

Sustainable Gabriola

Notes of May 23rd 2021 meeting

Present: Nancy Hetherington Peirce, Fay Weller, Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, Katharine Patterson, Deb Ferens, Suzi, Bob McKechnie, Tom Cameron, Charlotte Cameron, Suzanne Campbell, Dona Bradley, Steve Earle.

Nancy H-P was the facilitator. The meeting was held on Zoom.

1. Cutting trees on private property

Dyan: Land owners have the right to cut trees in the Islands Trust region. Recent cutting has been on the Davidson property on Shaw Rd., and on Mark Coats' property near to the golf course.

Deb: The Islands Trust was created to preserve and protect the Gulf Islands for the benefit of all British Columbians and to stop large subdivisions (like that at Magic Lake on Pender Island) from being repeated. The drafters never provided Islands Trust the power to regulate tree-cutting as they did municipalities under the Local Government Act.

Municipalities that have a tree-cutting bylaw regulates that you cannot cut a tree unless you have asked and gained permission to do so. In the Islands Trust, the default is you can cut any tree you want, unless you are expressly told you cannot because there is a Development Permit Area (DPA) on the land. Individual islands establish DPAs themselves. Gabriola does have some DPAs that prohibit some tree cutting (Riparian Areas, Steep Slopes). But there is no Tree Cutting DPA. MLA Adam Olsen is working on a private members bill to give the Islands Trust (and thus LTC's) the same power as municipalities in this regard, and some Trust Council members have been meeting with Minister Osborne. Vanessa has stated that the RDN has no power to stop tree cutting on Gabriola.

Dyan: The trust governance is very lean, focused primarily on land-use planning; services such as building permits, garbage/recycling collection, parks, etc., are provided by the RDN. She spoke about the work of the Housing Working Group on this subject, and will speak to it at the June 17th LTC meeting.

2. Talking Trees (Steve)

Steve met with Scott C. and Tobi E. yesterday. We had a preliminary discussion about making the next "Gabriola Talks" event about trees, including measures to preserve the trees we have left, efforts to plant more trees – everywhere, and education about trees and climate change, ecosystems, water etc.

There is the potential for a face-to-face gathering in the fall (depending on the COVID situation at the time), but meanwhile we suggest that the first phase should be a letter-writing campaign to the BC Minister of Municipal Affairs, Josie Osborne, in support of the Trust Council motion

asking for tree-cutting regulatory powers to bring the Trust in line with municipalities. In other words – to give the Trust the ability to regulate tree-cutting on private land.

Trees 4 Tomorrow Gabriola co-ordinator Simone Levesque spearheaded a spring drive to plant 1080 trees on the island. The fall push will start soon: looking for people to register their land for restorative tree work and funds to buy the trees and deer proofing (only \$2 per tree). Go to: <https://www.conservancyhornbyisland.org/trees4tomorrow-gabriola> to register land or donate for more tree planting.

Deb: The Raincoast Conservation Society has made recommendations to Trust Council about tree conservation.

For those that would like to start pushing for change on this issue now, the person to write to is the BC Minister of Municipal Affairs, Josie Osborne (MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca, (250) 387-2283) to ask her to give the Islands Trust the authority to regulate tree removal in the trust area to bring the Trust in line with municipalities. You might refer to the fact that in March, Trust Council unanimously voted to update the current strategic plan to expand the scope of “forestry initiatives,” which will include exploring establishment of development permit areas, tree cutting authority advocacy, enforcement of development permits related to forestry and advocacy associated with the Private Managed Forest Land Act. If you’re willing to wait for a few weeks, the organizers of Gabriola Talks will be working on a backgrounder for letters to the government on this issue.

3. Climate Change – finding local solutions (Steve)

This is a Gabriola library sponsored event hosted by North Island Climate Hub, Gabriola Island Residents Against Tanker Expansion and Sustainable Gabriola, on May 26th at 7 pm. Those attending will have an opportunity to collaborate to create a plan that will reduce community emissions to 50% of 2020 levels by 2030. (Which is something that we are obligated to achieve). To register: <https://virl.bc.ca/event/climate-change-finding-local-solutions/>

Suzanne asked if there was baseline data for Gabriola emission, and Fay spoke about the Island Futures GHG emission study that was done in 2008.

Steve also made a presentation about greenhouse gas (GHG) and how to reduce your emissions at the September 2019 Gabriola Talks! Climate Crisis event: <https://sustainablegabriola.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ghg-presentation.pdf>

4. Climate Change G7 Summit in June (Deb)

The G7 will be meeting in the UK in June, there is a youth summit in September and the COP-26 climate meeting will be held in Glasgow in November. Deb has drafted a letter that people can adapt to send to the Prime Minister, as follows:

Date

Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Fax: 613-941-6900 email: pm@pm.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister,

June 2021 G7 Summit – Making Climate Change A Top Priority

At a preliminary meeting in February in preparation for the June 2021 G7 Summit, all G7 leaders made three major climate commitments. They agreed: for the first time as a group to achieve net zero emissions by 2050; to make progress on implementing the three core pillars of the Paris Agreement – mitigation, adaptation and finance; and to make climate change and biodiversity a central part of recovery plans in the event of future health crises.

The loss of wildlife habits and deforestation is a key root cause of the spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19. The destruction of our planet's ecosystems, the loss of biodiversity, the continuous assault upon our forests, wetlands and soils exacerbate the massive inequities faced by indigenous, marginalized and low-income communities at the frontlines of climate change.

Your government has committed to a just transition for the citizens of Canada. We cannot afford to keep delaying the Just Transition Act. The process of decarbonisation, the transition to a net-zero-carbon economy and the guarantee of inclusive, productive and fair policies can protect and improve the well-being of workers and communities across the country.

Climate change action is critical to avoid untold global suffering and destruction. G7 leaders must treat anthropogenic climate change like the existential emergency it is. It is time for strong and effective climate action leadership and we trust that Canada will take a strong position at the Summit in supporting and advocating the climate commitments that will get us to significant reductions by 2030 and to net-zero by 2050. It is not the time for more excuses.

Yours etc.

Cc: MP Paul Manly (Paul.Manly@parl.gc.ca)

5. Village-Ferry roadside trail (Steve)

A group of us applied last year through the LTC to the Union of BC Municipalities for funding to complete a scoping study of a Ferry to Village roadside trail along North Rd. The application was successful. Pam Shaw and the VIU Masters of Community Planning team have been awarded the contract to carry out the project which involves working with all of the stakeholders (MoTI, RDN, IT, BCF, an engineering consultant) to discover what will be needed to proceed to phase II – design drawings.

6. Territorial acknowledgement (Dyan)

Dyan referred to an article in the "Sun" about the complexity of territorial acknowledgements. Some Gabriola organizations do them routinely, others do not. We had a discussion about whether this is something that S.G. should adopt.

Steve suggested that Dyan provide some background information so that we can have an informed discussion about this at the next meeting, and that we might invite Mark Fettes (SFU) who has been working with Snuneymuxw elders on this issue for several years.

Deb noted that at the Commons meeting they do an acknowledgement and typically have a discussion about its meaning. They also read out 1 or 2 points from the Truth and Reconciliation document.

It was suggested that Scott C. also be invited as he has a relationship with SFN.

Dyan will put together a package. She suggested that people have a look at: "21 things you may not know about the Indian Act" by Bob Joseph. (<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/21-things-you-may-not-have-known-about-the-indian-act->)

Notes by Steve

Next meeting is Sunday June 27th at 3 pm. Steve will facilitate, Dyan will take notes.

Facilitator/Notetaker roster for future meetings:

Steve
Dyan
Bob
Mary
Judith
John
Fay
Deb
Nancy