Decision Making on the Gabriola Commons

Where Decisions are Made

Decisions which do not affect those outside a single team are made within the team according to the team's mandate, plans and budget.

Decisions which affect multiple teams, groups, projects, etc. are made at Council, using input from other teams, groups, projects. This process is outlined below.

When an issue does not fall within the mandate of a specific team, group or project, or is important to many, representatives can draft a recommendation or decision together. Occasionally a short-term task force made up of members of various teams, projects, groups or interested individuals may form to research or examine the issue and bring forth recommendations to Council.

Decision Making Process

A team, person, group, project, etc. has an issue that requires a decision to be made that has repercussions outside their own sphere on the Commons:

The recommendation, or draft, for a decision comes from the team(s), projects(s) or groups(s) whose mandate(s) the decision falls within as this is the group of people who are the most informed on the given topic and most able to provide an appropriate solution or plan.

> **A. Drafting a recommendation:**
> Information is brought to a Commons Council meeting by the representative for discussion. A recommendation for a policy, action, etc. may be brought instead of a question or issue (skip to B in this case).
> 1. At Council the issue is discussed and it is determined if there are other teams, groups, projects or individuals that should be involved in drafting a recommendation for a policy, action, etc.
> 2. The involved parties form a task force to work up a draft plan of action, policy, etc. using knowledge and input from discussion at Council.
> 3. The involved parties take this draft to the next appropriate Council meeting for discussion and circulation.
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> **B. Circulating the recommendation:**
> Representatives circulate the draft recommendation to their team members and collect input. Because this is an inherently slow decision making process it is vital that team reps circulate the recommendation promptly, so that unreasonable delay is not created in decision making.
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> **C. Making a decision:**
> At the Council meeting, representatives discuss input and the recommendation is either:
> - Adopted and made final through consensus (based on input as presented by the representatives).

- Amended and re-circulated for further discussion/input (back to B).
- Dropped if it is found to be unnecessary and/or unpopular.

A final decision is made based on a consensus model as outlined in Consensus Decision Making.

D. Circulating the Decision and Follow up:
The decision and any pertinent information are circulated by representatives to their teams, groups, projects, and also through Council minutes, which are routinely sent out to representatives for circulation to teams, and are posted monthly on the Commons website.

Trustees are responsible for updating the *Gabriola Commons Field Guide* with new policies or changes to existing policies.

Once a decision is given the "green light" it is imperative that reports and updates are regularly submitted to Council as the project or activity progresses. This communication allows members to be up to date with current goings on and to monitor any changes to the original decision.

We are all responsible to uphold the vision of the Gabriola Commons and adhere to the Gabriola Commons Charter. The Gabriola Commons Coordinating Council is the central communications body and is at the heart of Commons stewardship.

The Council meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7pm at the Commons. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Consensus Decision Making

May 6, 2014 Policy adopted at Commons Coordinating Council for use at all Commons meetings except where otherwise legally required.

Note: Unity does not mean unanimity; it means the best general agreement possible in a reasonable time period.

Procedure:
1. Introduce the proposal.
2. Clarify questions and call for concerns.
3. Amend and modify the proposal through more discussion or, withdraw if there is no support at all.
4. The facilitator of the meeting will then ask for any further changes, reservations, or objections. The following options are ways to indicate a lack of support for a proposal or decision:
   - Non-support – I don't see the need for this, but I will go along.
   - Reservations – I think this may be a mistake, but I can live with it.
   - Standing aside – I personally can't support this, but I won't stop others.

- Blocking – I cannot support this or allow the group to support this.

5. If there are no further amendments or objections, the decision will be accepted.

6. If a proposal is blocked, the decision making process is suspended until a resolution process is activated.

7. Resolution Process:

- Blockers are given the opportunity to present reasons for blocking which must be clearly stated and recorded.
- Reasons for blocking must meet criteria that demonstrate the decision would: jeopardize the legal existence of the Commons; place the Commons in an untenable financial position; create irreversible impacts on the land and the environment (Do No Harm), constitute unethical or imprudent behaviour.
- After an agreed upon time frame to consider the blocking in light of the criteria, the issue is re-introduced for a decision. If the new information does not persuade other members to change the decision, the decision goes ahead.
- If the block does not meet the criteria but raises some concerns, the group should consider moving forward cautiously with the decision and action.
- The nature of the block and the blockers will go on record along with the decision.