Gabriola Commons Coordinating Council

Notes from September 3, 2019

Co-facilitators: Louise Amuir, Heather Menzies
Notes: Judith Roux for Trails and Green Spaces

Attending: Bob Andrew, Linda St. Clair, Patrick Roux, Don Smardon, Sheila Brooke, Tom Kean, Brenda Fowler, Jinny Hayes, Deb Ferens, Maya Ruggles, Lesley Hazeldine, Mitch Miyagawa, Angela Walkley, Jeff Malmgren, Maria Malmgren, Kim Kasasian, Marshall Mangan.

Recognition that we are meeting on the unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. Deb Ferens noted that in 2016 Canada finally adopted and agreed to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- Report by Mitch on the CULTIVATE Festival: Expression of great appreciation for the warmth and open-heartedness with which the Commons and Arts Council worked together to create an amazing event "reflective of a collective vitality." The different spaces of the Commons had an intimate feel without jostling. Particular recognition of Maya in her role bridging the two organizations. Estimates: 700 attendees; close to 1000 with volunteers.

- 20 Minute Discussion: Bookings (Deb, Maya and Lynda Toews)

See "Bookings & Rentals Task Force Notes for Council Meeting" attached, below.

Initially two people took care of the bookings of Commons spaces, with reservations posted on the Commons website. Currently the Bookings group is part of the Property Management Team and works with the Finance Team.
The scope and workload of Bookings have increased significantly with the use of the Farmhouse, Community Kitchen and outdoor spaces. It has become necessary to bring clarity to several issues: Who can rent space on the Commons and what is the role of the different teams involved.

- The unique zoning restrictions of the Commons need to be clearly understood: use for commercial purposes is not permitted. The category of "accessory commercial" is limited and specific. Only individuals or groups under the umbrella of non-profit societies or not-for-profit community groups can rent space from the Commons with the following exception: an individual requesting space for a personal use will be permitted to if it is open to the public, free (beyond contributing to space rental), with no one being paid and not promoting a commercial entity.

- Increasing requests for bookings of the outdoor spaces and large-scale events are being referred to the Sharing the Commons Team when the complexity requires it and to the Trustees (if an MoU is required.) Note that some spaces have specific requirements (e.g. Community Kitchen, Woodwork Shop, Pottery). See visual chart developed by Maya, attached.

Recommendation: that a future Bookings Team be constituted, with a mandate and more members. Meetings with different relevant teams will take place this month.

Discussion:
Linda: Recognizing the growing complexity of bookings, do we need a more sophisticated (even interactive) web page?
Sheila: It would help to have a single page on the website to explain the different criteria for booking spaces.
Louise: concerned about the potential burnout of Bookings volunteers.
Maya: feels supported
Jeff: other groups on the Island are seeing the same issues.
Heather: the Sharing the Commons Team was the original point of entry for new events/groups on the Commons and Bookings was initially part of this team. The need for clarity on the bookings of outdoor spaces then visibly required a liaison with the Property Management Team to assess impact on the land, and with the Trustees to create memoranda of understanding.
SCT is involved currently with the Woodwork Shop and Pottery groups.
Maria: offered to help as much as possible with her experience in facility management.

Team Reports & Groups:

Communication Team: Jinny thanked Kim for the Infoboards that were test-run at the Commons tent at the Cultivate Festival. The foci were basic info about the Commons and fundraising for the 25000 gallon reservoir project. Infoboards are to be discussed further at a one-topic meeting among Kim, Heather, and COM members on Sept 10 at 11.15 am.

Signage Team: Jinny is organizing a raffle to be held at the Farm to Table Feast (Saturday Sept. 7) with the proceeds to go to the "orientation to the Commons" signage in the Kiosk triangle near the well head. Meeting TBA.

Goat Barn: Leslie Hazeldine will join the Goat Barn Team. (Meeting to be announced.)

PHC: Brenda expressed appreciation for students working with People for a Healthy Community over the summer.
Hot lunch program with the elementary school begins again, expanding to all 4 weeks each month.

Community Health Care Workers Training course is starting (using the resources at the Fellowship Church, not to overuse the Commons facilities.
The Federal Government has promised an investment in food infrastructure to improve the "food chain". Some money will be put into upgrading the garden and greenhouse.
The Gabriola Rec Society ran a summer camp on Food Literacy for kids, using the Community Kitchen.

Tool Library: Tom reported that the solar light motion detector on the pergola is working, to the appreciation of all who come for evening meetings/events.

Kitchen Stewards Team: Maya
A recruiting and orientation process has begun, to augment the number of kitchen stewards. The immediate challenge of stewarding the Community Kitchen with only one person will make it necessary to shut down the Kitchen if not enough people respond to the call. (Jinny asked to be informed in order to communicate about this.)
Patrick suggested that teams of one or two people are too minimal and perhaps it is time to reconfigure the organization of our teams, with awareness of what is undertaken by all. Maya felt this may require more than a 20 minute discussion and should be planned as several larger meetings of one or two hours.

Property Management Team: Bob. Next meeting Sept. 12 at 4 pm
- Another big workbee (Gabriola Arts Council and Commons) will take place on Sept. 14. (4 pots of soup needed!)
- The irrigation system using the water from the pond has been shut down until significant rainfall returns. Protection of the wildlife habitat around the pond takes precedence over other uses. (In spite of shut down, the level of water continues to drop as evaporation continues.)
- Heat pump is on the agenda.
- Potable water is an issue on Gabriola during droughts. It is important to affirm that the Commons is not a "community water supply" and that we need to restrict access.
The need for a community water source would be a good topic for Sustainable Gabriola.

Trustees: Bob. Next meeting Sept. 10 at 2:30.
This team's mandate is legal and financial aspects of the Commons.
- The Trustees have been busy, working on 4 MoU's (Cultivate, Agi Coop for the Night Market, Poetry Gabriola [Yurt] and GERTIE Community Bus). A letter of agreement was also drawn up with the Farm to Table Feast group.
- No date yet for AGM. 4 trustees will be leaving in October, as their three-year terms are up, so Nominating Committee welcomes nominations.
- Theft is still happening in the South Gardens. The Stewards and Trustees are concerned and actively looking for solutions.

- Campers in the wild spaces of the Commons are a growing concern. The RCMP was invited to advise on the situation. Deb pointed out that we do not have zoning which would permit camping. This is mainly an issue of homelessness, with no resolution in sight.

- Question of residency on the Commons was raised, referring to the potential "Elders' Eco-Village" project dating from 2005.
Deb: when we first applied for zoning with the 2005 proposal, the Agricultural Land Commission held back their approval for two potential residential projects. These projects have still not been approved. A focus group undertook to study the Ecovillage project with all of the financial, zoning and philosophical issues involved (such as the fact that this would create "private" spaces contrary to the essence of the Commons). It was felt these issues could not be resolved at the time. Louise and Heather expressed the intention of exploring this further.

Water System Task Force: Linda. Next meeting Monday Sept. 9 at 11 am
Shovels will be in the ground in September/October for the Reservoir Project intended to collect rainwater from the roofs for irrigation.
Recap:
Fund raising is ongoing, with an application to the RDN for a Community Grant.
The Village Community Card total has been reached, bringing $5,000 onto the books.
The Finance team will be reporting on the funding from time to time.
Don has mapped out the water system infrastructure.
Kim has prepared attractive information boards and planning charts, inviting those with specific skills to register their willingness to take part.
Pre-Tax receipts will be issued on the spot for those giving a minimum of $10.
At the end of Council, Deb announced that $1,240 had been donated for the project at the Cultivate event!

Farm Team: Judith. Next meeting Monday, Sept. 30 at 9:30
The shutdown of water has been a necessity, but is challenging to all.
There will be a discussion this Fall on the impact of climate change when considering future planting and maintaining existing perennials in good health.
The Wednesday Night Market managed by the Agi Coop on the Commons has been a wonderful venture, drawing customers to farmers and vendors with music and delicious meals. The Commons table continues to bring in revenue for the Farm Team with good crops of blueberries, figs, and apples.

Covenant Team: Deb Next meeting Sept. 24 at 2 pm
The Covenant Team are planning for the visit on Sept. 17 of three members of The Land Conservancy who have expressed an interest in holding the Covenant for the Commons.

The Goat Barn/Performance Centre Project. Judith

A meeting will be called for late September to form a task force to move the project further. All who have expressed interest or have attended previous meetings will be contacted.

Events Team: Judith

A meeting will be called for late September to plan the Team's future

The decision to cancel the Fall Fair for 2019 was carefully considered by the Events Team and Stef Marrie's statement (attached) describes the need for more participants in the planning and carrying out of events, particularly during the summer when just a few people on the ground and in the kitchen make a dense series of festivities happen. "You end up feeling like limp lettuce" said one.

It was decided that the "Great Gabriola Squash Race" would still happen on Sundaze on Sept. 15. Several people agreed to attend the next meeting and consider joining the Events Team.

New project: Jeff

Jeff has an interest in evolutionary organizations and would like to explore the idea of developing a permanent amphitheatre in the naturally landscaped space on the Commons, working it in with the Goat Barn complex. A brainstorming was suggested with the Long Range Planning Team to consider new ideas. Next meeting of the LRP Team to be announced.

Next Council: Tuesday October 1, at 7 pm

Next notetaker: Communications Team

Attachments

Bookings & Rentals Task Force
Notes for Council Meeting Sept 3, 2019 – 20 minute discussion

1. Overview
   - A. Introduction: Task Force Scope
   - B. Refer to Bookings Flow Charts – Zoning & Large Event Criteria (see below)
   - C. Visual Chart: Stewardship of facilities and inter-team communications (attached from Maya)
   - D. Recommendations for consideration:

Introduction:
Current Booking Process: Bookings currently part of PMT (clarify this); 2 people taking turns alternating weeks (since Feb); Inquiry to book- Website Calendar - Rental Agreement - Financial aspects (collecting fees, issuing receipts if requested, invoicing overdue accounts, reconciling income to the calendar).

A. Task Force Scope – to address bookings challenges for the facilities (mostly the farmhouse and Community Kitchen, the Yurt and increasingly outdoor spaces

- Increased work load. Number of bookings, calls, inquiries have increased significantly as facilities become more known and popular; community kitchen became part of bookings in early 2019; poetry yurt; outdoor spaces; stretching capacity of 2 people to handle;
- Clarity & consistency regarding use & user of the rental spaces as per zoning and criteria, need to clarify what is a straight booking and what needs to be referred to other Teams. Avoid overlapping and identify gaps. Align zoning and Commons guidelines and indicators such as : non-exclusive; impact on resources; limiting # of events in a season; non commodification, etc);
- Prevent urgency, uncertainty, confusing messages to potential renter; become more efficient and organized.

B. Refer to Bookings Flow Charts – Zoning & Large Event Criteria

C. Visual Chart: Stewardship of facilities and inter-team communications (attached) – Maya

D. Recommendations for consideration:

- That a Commons Bookings Team be constituted with mandate to be drafted and recruitment of a couple of more bookings members to help spread the load.
- That use/rental of all commons facilities (including outdoor space) are aligned and consistent with zoning and criteria guidelines while being sensitive and attuned to specific requirements of each space.
- That status and preparation of the woodworking shop and the pottery space to make them ready to be used as rental spaces be continued and finalized. Build on STC Team work that was started with Workshop re: inventory, safety, etc.

  Fees for woodworking shop and pottery space and eventually the goat barn to be determined after all spaces are determined ready for rental and use.
- Meeting with other Teams (STC; PMT; Trustees) re: scope of bookings and rental spaces and clarity on forms being used and especially to go over the zoning criteria; and best ways to support one another at team to team level.

1. Commons Wood Workshop (STC Draft Proposal Jan 16)

Bookings Flow-chart for Commons zoning (Principle Land Uses: Commons Institutional and Commons Agricultural)

When a booking inquiry comes in, ask:

<u>Are you booking on behalf of a Non-Profit Society or a not-for-profit community group?</u>

- if YES, we can rent: what is the nature of your activity during your rental? (This is mostly for Commons records).

- if NO: then ask are you booking the space as an individual for personal use or on behalf of a group that is unconnected to a business or commercial enterprise for personal/social gathering such as kids birthday party, celebration, family gathering AND are you sharing knowledge and/or skills beneficial to the community or hosting an event at NO CHARGE to the public (including donations).
  - if YES: we can rent to them
  - if NO: we cannot rent space to them

- if NO: then ask are you booking the space as an individual connected to a business or corporation, AND are you sharing knowledge and/or skills beneficial to the community at no charge? AND NOT promoting your business or selling merchandise or asking for donations

- then – yes – we can rent to them
- Otherwise - No

- if any red flags arise, send out to Commons Teams such as STC and PMT for advice/comments and further review.

One can make an income from rental of Commons space only:
1. as a vendor during an event that is sponsored by a Non Profit Society or non-profit community group, or
2. as a presenter of a workshop that is sponsored by a Non-Profit Society or non-profit community group (proceeds, expenses, and publicity to be managed by organization

Bookings Flow-chart for LARGE EVENTS (EVENT RENTAL)
(Outdoor Use Only; Outdoor Use with Access to Facilities; Outdoor Use AND Facility Space) - Reference – Draft Feb 19 policy on use of outdoor space.

When a booking inquiry regarding a **LARGE EVENT** comes in, ask:

- What is the nature of your activity? Eg. Private event; community gathering; fundraiser;
- Is this a First Time Booking, a Repeat Booking (seasonal; annual; previous), or a possible Long Term ongoing use of space.

If a **Repeat Booking** with a previous MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)

- Tentatively book the space & time then refer to Trustees to create an new MOU (Trustees to confirm with Bookings when MOU confirmed or not pursued so space can be opened up again)

If a **Repeat Booking** and no MOU required – use Event Rental Agreement eg Easter Egg Hunt, Shakespeare on the Lawn; Sundaze) to clarify operations and processes;

If a **First Time Booking or Long Term Ongoing Use of Space**

- If a **First Time Booking** – refer to large event criteria to determine booking needs/requirements
- If a **First Time Booking** that goes beyond the capacity of Bookings to handle as a straight booking – refer to Sharing the Commons (Sharing the Commons determines fit; reports to Council and if it's a go informs Bookings of time & spaces required for a one-time large event)
- If a **Long Term Ongoing Use of Space** - Refer to Sharing the Commons Team (Sharing the Commons determines fit; reports to Council and follows through with Council agreement)

NOTE #1: The zoning questions are still relevant for use of all Commons spaces.
NOTE #2: Criteria for Larger Scale Events
NOTE #3: General Guidelines for Bookings

NOTE #1 – see Flow Chart re: Zoning
NOTE #2: Large Scale Events Criteria (Reference – PMT guidelines, STC & other documents)

What constitutes a large scale event?
Number of people and/or extent of spaces required?
Port a potties required (# of potties to #of people) = as per PMT
Water restrictions; provide potable water = as per PMT
Cleaning/damage deposit (leave no footprint)/wear & tear on grounds/buildings?
Use of Electricity
Noise Bylaws adherence
Use of indoor toilets and which ones
Tables/chairs/tents/stages/equipment being brought on site by renter
Light pollution

Dogs on leash/pick up poo
Smoking/fire bans
Point person for renter – to address any concerns prior, during and after event?

Note 3: General Guidelines for All Rental Spaces on yhe Commons (DRAFT ideas from various sources)

Multi-purpose (any use by community members cannot be exclusive)
Exclusive Use – only with an MOU or lease agreement in place
No subletting.
Community function/event takes priority over private use.
Events with multiple use and multiple community benefits take precedence over single-function events.
Non-gated;
Priority space for Commons Teams and Commons Events

Parking Requirements:

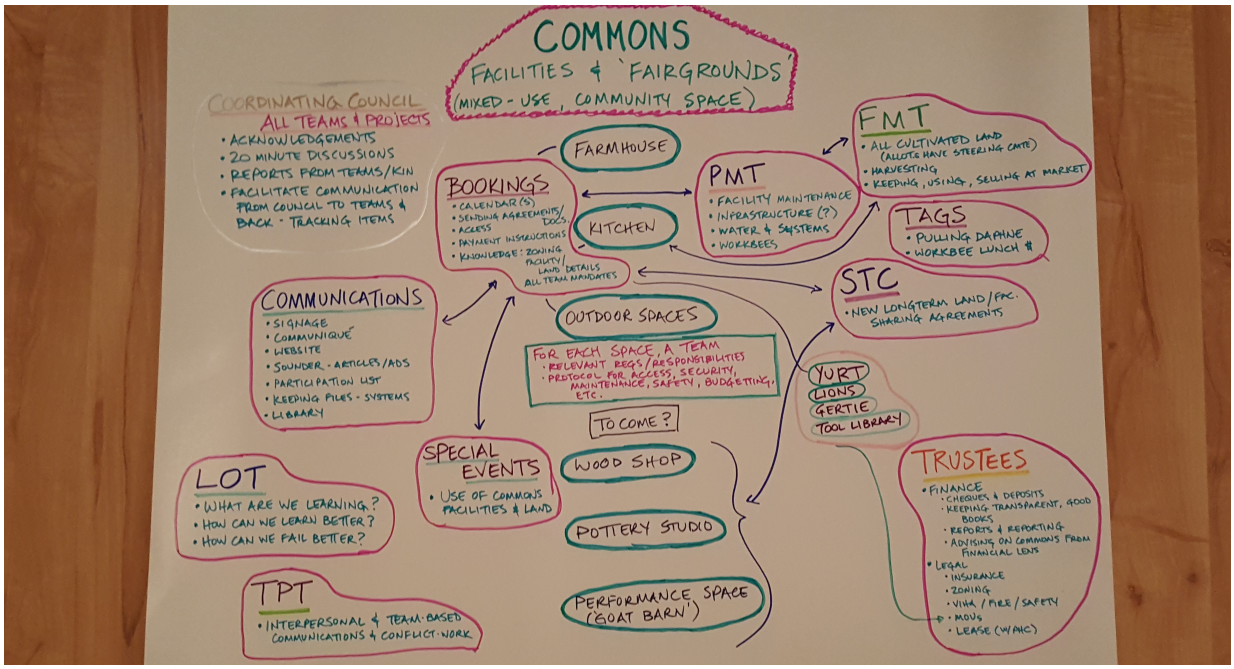
- In designated areas only (overflow to school or along North Road when school not in session)
- Not in front of the Cobwall.
- Not in front of wellhead.

Limiting # of events and Seasonal Restrictions

- Ongoing assessment of the land's well-being (and related things like water supply) inform decision on accepting new bookings during this time

PMT? determines when/if limits to number of events permitted in a Season by ……(date?) (PMT reports action guideline to Council)
Water usage – PMT determines and communicates when renter/user must bring their own potable water and port-a-potties. (PMT reports action guideline to Council)

Cancellations/Cancellation Fee?



Where's the Fall Fair…and Islander Days?

Stef Marrie

"If you want something done, ask a busy person." Benjamin Franklin. There is no shortage of busy people on Gabriola Island, and the word 'busy' has become the new response to 'How are you?' But, despite the hectic pace of the times, busy folks still find the time to volunteer.

There is no shortage of volunteering opportunities on Gabriola. In fact, all of the wonderful events on Gabriola are powered largely by volunteers. Spring Fair, Fall Fair, Food Forum, Concert on the Green, Salmon Barbeque, Gabriola Player productions, Cultivate Festival, Farm to Table Feast and the Studio Tours, just to name a few. These events are highly anticipated and would be sadly missed. We still hear the sad lamentations caused by the loss of Islander Days.

A few things are repeatedly said about volunteerism. First, volunteers burn out. A wise man recently told me that a capable and enthusiastic volunteer is their own worst enemy. It's very rewarding to pull off a great event that leaves everyone smiling, so how could one possibly say no to helping out the next year, and the next and… But, help out once and it's appreciated, twice and you're a member of the team, by the third time you're the organizer, and of course, irreplaceable.

Second, there seems to be a volunteer shortage. This is an illusion, as there are just as many folks helping out today as there were 10 years ago. The difference is in the number of organizations and events available to us now. All great causes and all wonderful events. So how do we increase the number of volunteers, what with all of us being so busy and all? That's not a rhetorical question folks; if anyone has the skills to conduct a successful volunteer recruitment drive, there's about 40 Gabriola organizations that will be thrilled to have them.

Ultimately, even the best and most notable volunteers must tuck away their day planners and get back to tending their own gardens, families and businesses. This is the case with the Gabriola Commons Fall Fair and Events Team. It has become increasingly challenging to plan, organize and operate the fair with our depleted numbers. So the question on everyone's minds is whether the Fall Fair has been postponed or cancelled, and for how long? A Fall Fair needs folks for set-up of tables, tents, stage and animal enclosures, food prep and serving, organizing and running the agricultural contest, providing music and final breaking down and cleanup of the site. If you are ready, willing and able to assist with any of these tasks, VOLUNTEER by contacting info@gabriolacommons.ca.