

**Transcription of Meeting**  
**Discussion About the Future of the Gabriola Commons Hedge**  
**May 13, 2017 1-3 pm**

**Attending (15):**

Maggie Aldous, Louise Amuir, Tom Archdekin, David Arnell, Pat Durrett, Sheila Haniszewska, Freddy Harris, Jinny Hayes, John la Marquand, Dave Lightly, Catherine Robertson, Judith Roux, Patrick Roux, Kit Szanto, Jen Turner

Process: Edward de Bono's Six Hats

**1. THE FACTS**

planted 1980-ish. needs to be maintained. time consuming, labour intensive, less maintenance than NOT doing hedge, unsafe for women, can cut in half and it'll be fine, grows 1 foot a year, pseudo picata (hybrid of Western Red Cedar), if cut in half will grow back in a few years, people never prune it tight enough - needs to be almost all the way back, keeps noise, dust, exhaust out, more usable space, refuge for birds (is there a survey?), landmark, leaving it to go wild is a dead end, it'll fall apart in a good snowfall and break, fall is the best time to cut in this climate, lifespan 100 years, if we paid someone budget 40 hours for pruning and another 20 for cleanup, too tall for volunteers to be on ladders, 8' would be optimal and ok to cut it back to, complaints that vision is obstructed turning on to North Road, if any of the trees are removed, it will leave an ugly scar, circles and shapes will leave an ugly scar, if we do cut the sides cut on the eastside so it grows back faster, doesn't need soil amendment but does like water, was much higher 10 years ago, how does Rollo like it?

**2. FOR**

landmark, place for birds, noise, dust, exhaust filtration, keeps kids corralled, defines space, feel protected inside hedge, magic garden, aesthetics, privacy for clients of food bank, BEAUTIFUL hedge, will draw people here, don't have to worry too much about what's behind - hides a multitude of sins, comforting, tradition, welcome, warmth, sound barrier both ways, temperature regulation, microclimate/shade, sense of sanctuary, conservation, if gone more work on lawn, Baronial, without the hedge suburban sterile mall-like.

**3. AGAINST**

difficult for Doug to mow lawn, maintenance, time consuming, can't figure out where the commons is, intimidating, RCMP suggested we remove it for ease of patrolling, some people won't go behind the hedge, differentiation difficult between PHC and Commons, in the dark it's scary for new people, sense of either insider/outsider, Baronial, visibility getting on to N. Rd, need equipment, commitment, volunteers, job for an expert? whereas lawn might be ok for regular volunteers, hedge took 8 or 9 volunteers x 7 days + 40 hours of John la M, barrier to volunteers, we're getting older, cost, fundraising, what's in there?

**4. FEELINGS**

LOVE IT! Cutting it is BAD! and indefensible! venerable, magnificent, heirloom, heritage, hi-maintenance love affair (it's complicated), scary, intimidating, unwelcoming, how do you get "in?", isolates between parking lot and house, daunting.

**5. BEING CREATIVE**

have a budget and get some younger arborists involved, lower it considerably on kitchen side, crenellated at various points, Maggie making a donation, Tom good to help (professionally \$40 per hour), David A offers to help (especially if he can chain himself to some part of the hedge in protest), Susan Y also offered to help to lower it, those that love it can help pay to maintain it. VFM fund in the future?, lawn underused, road access via Rollo road right of way? get school kids involved with stories, want to be able to see around, wider entrances, leave it 8-10' along road and lower everywhere else, drive through drive way and elevator for accessibility, safety at N. Rd, if removing some of the cedar we could replace with flowering shrubs in some of the scarred areas, FEDGE (food hedge) filling in scars at removal points will

allotment garden-style demonstration project, arch or gap in the middle (if practical), entrances for pedestrians rather than just drivers, consider relationships with Rollo and school and make openings to facilitate closer relationship, also consider relationship with PHC and deliveries, hedge fund happy to accept donations of money and volunteer labour, it's a design problem - needs to be beautiful and welcoming, suggest engaging a hedge designer.

## **6. PROCESS & CONSENSUS**

it should be lower in many places; bringing it down to about 8 ft is about right  
we need a hedge fund (so far collected \$107)  
we need a design for the hedge (perhaps funded by the hedge fund?)  
openings should be wider and more numerous  
we want it to look more welcoming