

Sustainable Gabriola  
November 22, 2020

Attending:

Bob McKechnie (facilitator) Mary Wilson (notes), Tom Cameron, Fay Weller, Charlotte Cameron, Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, Lisa Papania, Katherine Patterson, Steve Earle, Suzi, Deb Ferens, Simone Levesque

1. Shout-out to GALTT for their new “lesser-known trails” initiative.
2. Administrative issues
  - a. Guidelines for use of email list
3. Stuff it! Fay and Mary
4. “Beyond Covid” survey – Fay and Dyan
5. Trees for Tomorrow – Simone Levesque
6. Deborah – Climate change/climate change emergency
7. Nanaimo Airport Expansion – Bob
8. OCP and Sustainability – Tom Cameron

1. Use of SG mailing list

Sustainable Gabriola respects the privacy of those who subscribe to its distribution list, and undertakes to communicate to those on the list only in regard to information that is consistent with the SG vision and mandate.

This means that, while the list is used primarily to send out meeting reminders, it may on occasion be used to notify members of a relevant event/activity/issue which has a deadline in advance of the next scheduled SG meeting. Believing that many SG members will be interested in such news, we have decided to use the SG mailing list only to broadcast information other than meeting notices that meets the following criteria:

- Aligns with SG’s vision, goals, and principles, as described at <http://sustainablegabriola.ca/about-us/>;
- Hasn’t been, or is unlikely to be, distributed widely in the community by others

If the timeline is after the next scheduled SG meeting, then information that meets the forgoing criteria may be sent out along with the meeting reminder.

2. Stuff It! Project

Currently underway; an initiative led by GIRO. Funding is being sought from the RDN and the Western Development Fund for an initiative to reduce the amount of textile waste going to landfill. GIRO currently receives 50-100 garbage bags full of textiles (clothing, bedding, etc.) each week. A phase-one funding proposal for equipment and staff to investigate ways to reduce this has been submitted.

Tom Cameron is interested in finding out more about what happens to things that enter the blue box; he will investigate and report back.

3. Trees For Tomorrow –

This is an initiative started by the Conservancy of Hornby Island last winter – a program to involve homeowners in being stewards of their own land. Trees for Tomorrow plants Douglas Fir seedlings on private property, where owners have agreed to reforest for carbon sequestering. Project is in the starting stages on Gabriola; figuring out the website etc. Working on Gabriola; will be asking for donations of \$2 per tree. May expand focus beyond Douglas Fir seedlings. Donating: The way Hornby does it, they have a website with a clickable link to make a donation. The all-inclusive cost of planting a tree is \$2, so if someone donates \$10, five trees can be planted. Will also reach out to property owners to ask for places for trees to be planted. Will there be a possibility for donations, particularly of saplings? (Big leaf maple, Garry oak, etc.) – could this project be a clearing house for donations? Simone Levesque, who is involved with the initiative, will explore these ideas.. There will also be a possibility for volunteers to assist with planting.

4. The OCP and Sustainable Gabriola.

General discussion about planning on Gabriola: the challenge of road/path building, and the tendency of planning discussions to be “on off” with a focus on a particular project, rather than overarching. Currently there is considerable community debate about the Paisley Place housing project. Part of the problem here is that there is no consistent process for environmental oversight on developments; every development ends up as a battle between environmental concerns and developers concerns. Should the Islands Trust should be more willing to use the “tools in their tool box” to implement the Coastal Douglas Fir Toolkit? Community needs to understand that making decisions about developments on a one-off basis is not the best way forward. Noted that a new provision for what people can do on their properties, especially retroactively, might be difficult to introduce now. Trust Council is also working on creating development permit areas where you will not be allowed to cut down trees; this is a big and difficult initiative. Islands Trust faces barrier that lands in private hands, designated as Forestry in private hands – forestry has power they can download. It was noted that the Trust changed guidelines for installation of cellular towers in January without public input, and have been unresponsive on making changes to the policy that was introduced. Douglas Fir protection – can this be publicized? Steve notes there will be something coming up soon in the Sounder as part of the housing project.

5. The Climate Emergency

Climate emergency threat means we have to perhaps mobilize differently than we do for a sustainability approach. We are doing a lot through our initiatives (food, transportation, etc....) but it feels as if we are missing a deep political chance to have conversations in our community about the climate crisis.. Is there a way we can host some talks on that aspect of the climate emergency?

Lisa Papania : Suggests small grief sessions for responding to climate crisis and Covid.

Youth or others too, to talk about it and make it public. (ie maybe a podcast, ending in an action item)

Podcast possible list: Lisa & Daniel, Dyan, Fay, Deborah, Mary. Followup meeting scheduled.

6. Post-Covid survey (Dyan and Fay)

Five “lessons” have been derived from the data. Presented at a Rural Health Coordination Conference recently. Five major themes:

- a. Well being: Social connections, connecting with nature and exercise were the top three findings across age, gender and income level. (important factors: keeping parks open, encouraging building and maintenance of trails; open community spaces for gatherings; online courses.)
- b. Perspective of workers: More grateful, more anxious and more stressed than the general population. Median age on Gab is 61; most working are over 50. Stress of implementing requirements/changes. Working from home; general a welcome change. Access to government benefits;
- c. Vulnerable healthcare system; numbers of unattached patients, ongoing consultation, need for coordination, etc. Increased mental health challenges for patients and clients; Larger numbers of older patients and complex cases, combined with new requirements for safety, lead to increasing stress.
- d. Income stability – benefits were important for income stability; reduced stress if there was little income reduction; support for Universal Basic Income type program
- e. Community self-sufficiency: Supply chain fragility; desire not to leave the island; desire to increase resilience through local purchasing. Strong support for local food and products.

7. Nanaimo Airport: There was an RDN public hearing on Nov 4th re changing bylaws to allow Nanaimo Airport Commission (private) to expand the airport at Cassidy to accommodate wide-bodied jets with longer runways, crew hotel, fuelling facility, etc. Barrier #1: Airport is still in the ALR. (Mid-90s expansion was in contravention and now it’s “legally non-conforming.”) Barrier #2: Area A’s OCP does not allow for airport use. At the public hearing there were approximately 30 submissions speaking against the enabling bylaws - partly because of lack of consultation; partly because of legal difficulties; and also because of perceived conflict of interest with the RDN appointing the airport commission. No one supported the expansion. Third (and final) reading of the bylaws will take place at RDN board meeting Dec 8. It was noted that the SNC Lavelin plan, which was developed in 2014 for the airport, was not included in the materials made available to the public prior to the meeting. Vanessa Craig chaired the meeting, making it impossible for her to represent Area B’s views in this.

8. Next meeting: January 24, 2021

Next facilitator: Mary Wilson

Next notetaker: Judith Roux