

## **Sustainable Gabriola**

Minutes of April 26, 2020 ZOOM meeting

Present: Nancy Hetherington-Peirce, Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, Steve Earl, Greg Blanchette, Judith Roux, Kees Langereis, Suzi H., Bob McKechnie, Tom Cameron, Charlotte Cameron, Louise Amuir, Jerry Bowes, Gerry Owens, Richard Strachan, Mary Wilson.

Facilitator: Fay Weller

Note Taker: Deb Ferens

### 1. System Change/Beyond Recovery

Beyond Recovery – Steve

What are some of the good things that have changed in our lives as a result of the COVID 19 shut-down? Can we keep these good changes and how? Comments:

- Cleaner air due to reduction in fossil fuels; more community caring. Awareness of food supply chain and keeping it local; less consumption; reshape economic system on health policies; resiliency and can we make the changes really fast.

System Change – Judith

COVID 19 is highlighting the fragility of the “old” system. It’s like a house of cards that is collapsing. How do we not go back to the old normal? Comments:

- Stories about animals taking over urban streets and nature reviving with less air pollution; lots of changes depend on the prov/fed gov’t who want to get back to the old normal as fast as possible – can we tilt the dialogue towards sustainability? “Enough is as good as a feast” – new narrative; this affects all of us; we’re all in it together; can we create a space of all of us as commonwealth; one of the big disappointments is the closing of provincial parks; thankful that the Regional parks stayed open to the public.

### 2. Water – Louise

The Commons is experiencing water shortages which will affect the gardens – a new reservoir under construction will help; The Haven has a long historical record on their water issues; they have been dependent on water from off island. With Climate change and more droughts water will create more water issues on the island. Comments:

- Village Vision – water supply was a big issue; John Peirce did a lot of work.; Kees mentioned that the Islands trust is funding a water project for the Northern Gulf Islands starting next year; historical background – water is not valued except as a commodity; local groups like Streamkeepers and Shorekeepers focus on protecting streams, wetlands and watersheds; protecting forests is also important for healthy water retention; over development is part of the problem.
- Maybe it’s time to bring water back to the top of the community discussion list

### 3. Gabriola Talks – Food Strategy – Dyan

Three topics that arose out of the Climate Crisis Gabriola Talks: Food, Transportation and Waste; Food group developed strategy - now been taken on by Gabriola Agri Co-op.

### 4. Website - Suzi & Greg

Reorganizing website; sent out an email with 3 questions – no response. Suzi will send

out the questions again. Website looks good.

#### 5. Gabriola Housing Society – Nancy

Updates: Jan – rezoning application submitted to Local Trust Committee (LTC). Staff report presented to Trustees with recommendation to draft bylaws; Trustees voted in Resolution Without Meeting to support staff recommendation. Society hopes the draft bylaws will be on the May or June LTC meeting whether the meeting is in public or a virtual meeting. Society is still hopeful they can apply to provincial BC Housing for major project funding. Here is the link for the GHS website that has details: [gabriolahousing.ca](http://gabriolahousing.ca).

6. COVID 19 Response and Recovery Committee – largely comprised of Fire Dept; RDN and LTC reps; Health & Wellbeing Collaborative; GESS and more. Meeting once a week. Gabriola focus specific; different than RDN Emergency Response which is district wide. Query if there could be more updates in the paper on what the committee is working on. Dyan – applying for funding re: Uvic - project on looking at the effects and experiences of COVID on island communities.

#### Summary Remarks

Zoom works well;  
face to face meetings still preferable;  
indebted to community members who are providing daily services on the island  
is there a hub somewhere to hire people for work? Suggestions: Gabriola Facebook Page; Julie Sperber – Chamber of Commerce.  
Grateful for SG bringing us together.  
Much useful information – how do we act faster to become more resilient?  
Hope we don't go back to the "old" normal.  
How can we continue to unpack existential threat of collapse, need for political action (eg Universal Basic Income), local actions (esp food supply) and re-weave into a narrative moving forward?  
Let's remember: "Enough is as good as a Feast".

#### More from Judith:

Let's not simply watch as unimaginable amounts of money and energy are rapidly poured into a rebuilding of the economic and social structures which created and upheld the "house of cards" over decades. The fossil fuel industry is but one "card". We need to go further, looking at the inequalities supporting the 1%; looking at the banking industry (when did we agree to allow the banks to make gargantuan profits as they perform a public service?); looking at the ease with which even now First Nations treaties are casually broken and environmental protection is being unhooked from the controls on "big industry"; seeing the stock market as the global casino it really is; continuing to permit lobbyists to lean heavily on our elected leaders... (the list is long!)

The underlying mantra: pushing for growth and profit-making for the few, at all costs, is the one to counter. Respecting the concept of "enough" would start to

grapple with the obscene existence of trillionaires while essential service workers are paid below subsistence level wages. It would allow our governments to address critical issues such as housing shortages and to subsidize needs such as free post secondary education. Again, the list is long!

As oil is listed at below zero on the stock market, we could consider that we've reached a blank slate on which to build... NOW!

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