Note: as the water from the pond heats up there is a growth of algae which may require irrigated vegetables to be rinsed before eating.

2. Climate change has brought about increasingly long droughts which threaten to lower the level of the pond beyond a sustainable limit because of evaporation and irrigation needs. Over the past few years it has been necessary to restrict access to water to avoid reaching this limit, but this usually happens in September, when crops are still ripening. There is no doubt about the choice we have before us: To relieve the pond we must capture and store the winter rainfall in a reservoir large enough to answer the need.

3. The estimated cost for a 25,000 gallon concrete reservoir is $32,000. (See site plan, sections and plans and description of the project)
Grants have been written, applying for funding:
- one was approved (from the Village Food Market for $5,000)
- Funding from the Community Works fund was turned down (already dedicated to the Village Trail
- Funding from the Nanaimo Foundation will only be decided in late August.

4. It was agreed that the need to act on this project is critical, and requires major fundraising.
Comments: - Concern about water is also restricting event planning and would definitely be supported by Gabriolans
- Climate change is a reality and there is growing public awareness of the need for water.
- Suggestion to dig the pond wider (with a drag line), but legal difficulties could arise from this with the RAR restrictions around waterways.
- Observation: Dan Foley (Summer Rain) is restricting his fillups of cisterns to water for drinking.
Linda summed up: Let's not nickel and dime this project. We need the teams to support it.

Reports from Commons teams:

- ***Communication Team***

- New process to ensure Council Notes get sent out to all:
Once Council Notes are checked by facilitators for accuracy Jinny will send out to all attending Council (including all Team contact persons)

- Stef will continue to take on the Commons Communique. (Huge sigh of relief!)
- Meeting regarding logo August 6 at 5 pm (i.e. just before Council)

- ***Gabriola Commons Foundation Trustees***

Three Memoranda of Understanding are being drawn up with the Commons Trustees (Allie, Deb):

- Cultivate (Mitch Miyagawa, Gabriola Arts Council)
- Farm to Table Feast (Lynn Bowerman)
- Agi Coop Midweek Market (Laura Jean, Katie, Lisa, Margo)

Bob: Concerned about extended building area in lease with PHC. There are zoning restrictions in the Commons bylaws which limit area to be used as "accessory food depot" to 2150 sq.ft. PHC is already near 1800 sq.ft.

FInance Team Next meeting Monday June 17 at 12:30
-The financial documents are going to the accountant for a final year-end (Mar. 31) report. An anticipated surplus should be able to give seed money to teams. (See end of report)
- Meetings with reps from different teams, looking at ensuring an alignment with different users on rental agreements, fees and orientation

- ***Property Management Team.*** Next meeting June 13 at 4:30. House Stewards will meet this Saturday at 9:30

-Bob expressed concern about the impact of wide-scale use of the land. How to establish the "carrying capacity" of the Commons? This could inform decision making on different activities on the land. Review after this summer/fall.

-Policies are being suggested, such as "No more weddings on the Commons", or "no new bookings for this summer". To be discussed.

-Hedge: Many thanks to Dave Lightly and Laura Jean and Cameron for their work cleaning up after the hedge project. Thanks to Kim for taking on the watering required for newly planted shrubs/trees.

- Dave suggested we plant more to cover the "scar" where firs were removed, exposing portions of the hedge. $500 is still available on the budget to move rocks etc.

- ***Farm Team*** Next meeting June 24 at 9:30

A special meeting was held on May 7 to consider the proposal drafted by the South Garden Stewards to deal with theft and vandalism in the allotment gardens. The solution suggested by the RCMP was the installation of a motion-activated camera at the south entrance gate to the Gardens to be checked only when warranted to identify anyone committing acts of vandalism or theft of produce.

It was clearly recognized by all at the Farm Team table that the morale and sense of safety of the gardeners were impacted by the ongoing climate and that much time and thought had been given by the South Garden Stewards to resolve the issue. Those who could not make the meeting expressed reluctant agreement to the proposal. Consequently it was agreed that a motion-activated trail-type camera (i.e. not for surveillance) could be installed at the South Garden gate with the understanding that it only be checked when warranted by an incident and then only by Garden stewards or Farm Team members. Furthermore it is to be considered temporary, for a trial period only, for this 2019 gardening season.

- ***Covenant Team.*** Next formal meeting August 14

With the main body of the Covenant in a final draft state, the Covenant Team is working on the Stewardship Plan, teasing out the components which will permit a Covenant Holder to undertake the monitoring of the complex mix of Agricultural, Environmental and Multi-purpose uses of the Commons. We will be working on this throughout the summer, getting input from the different teams, and hope for a release of the entire document in the Fall. The search for a Covenant Holder is ongoing, with The Land Conservancy looking like a good fit.

- ***Sharing the Commons Team.*** Next meeting June 19 at 10 am

A brief discussion on "Commons Systems" with Maya: Review of "outdoor uses" of the Commons should also include need for tents, electrical extensions, and porta potties. Note the need for composting toilets near the Timber Frame.
The SCT worked with Joelle Anthony on planting a Ginkgo tree in honour of Victor, with the Ken Capon Marching Band in full swing and a great community gathering. The rain stopped precisely on time for the outdoor event to take place well.

- ***Learning Opportunities Team*** (Maya)

A revised mandate for the LOT has been drafted dated May 18, 2019:

To bring visibility to the Commons movement by creating opportunities for engaging and reconnecting the community in learning about aspects of the Commons philosophy, vision, processes, practices, goals and challenges.

See LOT website for objectives and strategy.

Reports from Community groups:

- ***2nd Annual Cultivate! on the Commons:*** Labour Day weekend Aug. 31 to Sept.2 *(*Liaison Team: Maya Ruggles and Mitch Miyagawa)

Theatre, Music, Arts Festival for all generations against a backdrop of community partnership and great energy!
Appreciations were expressed by many: by Mitch to K.Louise for last year's guidance and to Alllie and Maya for a great start this year; by Deb to Kim for her huge transformation of the farm house - particularly appreciated in view of the community presence.

Next steps: finalizing the extensive Memorandum of Understanding between GCF and GAC (shared at Council), including details about use of space from August 26 to Sept. 2 (see "Cultivate Gabriola" website for more details. Stay tuned!

- ***4th Annual Farm to Table Feast (***Lynn Bowerman) September 7 (Prep begins Sept. 3)

Lynn described the scope of the 2019 Farm to Table Feast: offering dinners for 400 people (i.e. 260 adults, 25 kids, 40 farmers and 75 volunteers) plus 150 concert tickets. Be prepared for delicious food and amazing music!
Recap: all produce will come from local farmers; the Commons Kitchen is action centre! Advance sales start on July 1. (Note: last year all tickets were sold on the same day!)

The FTTF is in the process of becoming an official entity (i.e. an incorporated society). Until they do, they require a registered society to sponsor them by obtaining a liquor licence on their behalf, with the opportunity to share in the revenue. Last year the Skate Park Society acted in this capacity, with a substantial donation made to their fund-raising campaign. This year Lynn has proposed that the Gabriola Commons Foundation could take on this role, with a potential of $5 to 6,000 being donated to the Reservoir Project. Deb suggested that the Commons Trustees consider this opportunity. There was agreement by consensus at Council to take this on. Bob will present proposal to Trustees.

- ***Agi Co-op Midweek Evening Market* -** new venture by the Gabriola Agricultural Co-op at the Commons (Laura Jean Kelly, Katie Massy, Lisa Butler, Margo Anfossie)

A draft MoU is in preparation for the new version of the Midweek Market on the Commons, near the Timber Frame, operated by the Agricultural Co-op and managed by a coordinator (to be named). An evening market (from 4 to 7 pm) it is intended to run from Wednesday June 26 to October 12). This will provide marketgoers with a means of buying produce after work in a festive ambiance with music and food prepared in the Commons Kitchen. It is anticipated that 30 vendors will participate: farmers and crafters, with all produce or products originating on Gabriola. They will supply their own tents and tables. Information will be sent out to vendors.

Comments:

- It will be great to have the Wednesday market here. It's a good fit.
- Need for composting toilets becomes urgent.

Sun-daze

Each summer, for the last 3 or 4 years a group of families with school age children have organized a free once-a-month Sunday picnic/party with music and nibblies and space to play on the Commons near the Timber Frame. Each time a sign is posted at the West entry to the Commons, inviting all and sundry to take part.

This time when Laura O'Brien contacted Commons Bookings to reserve the outdoor space around the Timber Frame for "Sun-daze". (i.e. on the fourth Sunday afternoon of each month) she was informed about a policy to refuse new events happening on the outdoor space at the Commons. The policy had been created by the Property Management Team with the intention of caring for the "carrying capacity" of the land.

As Laura pointed out, this was a regular event, not new, and has a proven history of no impact, no garbage left, no need for Commons water. There have been no complaints about it.

Comments: Why not say "yes?

If no or little impact why refuse it? Concern was expressed about the drafting of this policy without broader notice. Apparently it had also been decided not to hold any weddings on the Commons in the future.

Bob is taking the request for "Sun-daze" back to the PMT with the recommendation that it be allowed (particularly since it is not new!). Those present at Council were asked to weigh in. There was agreement with one abstention.

- ***Welcome Wagon***

Laura O'Brien is the new Welcome Wagon lady for Gabriola and invites Commons participation (plus Commons brochures)

- ***Temple Arts at the Yurt.*** Melissa Nobels

An "Artist Residency" at the Yurt through Poetry Gabriola. Melissa described several of the activities happening in the Yurt (such as the Women's Moon Circle ,with music and dancing.) The Temple is not a religious organization, but a creative space.

The Temple Arts group will be coming to a Sharing the Commons Team meeting to clarify this before an event planned for December 31. (Note that SCT meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 10 am.)

K.Louise mentioned an earlier agreement with Poetry Gabriola that the Yurt only be used for poetry events. Perhaps this needs to be clarified when the new Memorandum of Understanding is drafted with Poetry Gabriola.

- ***PHC***

Brenda reported on several successful applications by PHC for funding for community programs. In the Commons Kitchen the Hot Lunch program for the school will run until school year end. Another program has begun teaching cooking skills to young teenagers. The Step up Step Out program working with GERTIE is much appreciated by older islanders often feeling home-bound.

- ***Tool Library***

Patsy Ludwick has requested to be part of the conversations with Cultivate.

The response at Council to the callout for support of the Reservoir Project was gratifying:

- $500 (10% of the fees generated from the community allotment gardens) has already been reserved for "irrigation". The South Gardeners recently voted to allocate an additional $300 to this fund.
- Deb announced that the Commons Trustees are considering the allocation to the reservoir project of a significant portion of the funds marked as surplus, after the review of year end accounting. She pointed out that this would encourage the Nanaimo Foundation to match the sum with their funding.
- Lynn Bowerman said that this summer's "Field to Table Feast" would be sponsoring the Commons, with the possibility of a donation of $5,000 to $6,000 after expenses.
- The Farm Team has a healthy budget in its restricted funds and at the next meeting June 24 will discuss allocating funds toward the reservoir.

Next Council: Tuesday, July 2 at 7 pm. 20 minute Discussion: Long Range Planning

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Commons Communication Team

Report for Coordinating Council, 04 June 2019

No in-person meetings, doing business by e.mail.
Next mtg: TBA

1. Website: No progress this month; no feedback either.

2. Logo: Brainstorming session postponed to5.00 pm Tuesday August 6, ie, prior to the next Council meeting, open to the community; refreshments to be served. Background: To possible give a different direction to logo design, it was suggested at the December Council that Rose Boulton's Grade 2 & 3 students' drawings be used as brainstorming triggers. We also have in hand an unsolicited image by Anne Havard and the 3 images from Tim Gambrill, and the promise of some work from Carol Weaver.

3. Sounder articles: monthly submissions continue; please get any suggestions and submissions to Nancy Heatherington Peirce: nhpeirce@gmail.com

4. Commons Tours may continue monthly; need to get the word out and need people to do them. Also at Cultivate. Take about a half-hour, depending on questions, etc.

5. Communiqué: Thankfully, Stef has agreed to continue doing this, but we do need someone to serve as "understudy" and backup for this and its associated MailChimp list, our only real "membership list". A great opportunity to learn new skills that can be used at home. Please let Stef Marrie smarrie745@gmail.com or Jinny communications@gabriolacommons.ca know if you can do this – or nominate someone.

6. Library: Did any reps talk with their teams about whether or not the Commons should have a library? House stewards are trying out various furniture arrangements in the "cozy room", so would like to know. Plus books now need re-cataloguing: Please discuss and get back to COM: communications@gabriolacommons.ca

7. InfoBoards: COM to work with Kim and Heather M on these.

8. Council Notes idea: As Jinny maintains list of reps and posts Notes to website, would it be helpful if she posted to all reps and Council attendees each month (rather than the co-facilitators)?

The Gabriola Commons
A shared community space

with:

An orchard of apples, blueberries, haskaps
Allotment and common gardens
Trails through wetlands and forest
A pond filled with wildlife, its water feeding the gardens
A community kitchen
A wood-working shop & pottery
A stone labyrinth
Open areas for play & pleasure
The Goat Barn: performance venue
The "Poetry" Yurt
Farmhouse meeting rooms

All are welcome to use this space, and help take care of it, so that its living systems and the Commons as a whole can flourish.