

In attendance

Emar Hall, Margaret Taylor, Sam Betts, Anne van Kessel, Mary Aitken, Anne Drozd, Ariane Collin, Bill Pope, Derek Kilbourn, Dorothy Betts, Gill Elcock, George Szanto, Hans van Kessel, Kit(Alison) Szanto, Doug McKnight, Linda St. Clair, Mary Wilson, Maureen Wild, Mary Rose, Robbie Huston, Bob Andrew, Roger Gouin, Judith Roux, Raymond Tremblay, Richard Welsh, Shelagh Huston, Christine Gagnon, Yetta Lees Strasdine

1. Welcome - Linda St. Clair

- some brief history
 - the Foundation has been incorporated by the B.C. Society Act
 - now a charitable organization
- try to do as much by consensus as possible
 - it is not easy but the results are worth it
 - for this meeting we will ask the questions, seek a general agreement and show hands
 - all of the oral reports will be on line and if requested emailed out
 - looking to save as much paper as possible

2. Introduction of the Board of Directors - Linda St. Clair

George Szanto - chair - Covenant and Grant Writing teams
Bob Andrew - rep on the Commons Coordinating Council
Yetta Lees Strasdine - treasurer
Ken Capon - Property Management, monthly donor drive
Doug McKnight - Communications, Share the Commons, Infrastructure
Judith Roux - Farm Management, Infrastructure, Covenant
Hans van Kessel - Infrastructure, Communications, Membership
Bill Pope - Covenant
Linda St. Clair - Share the Commons, Communications

3. Annual Directors Report - George Szanto

This Directors' report to the First Annual General Meeting of the Gabriola Commons Foundation will be different from future AGM reports, since some of what I'm about to present must focus not just on the past year, but consider the past several years as well.

So we need to look backward five and more years. It's the early history of what would become the Commons that explains the successful events of the year just gone by. You all know pieces of the story. Gabriolans with vision, Gabriolan kooks, Gabriolan dreamers - and often these were the same people - came up with sometimes fertile, sometimes scatty, usually productive ideas as to what an old goat farm could become. From the acquisition by AGES of these 26 acres along with a mountain of a mortgage, to public meetings that produced ideas and directions of great

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fertility, to the establishment of a semi-organized steering committee, to the creation of the Gabriola Commons Society, the prehistory of the Gabriola Commons Foundation has been like an inspired roller coaster where the up-slope ride produces the exhilaration. And there's not going to be any downhill ride.

The present directors, those of us making this report, are a varied lot. An architect, a science-education author, a home maintenance professional and musician, a priest, a novelist, a lawyer, a retired traveller, a cabinet-maker and a business administrator. For the last year, and with similar others over the preceding years, we have worked our way into and through complex decisions with maximum coherence and minimal contention. We believe that our work over these past years has indeed, in the words of Commons Charter, allowed us to leave the Commons undiminished and enriched, for those who follow us, as others will pass it on in perpetuity.

The first year of the Foundation saw a remarkable series of successes within the Commons mandate. That mandate, the purposes of the Commons' incorporation, are three-fold: to hold, protect and steward the property as a public amenity for the use and enjoyment of the public, in perpetuity; to preserve the ecological qualities of the Gabriola Commons; and to promote sustainable agricultural practices. We have been upholding that mandate with a set of guiding principles, as anchored in the constitution: **public trust**, meaning that the Commons exists in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Gabriola; **ecological sustainability**, meaning the creation of a Commons covenant to safeguard in perpetuity the qualities of the land; **social sustainability**, meaning that one of the Commons' purposes is to nourish the fabric of the community; **local democracy**, meaning that the Commons functions according to democratic, equitable and local stewardship; and **community service**, meaning that the Commons is a community legacy serving community needs.

More specifically, over the past year we have been working toward full property ownership, in trust, for the Gabriola community, through two kinds of fundraising campaigns. First it was necessary to meet the current financial obligations of the mortgage; to this the community has responded beyond expectation, and The Land Conservancy of British Columbia, which will ultimately hold the covenant with us, has helped us in the monthly donor campaign by providing charitable receipts to donors. Secondly, a major funds campaign is underway to reduce the principal owing on the mortgage; as you can all imagine, this campaign has not been helped by the current financial climate, but we continuing on this complex path nonetheless.

In addition, in February of this past year the Commons achieved charitable status as a Society. We were awarded this status, in the words of the Registrar of Charities, "because it benefits the community" by fulfilling its purposes. As well, this year saw the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Commons Foundation and AGES, agreeing to the transfer of ownership. This transfer will happen within the next couple of months, as soon as we have finalized details with a financial institution to hold the mortgage for the Foundation under optimal terms.

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As well, half a dozen teams are hard at work on an ongoing basis, from the farm team with its weekly very physical activities, to the covenant team and its explorations of precise language which will guarantee that the principles of the Commons are enshrined in perpetuity; you'll hear more about the work of these teams further along in the agenda.

A Commons Coordinating Council has come into existence, meeting on a monthly basis, with all meetings open to anyone in the Gabriola community who would like to attend. The Council is an information-sharing body and sounding board. At its meetings projects are discussed, excitement is generated and concerns are aired. The Council is the body which ultimately brings into existence decisions which are collectively arrived at rather than top-down or executively imposed.

Importantly the last year saw great progress in satisfying the land-use requirements of a Commons. These 26 acres lie in the Agricultural Land Reserve. The Agricultural Land Commission has granted that the Commons may engage in all uses requested, except for three projects (the elders' eco-village, housing for land stewards, and an education centre). These will be considered after the ALC has been assured of the agricultural development of the Commons. Such final approval is still pending. Once this first agreement with the ALC was in hand, it became possible for the Commons to request that the Islands Trust consider rezoning the 26 acres for a diversity of uses of benefit to the community. A couple of weeks ago our local trustees accepted a third staff planning report, recommending a final community airing of the concept of a "Commons Zone."

So the first year of the Foundation comes to its conclusion with a goal already expressed in its name: a solid foundation from which to go into the second year, the third, and beyond. We look forward to a vigorous major fund raising drive in the year to come, to obtaining a reduced mortgage, to receiving exemption from property taxes, to finalizing the transfer of the land from AGES to the Commons Foundation, to agreeing with a local society to act as a second covenant holder, to the fostering the ongoing fruitful work of the several teams, and to working ever more closely with the Gabriola community, all of you here and all of those not here who are also working productively for the good of the island and its people.

Thank you.

- asked for questions - none asked - call for acceptance - hand vote - passed

4. Definition of Membership - hans van Kessel

- membership if by and for the community
- there is a need for procedure and criteria
- did the research and came up with the membership participation form
 - copy available upon request
- there are 625 people on the member data base and we are looking to expand

- the more participation the more grants possible
- question about getting info in the papers
 - is being followed up and should be in the Shingle's next edition
 - Derek was in attendance so we are sure there will be something in the Sounder
- every Saturday throughout the summer there will be members / monthly donors drive at the Village
- membership is free and once a member always a member

5. Financial Report

- report available upon request
- report covers all of the years up until today
- we are in a good position - averaging between 60,000 and 70,000 annually
- the assets and liabilities are looking balanced
- now have a professional book keeper
- installing new software
- a recording process that meets government standards
- TLC donors can now get receipts from the Foundation
- challenges
 - fine tune the paper process
 - continue to work on the ownership campaign
 - monitor and manage the new software system
 - have one person inputting information
- this report has been professionally reviewed
- Questions from floor
 - how much is owed - \$ 525,000
 - mortgage comes under rent
 - there is a great deal of security on the property
 - 2 financial institutions are interested in holding the mortgage
 - the books are open to everyone
- called for a hand vote - report accepted

6. By Law changes

- (1) The Board of the GCF recommends that **Bylaw Part 1, 1(1)** definition be changed
- from
- "directors" means the directors of the society for the time being
- to
- "trustees" means the elected trustees of the society for the time being

Rationale: The Society Act permits an incorporated society to use any appropriate term for the elected persons in the society. The term "trustees" is of stronger significance and

more adequately conveys the concept of holding the Gabriola Commons in trust for the benefit and enjoyment of the public in perpetuity. Upon adoption of this bylaw, all references to the term "Directors" throughout the Bylaws will be changed to "Trustees".

-call for agreement - passed

(2) The Board of the GCF recommends that Bylaw **Part 6, 27(2 a-e)** be moved to **Part 1 and designated #3:**

(3) The following principles will guide the trustees in all of their proceedings:

a. Public Trust: The assets, including the natural and community resources of the Gabriola Commons, exist in perpetuity for the ongoing benefit of the people of Gabriola, including generations yet to come, not favoring one generation over another.

b. Ecological Sustainability: The assets and the land of the Gabriola Commons are used only in ways that respect its ecology.

c. Social Sustainability: The Gabriola Commons sustains and nourishes the fabric of the community for generations yet to come.

d. Local Democracy: The Gabriola Commons stewardship is democratic, equitable and local.

e. Community Service: The Gabriola Commons is a community legacy, serving community needs.

Rationale: Moving the guiding principles to the beginning of the By-laws enhances their significance and the important role of the trustees to protect and preserve these principles.

- explanation of how chosen - 3 year term, 3 new members each year
- appointments can be made but need approval at AGM
- members can return to the board once they have finished their term
- there are a minimum of 9 members
- consensus is the way agreements are made
- hand vote - accepted

(3) The Board of the GCF recommends that **Bylaw Part 5, 22(5)** as follows be added to the bylaws:

No trustee shall be elected more than three years consecutively.

Rationale: We want to ensure that there is a continual revival of the Board combining some people with experience on the Board with other community members with fresh ideas.

- call for acceptance - accepted

7. Election to Board - George Szanto

- there are staggered terms

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- do not have a full board now
- board recommends Hans van Kessel, Bill Pope and Doug McKnight all for 3 year terms
- all individually agreed to by membership
- still require 2 more board members - especially a treasurer
- call for nominations from the floor
 - Christine Gagnon - accepted, call for agreement - newest board member
 - Gill Elcock - declined

Team Reports

- all teams report to the Commons Coordinating Council - first Tuesday of the month

Communications Team - Roger Guin

Contact - Doug McKnight lags@shaw.ca or 250-713-8834

Meetings - fourth Monday of the month at 10:30 am

Mandate - To create AWARENESS, to encourage the EXCHANGE of ideas and to invite PARTICIPATION in the evolution of the life of the Commons

Accomplishments of this last year

- providing a Quarterly Newsletter
- sending out flyers for special events at the commons
- updating the members list and setting up the Flickr account

Goals for the next year

- have the web site functional
- get the archiving under way
- have monthly articles in the papers about an aspect of the Commons

Covenant Team - Bill Pope

- working towards what is important in perpetuity
- what is important about the property for the community
- closely tied in with the management plan
- the Commons is for all to share
- have scientist and photographers doing the research
- looking to complete by the end of the year
- TLC will be a covenant holder
- question about whether the Islands Trust could be another holder

Elders Eco-Village - Raymond Tremblay

- 24 units for seniors from independent to dependent
- the concept is viable and is proceeding as planned
- waiting on zoning from the Islands Trust
- guest speakers on eco villages

Farm Management Team - Judith Roux

- the first to develop on the Commons
- sustainability and organic are the cornerstones
- looking to involve more on the commons
- goal of food security

Infrastructure Team - Mary Wilson

- sustainability center is major new goal
- model and demonstration for the island

Share the Commons Team - Shelagh Huston

Mandate - The team acts as a point of entry for community commons land use interests and projects

Meeting times - Scheduled meetings every first and third Wednesday at 10:00 am

Top three Highlights of the Year Past

We birthed the Infrastructure Team

We developed a policy and process for Sharing the Commons.

We have met and liaised with other Commons Organizations.

Top three things we plan to accomplish next year

Work with prospective projects.

Further develop and refine the process for Sharing the Commons.

Initiate the "Goat Barn Complex" Project.

Special Events - Heide Brown

- exists when needed
- work on the fall and spring fairs
- assists other teams when needed

Property Management - Raymond Tremblay

- maintaining the property and grounds
- graveled the rest of the parking lot

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- office area has been revamped
- a cleaner has been hired
- working on a system for care of the lawn and gardens
- looking for a booking coordinator
- replace the old carpet

Question - need for power on the property - will be looked into by the team

Volunteer Team - Heide Brown

- newest group to Commons
- always looking for more community involvement

9. Comments and Questions from the Floor

- need for more involvement in Commons
- moved by how the Commons has evolved
- all continue to support the effort being made
- the Commons is one of the highlights of Gabriola
- draws in community spirit and is a beautiful example to Gabriola
- is inspirational for many in our community
- has become bigger than the sum of the parts
- Shelagh and Heide are still the landowners and it would be a conflict to be on Board
- a thank you to Linda for all she has done for the initial stages of growth

Meeting adjourned 3:19