

Minutes for Gabriola Commons AGM on September 22, 2012, 1:30 pm

MCs: Doug McKnight & Rebecca Furnell

Minutes: Susan Yates

Welcome and introduction to the AGM

Approval of the 2011 AGM minutes with one abstention

Bob Andrew introduced and thanked the **retiring Trustees of the Board:** Doug McKnight, Hans van Kessel, Christine Purfield, Christine Gagnon, Shelagh Huston, Victor Anthony.

Bob also introduced the **3 Trustees who are staying on for the next term:** Rebecca Furnell, Jinny Hayes and George Szanto.

Bob's comments regarding the retiring and current Trustees were well received; briefly, he noted that their diligence, individual skills, and commitment to the Commons that ensure its ongoing success and warrant our great appreciation.

Jinny presented the **Board of Trustees Report** (attached), verbally noting that:

- The Board holds the Commons legal title for the purposes stated in the Commons principles and draft covenant.
- Trustees will have staggered 3-year terms.
- Communication with People for a Health Community (PHC) as our tenant is improving with new ways and means of facilitation, and the content of a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PHC will be integrated into a new lease, soon to be signed.
- An MoU has been negotiated and with Island Futures for future collaborations.
- An agreement is in place for the "satellite" Commons allotment gardens at Namaste Farm on South Road.
- The Commons has been blessed with many generous donations, and we thank these donors and Ken Capon for his tireless fund-raising. Recently two large donations have come in and we are very grateful for being able to use such funds to help pay down the Commons mortgage and to make immediate repairs and long-term improvements to Commons resources and property. Thanks as well to our solid cohort of regular monthly donors.
- Judith Roux and George Szanto and others on the Grant Writing Team have secured one necessary grant towards construction of the Community Kitchen, and have another application in review.
- The Covenant Team has done a great job on the most recent draft of the Covenant, which is currently under review by two potential Covenant holders: Gabriola Lands & Trails Trust and The Land Conservancy of BC.
- Commons Bookings are working well in collaboration with the Share the Commons and Property Management Teams.
- Volunteer archivists worked for several months to help organize and catalogue Commons files and records.

The **Treasurer's Report** (attached) was presented with comments from Jinny: We are solvent and expenses and spending balanced. The 2011-2012 annual statements are on the Commons website.

Four motions were presented from the Board of Trustees, the first 2 initiated by the Covenant Group:

Motion #1 regarding the Bylaws Part 1 #3 (Commons Principles)

There was much discussion on the wording of the five parts of this motion, the aim of which are to bring the Principles in line with wording in the developing Covenant draft. With wording refinements the following final motion was Carried with 3 against and 1 abstaining:

- (a) *Public Trust*: The Gabriola Commons exists in perpetuity for the ongoing benefit of the land and the people of Gabriola, including future generations, not favouring one generation over another.
- (b) *Ecological Sustainability*: The assets and the land of the Gabriola Commons are valuable 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 Engagement*: The Gabriola Commons is a community legacy, involving the community in the broadest and deepest sense.

Motion #2 regarding Bylaw Part 11 Notice to Members, #50 about changing notice of general meetings from 30 to 14 days, for the newspapers and website. This is more practical in the Gabriola community where newspapers are published weekly, and a month's notice may "fall from memory".

Carried unanimously. This Bylaw will now read:

"A notice of a general meeting or of an extraordinary general meeting may be given to a member, through local media ~~30~~ **at least 14** days in advance."

Motion #3 regarding the Bylaws was Part 11 Notice to Members, #51(1) about length of time required to notify members of any special resolutions to be considered at a general meeting, also changing 30 days' notice to 14 days, for the newspapers and website. This brings our Bylaws in line with the BC Society Act.

Carried with 1 abstention. This Bylaw will now read:

"A notice of special resolution for alterations or additions to constitution or bylaws, and a notice of the meeting at which the special resolution will be considered, shall be published in the local media ~~approximately thirty~~ **at least 14** days prior to the meeting at which the special resolution will be considered."

Motion #4, regarding the preamble to the Commons Charter. These proposed changes were clarifications for expression and grammar, and were Carried unanimously. It now reads:

1. The Gabriola Commons

The Gabriola Commons is intended as a source of ecological and community well-being that exists in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Gabriola Island and the land on which it is situated.

As a source of well-being, the Gabriola Commons contributes to our sense of community, of belonging, and of our bonds to one another and the land. It draws the community in, and brings the people of the community closer to each other. It is a space for creativity and justice, for art and

learning, and for fairness and openness.

The Gabriola Commons demonstrates ways to enhance sustainability, to preserve ecosystems and biodiversity, and to promote equity both on this island and in the world.

The land includes a number of significant natural gifts and community amenities in one contiguous property: rich wildlife habitats; a pond and wetland area; open vistas and meadows; cedar groves and forests; pathways linking neighbourhoods; a rural agricultural heritage and landscape for farming and gardening; indoor gathering places for community celebrations and events, for solitude and sanctuary, performance and festivity.

The property of the Gabriola Commons is a gift from an earlier generation that we in turn must pass on, undiminished and enriched, to those who follow us, in perpetuity.

[May 21, 2008; Revised September 22, 2012]

George Szanto introduced the **Nomination of New Trustees to the Commons Foundation Board:**

- 3 ongoing Trustees are Jinny, Rebecca and George
- Board needs 7 to 10 Trustees for staggered 3-year terms
- Nominees are from the Board, but may also be from the public and the floor of this meeting
- 10 or fewer nominees will be acclaimed

The six nominees:

1. Heide Brown: Co-founder of the Gabriola Commons and involved in almost every aspect to date
2. Deborah Ferens: Involved in many activities and developmental phases of the Commons since 2005
3. Robbie Huston: Involved with South Garden Group, Farm Management Team, Saturday work bees, and scything
4. Judith Roux: Participation on almost every Commons team, Saturday work bees, and ongoing community engagement
5. Aidan Simmons: Participation on the Infrastructure Team and Elder Eco-Village proposal
6. Yetta Lees Strasdine: 2 years on the Share the Commons Team, recently on the Communications Team, Fundraising Team, and Saturday soup maker-supreme

There being no further nominations, these six were acclaimed with resounding positive acknowledgement from those attending.

Query from a member re: keeping terms for the Trustees staggered. It was agreed that new Trustees will establish staggered terms among themselves for the up-coming year, but the Commons Bylaws will need to be changed at next year's AGM as they currently address staggered terms only in the first year.

Team/Project/Group Reports

1. Board of Trustees Report (attached; also see above)

2. Commons Council Coordinator(s)

Comment re: the evolving sophistication and cooperation of the discussion that occurs at monthly Council meetings.

3. Communications Team

More articles about the Commons are appearing in local newspapers, YouTubes are coming and newcomers to Gabriola are told about the Commons at Welcome Wagon events. Note that this Team needs members in order to continue facilitating communications within the Commons and between the Commons and the Community. Maya Ruggles has been doing a fine job with the Communiqué to Commons members.

4. Farm Management Team

There have been refinements in the organization of the North, South, and up-coming Namaste Allotment Gardens. The Kitchen Garden has been transformed to provide ingredients for the soups served at weekly workbees and for our farmgate stand. Perennials are flourishing, and with PHC a new fence has been built to enclose the fruit trees within the North Gardens.

5. Finance Team

Treasurer's report for past fiscal year is attached. The team has not been active.

6. Fundraising Team

Big applause from the floor for the amazing generosity of our donors and campaigners. Funds have largely been used to reduce the mortgage and the amortization period, unless otherwise specified for renovations and development.

7. Grant-Writing Team

See Board report, above.

8. Infrastructure Team

Team has been actively researching alternative energies, prioritizing building projects, and discussing the role of the team in obtaining building permits, helping with drawings, and engaging in the building processes, eg, Community Kitchen, Sustainability Centre, Performing Arts Centre (Goat Barn). Team has done site mapping and AutoCAD drawings and designing "you are here" site plans. **Query** re: whether a future "Performing Arts" building should be reconsidered as including space for the visual arts as well.

9. Learning Opportunities Team

A new team with a mandate still in process. Discussed learning opportunities at the Commons with multiple teams. Hosted workshops on permaculture and grain growing/use. **Thanks** to this Team for pioneering a visiting/outreach mode of obtaining wide input for ideas for the Commons and for facilitating many interesting workshops this year.

10. Property Management Team

Repaired the deck and replaced the concrete step and mud path through the hedge with a gravel path. Overhauled the bookings system for more transparency and efficiency. Instituted a log book system for reporting property management issues. Began major clean-ups of various spots, eg, woodworking shop, Sustainability Centre. Lots of "unseen" work is done by this team which everyone appreciated.

11. Sharing the Commons Team

Several applications for uses of the Commons were reviewed and recommendations made.

12. Long-Range Planning Team

Another new team, which will be proposing a Planning Prospectus (the why & how of planning), Planning Process and Timeline (3 phases), a Planning Framework (enabling documents), and then conducting preliminary consultations (input from teams).

13. Trails and Green Spaces (TAGS) Team

Team initiated the “East-West Connector” trail from the tennis courts (on the west) to the east side of the Rollo Centre. The “west side” trail was partially cleared, as was another the “Casara trail. The “Daphne group” continued cutting and pulling out this invasive species, working sometimes with groups of campers from Camp Miriam. Three native species were planted in an area cleared of Daphne west of the yurt.

14. Volunteer Participation Team

There are about 80 volunteers ready and willing to assist with special events, which included: Christmas Craft Fair, Victor Anthony’s Concert for the Commons, Trade Fair, Spring Fair, Community Garage Sale, Fall Fair, Concert at the Razz, and Bob Bossin’s “Davy the Punk”. Kudos to all volunteers including all team members

15. Covenant Group – see Trustee Report, above

16. Elder Eco-Village Project

This large team has met diligently to discuss the legal and cost ramifications of the EEV. The team members have researched and examined various housing models and conducted pertinent local and other consultations.

17. Labyrinth Project

The official opening of the labyrinth and community group walk on Earth Day in April included music, poetry, a bonfire and displays by environmental protection groups. “Introduction to Walking the Labyrinth” in September was sponsored by the Ecumenical Society. Handcrafted wooden benches commemorating two deceased Commons members have been commissioned and will be dedicated in October.

18. Sustainability Centre Project

Design and Construction planning and ding are progressing well. Roofing and cleanup is progressing, including the living roof.

19. Green Bike Program

No report.

20. Commons Community Connections

For example: Brownies, Sustainable Gabriola, Island Futures, Poetry Gabriola.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.

Appendix A
GABRIOLA COMMONS FOUNDATION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012
September 22, 2012

Briefly stated (in the *Trustee Handbook*), the Board holds the Commons' legal title "on behalf of the community of Gabriola, to protect and steward the land as a public amenity in perpetuity, and preserve its ecological qualities". Interpreted, this means the Trustees oversees income and spending, how the Commons Principles "play out", and the preparation of the Covenant. Despite the simple description, it's been a busy year. The Board has met monthly and occasionally more when special situations arose.

Initially 9 trustees with terms of 1, 2, and 3 years, we sadly accepted resignations (for personal reasons) from Victor Anthony (Chair) and Shelagh Huston (People for a Healthy Community [PHC] liaison) in recent months. In addition, our Treasurer, Christine Purfield, tendered her resignation for the end of the second year of her elected term, though she has in fact served 3 years as a Trustee. Three other Board members end their 3-year terms with this AGM: Christine Gagnon, Doug McKnight, and Hans van Kessel. We thank all 6 for their significant contributions to the Gabriola Commons during their Trustee terms—there's no way to measure their collective thoughtfulness, energies, and amounts of time that they brought to the Board.

In the "legal" department, we have been addressing the PHC lease, which expired in December 2011, and has required some time and collaborative effort. In this process, the Trustees and Council are working on ways to improve exchanges of information and communication with PHC without the use of a "Commons Board/PHC Liaison" person. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up and signed for the Islands Futures project, and the contract signed with the Peirces of Namaste Farm for the South End allotment gardens which will open next summer—both new initiatives for the Commons, and exciting and fun projects for those involved.

Financially, the Commons is solvent and well managed, thanks to the two Christines' oversight, regular and occasional donors, funds raised at special events, and successful grant procurement. As is well known, we have been blessed this year with generous donations that have enabled us to significantly reduce the mortgage, the over-time interest charges and the loan amortization period, and get started on long-overdue maintenance and capital improvements. Ken Capon has been instrumental in improving the numbers and amount of monthly donations, and the grant-writing team of George Szanto and Judith Roux have been active (and successful) in obtaining a grant for the Community Kitchen—and writing applications for more. Huge thank yous to all these individual and group supporters and the people who helped to make money happen. We wouldn't be here without you! While not diminishing these successes, it must be said that a Board goal to strengthen the Fundraising Team (a team of the Board), had only some success and will require reassessment and action in the coming year.

The **Covenant** Group is also a Board responsibility. In May, the group finished the complete second draft of the Covenant and got it off to our two potential Covenant Holders for feedback. To date, comments have been received from the Gabriola Lands & Trails Trust and the group will be meeting with them for further discussion. Further revisions are in the offing. The Land Conservancy of BC is having internal difficulties, so we have not yet heard back from them. The current draft is on the Commons website, and the group is always open to comments.

Two footnotes:

1) Begun last Fall as a Board initiative, the **Commons Bookings system** is another success story for this year, thanks to those who've been in the positions, monitored the mail and phone, and refined means of tracking room and equipment use. Bookings come under the terms of reference of both the Property Management and Sharing the Commons Teams.

2) The volunteer **archivists** began their work in earnest this year, and the paper part of our his/herstory is in good shape, though looking for folks to establish an intuitively useful filing system. The electronic records are next.

Summary

We've discussed and acted on a few challenges and picky tasks this year to help the Commons "purr along", and we face a few challenges and tasks in the year ahead. I look forward to working successfully with the new Trustees in the coming year.

Virginia E. Hayes
For the 2011-2012 GCF Board of Trustees

Appendix B

GABRIOLA COMMONS FOUNDATION TREASURER'S REPORT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2012

The financial statements for the year-ended March 31st 2012 have been uploaded to the website and are available for viewing. The bookkeeping was found to be in order and no issues were raised by the external accountant, Judy McPhee & Company.

The biggest success story of the year has been the paying down of the mortgage. In the 2011/2012 fiscal year the Commons' donors reduced the mortgage by \$24, 958, amounting to a total reduction from inception to the end of the last fiscal year of \$65,150.

The news only got better in the current fiscal year, of course, with a large anonymous donation of almost \$150,000, \$100,000 of which was designated to pay down the mortgage. As at August 31, 2012 the mortgage balance stood at \$332,638.

In addition to the anonymous donor, on behalf of the Trustees I would like to thank all the regular monthly donors as well as people responding to our various campaigns. On an annual basis, monthly donors contribute a little less than \$30,000, almost sufficient to cover our biweekly mortgage payments amounting to just over \$32,000. Well done!

The Commons continues to develop as an organization and the recent large donation brought home the need for not only policies for spending, but also a process for discussion and agreeing on how to allocate the money to projects and teams. During the current fiscal year, Council approved spending to replace the deck on the upper floor, long known to be a safety issue for the Commons and a comfort issue for PHC below. Funds have also been set-aside for the Community Kitchen.

I can report that all payables from the fiscal year have been paid and there are no outstanding debts other than the VanCity mortgage.

I have resigned as Treasurer from the Gabriola Commons after three years, effective this Annual General Meeting. Along with the rest of the Board of Trustees, I am hopeful that Yetta Lees Stradsine will be appointed by the membership to fill the role. Yetta, I believe, has the knowledge and experience needed to successfully administer the Commons' finances.

Respectfully submitted:

Christine Purfield
Treasurer