

Notes on Sustainable Gabriola Meeting

March 25, 2018

At the Commons

Present: Fay Weller (facilitator), Sibyl Frei (notes), Bob McKechnie, Janet Vicker, Kim Kasasian, John Switzer, Steve Earle, Hans van Kessel.

Tool library – Kim

They received two grants but needed to do more fundraising, which is going well. They have also been getting great donations of materials. They have started digging the foundation area, and hope to be building in 2-3 weeks.

Network of co-ops – Fay

The group working on establishing co-ops is forming a network of co-ops that other co-ops can join. Marty Frost, an experienced co-op developer, will be helping us with establishing co-ops.

Agriculture co-op – Fay & John

The co-op was established in 1932, one of the oldest co-ops in BC. More recently, they have been acting more like a society, but the co-op is now getting revitalized. A farmers meeting was held; they are considering setting up a purchasing co-op (such as for livestock food and soil amendments) and an insurance coop, and using Agi Hall in different ways. The best time for farmers to work together is from about October to March. The agriculture co-op is looking at certification or establishing standards that all farmers agree on such as no petro-chemical fertilizers, and looking at how to improve food security on Gabriola. Some farmers are working toward organic certification

Housing co-op – Sibyl

Initial meetings about a housing co-op were attended by many people interested in supporting the development of a housing co-op and other types of group housing. A group of people who want to live in a housing co-op met last week, and everyone took on a piece of research or other work before the next meeting. The group had a great offer to consider a project on an individual's large property, and will be doing a site visit and have more discussion with the landowner on April 21st.

Gabriola Housing Society is holding an affordable housing summit to engage the community on possible models for multi-dwelling affordable housing in order to learn what might work here. May 12, 1:00 – 4:30pm at the Hope Centre. Everyone is welcome.

John talked about the Glen Valley farmers co-op in the Fraser Valley. Some people, including John, joined the co-op and farmed the land. The co-op also pushed the limits to develop housing for some of the farmers on the land. Other members bought

member shares to support the farmers co-op without farming or even living nearby; the share cost \$5000 and people could sell their shares 10 years later for the same amount.

ASIDE: John is interested in buying a share in the possible housing co-op project on large lot.

Energy co-op – Steve, Fay, Bob, Hans

Looking at developing an energy co-op that would include biodiesel, heat pumps and solar PV. GabEnergy is part of the conversation and considering being folded into the energy co-op.

The energy co-op wants to start building community solar projects in community spaces such as field by old fire hall in south end. Financing options would include investments that don't get interest or buying a panel and getting interest on that investment or individuals buying solar systems at cost for own home. One hurdle: in the past, BC Hydro wouldn't install a separate meter with a separate account on a property where the landowner has given permission for a community solar project but already has their own account with BDC Hydro and meter(s). Perhaps the new government could ask or require BC Hydro to allow it. Also the group would like to look into buying a lot where a house can't be built (rock face or marsh, for example) and make it a solar farm.

Next step is to create Gabriola Energy Co-op. The group can use existing energy co-op templates.

Investment co-op – Fay

Rupert Downing was here for public meeting on an investment co-op. The purpose is to be able to invest in things we believe in our community. More than 80 people completed the survey about their willingness to invest. Generally people were comfortable with a 2% return on investment, and some of the priorities were liveable wages and food security. The current legislation limits investments to \$5,000 per person and \$750,000 maximum fund. However, Rupert said they established two classes of membership shares, one with a low membership fee and an unlimited number of shares of investment class.

Currently there is a survey out for entrepreneurs (see the link on the Island Futures website for the link, and please share information about survey). They are planning a public meeting in mid-May to discuss different structures and ask people to pledge investments. They plan register the investment co-op by the end of May and hopefully start accepting investments by the fall. They won't be doing micro loans but might consider a proposal from someone who wants to run a micro-loan program. Another

idea raised at the SG meeting was to have the investment co-op provide mortgages or act as a mortgage broker.

GENERAL SUGGESTION: Look at insurance co-op as a possibility in the future.

Land bank – Sibyl & Steve

We want to hold land that can be used for community benefit of many kinds. Steve and Sibyl are doing research. People are coming forward saying that they are interested in contributing land to such a land trust or land bank. John suggested that a lot in the land bank could be used for many purposes (such as housing, agriculture and solar).

Healthy transportation group – Steve

The group is forming, and recently had their first meeting. One thing they are looking at is how to make the ferry terminal area safer for pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers. BC Ferries is planning dock and possible terminal upgrade in 2021. In the meantime, can we put in a temporary solution that creates a footpath to go along the vehicle ramp, along the same side as the ferry line-up and end with a crosswalk at Taylor Bay Rd. Howard Houle is taking this idea to the RDN. Note that the land beside the ferry line-up is owned by Ministry.

ASIDE: "New village trail" is still in the works.

Energy audits – Kim & Fay

A thermal imaging camera is now in the library. Kim and Fay are wondering whether we will start doing energy audits here. On Bowen, neighbourhoods got together and did energy audits after someone got training from Cool North Shore. Two people here are using thermal imaging and might be willing to do some audits as a contribution to community (Timothy Maika & Bob Andrew). Also look at how to share "life hacks" for using the thermal imaging camera and moisture pen, such as testing firewood with the moisture pen, to promote energy efficiency.

Facilitator schedule:

Dyan – April mtg

Steve – notes for April mtg

Judith

Bob

Tawny

Mary

Jan

John

Judith

Fay