

SUSTAINABLE GABRIOLA meeting notes – Feb. 23, 2025

Present: Deb F (facilitator), Suzi, Tom C, Charlotte C, Bob McK, Greg B, Kes A, Deborah B, Deb D, Joan J, Fay W, Susan S, Betty K, John G, Janice P, Bob A (notetaker)

Welcome & introductions —

Reconciliation — Greg gave a brief geology tale on the formation of the lands we stand on.

1) Food Security (Susan) — Synopsis of a Food Security meeting Feb. 21. About 32 people attended, mostly from the local food field. The meeting hoped to create an inventory of strengths and needs. Currently less than 2% of the food consumed on the island is produced here. The meeting included small group conversations with mini presentations on BioChar, Slow Foods Bulk Buying, Agi Coop, Seed Saving, and other learning opportunities to grow and preserve food. Notes from the meeting were sent to mailing list of 43, including attendees (Feb. 27).

2) Gabriola Climate Action Charter draft (Greg) — An SG initiative, started 2019, revived 2024 small team working on it. Meant to be something individuals/businesses/organizations can sign on to, to indicate their support for strong climate action. Includes a public-facing declaration of Gabriolans' climate commitment (the Charter) and a "banner" to be displayed near ferry, at events, etc. This is the first stage in a broader SG communications plan, begun in 2024 but on hold.

A draft was emailed to full SG membership, looking for feedback. Also looking for SG approval at this meeting to move forward on next steps: further editing & design, workshopping with select businesses, entities, Chamber of Commerce. **ACTIONS:**

- Meeting consensus: "Carry on, keep reporting in, give launch date when available."
- Feedback on the Charter can go to info@SustainableGabriola.ca
- Greg will create a "Climate Charter" page on the SG website for public info, feedback, etc.

3) Climate-12 Neighbourhoods project (Susan) — This came out of the Climate-12 process, where many recommendations involved organizing by neighbourhood. Building on the "Gabr'hoods" gathering (May 2024) C-12 coordinators identified 16 already established neighbourhoods on Gabriola. A volunteer GIS mapper (Renée) is working on an interactive map showing the 16 neighbourhoods, plus community amenities like bike routes, farm stands and AED machines. **This key project needs a dedicated team of its own.**

Note that the ESS "neighbourhoods" and muster areas are much larger, created for purposes like evacuation. C-12 neighbourhoods would be around 10–30 households, small enough for everyone to know each other through initiatives like block parties. The two ideas are complementary. ESS has presented its preparedness workshop to several of the smaller neighbourhood groups.

- Kes said the Health & Wellbeing Collaborative might be of help. They have a new coordinator, Penny Scott, and are looking for projects. Strategic planning workshop being planned (maybe March). **ACTION:** Susan/Greg will volunteer (w Kes) to present the Neighbourhoods project at the workshop.

4) Climate-12 Team reports (Greg) — Gabriola Climate-12 project has 8 more-or-less active Action Teams (Arts & Culture, Biodiversity, Buildings & Energy, Economic Change, Health & Well-Being, Food & Agriculture, Transportation, Water). Team "convenors" were meeting monthly to report on progress and obstacles, but we propose to invite the Action Teams to make their reports at SG meetings, for the information of all. Two reports:

- **Buildings & Energy (Greg, from Rob West)** — The Gabriola Nature Education Society farmhouse (on John Switzer land) reno is done. Waiting on final energy audit. Plan is to monitor actual energy use for a year after the reno, to see how it matches calculated numbers. Should be of use on retrofitting Gabriola's older houses.

Rob is pulling together the final cost numbers, and separating energy upgrades from cosmetic. Will put together a presentation, but not for some months.

- **Water (Joan)** — The team is pulling together a detailed manual for water supply and use on Gabriola. Initial draft is close, currently 21 pages. Table of contents is comprehensive. Will also include a directory of water-related businesses. Being cautious about liability issues.

No launch date yet. We will first distribute for comments (to C-12, SG). May hold a big launch event or workshops, open to suggestions.

5) SG communications (Greg/Susan) — Greg is taking over from Suzi on website maintenance, posting minutes, facilitator/note-taker tracking. Minutes now go to Greg to be distributed. HUGE THANKS to Suzi for her years of work doing this!

SG website traffic: in last 30 days, the site got 700+ visitors, 1.8K views (likely includes many bots). No indication yet of where visitors are from.

A broader SG communications plan was started last year. Now paused in favour of completing the Climate Charter first.

SG has a Facebook page, currently 55 followers. We're engaging with Lynn C, a social media pro, and looking to expand its reach, to publicize events promoting local sustainability (nothing political or controversial). Looking for an okay from the group to move this along. **ACTION:** Future posting on Facebook agreed to by all present.

6) Earth Day, Tue-22-Apr (Greg, for Steve E) — Erin of the Chamber can't do it this year. Steve has pulled a small group together. Help likely required. Event is usually held at the Commons, and involves a kids' parade.

7) Political pressure (Greg) — I've heard that MLA Sheila Malcolmson gets letters and calls mainly about housing and cost of living, few about the climate crisis. Healthy discussion on best ways to pressure politicians to pay more attention to this. Decided the way politicians work is to take forward the most requested concerns expressed, so we need to express more concern on climate change.

- Proposed: Canvas membership (via elist) about SG becoming more politically active, by sending approved minutes to full list (in addition to posting to website) as a second monthly mailout, highlighting the items needing attention, asking for input. We could also add relevant announcements, event notices (if any). But we don't want to burden our members with too many emails. **ACTION:** Try on a tentative basis, see what the reaction is.

General info: new BC-based climate podcast *Break in Case of Emergency*, produced by the BC Climate Emergency Campaign (started in 2021, website [BCClimateEmergency.ca](https://bcclimateemergency.ca)).

They have an open letter "calling on the BC government to confront the climate emergency by implementing ten urgent climate actions." It has 613 signers, including Vancity, Dogwood, Stand.earth, Extinction Rebellion Nanaimo/Vanc/Vic, WCEL, plus many community groups and small businesses. The only Gabriola signer is the Sustainable Energy Co-op. **Is SG interested in signing the letter?** Letter is at bcclimateemergency.ca/10-actions

- Q: SG is a loose info-sharing hub, not a formal organization. Is this enough to meet the signing criteria? **ACTION:** Greg will look into this.

8) Gabriola Carbon Action Project & BioChar workshop (Fay) — Travelling Gabriolans who are concerned about their climate-change impacts now have a great new way to offset their carbon emissions. The Gabriola Carbon Action Project (GCAP) is working with GERTIE and Blue Heron Learning Society (BHLS) to direct travel offset contributions into Gabriola projects that have real, visible and local climate and other benefits.

Funds directed to GERTIE will be used to provide extra bus service not covered by GERTIE's normal operating funding. That could include additional service during the busy summer season. When people take GERTIE, there are fewer vehicles burning fuel to get around on our roads. Even better, the use of all-electric buses, starting this coming spring, will mean no emissions.

Funds directed to BHLS will be used to support their **biochar initiative**. This project allows Gabriolans to convert woody waste on their property into charcoal. Removal of wood waste helps reduce the fire risk on our island. It also ensures that most of the carbon in that material is taken out of circulation because the carbon in charcoal added to soils is sequestered for centuries. Biochar is also an effective soil amendment, allowing us to grow more of our own food. Growing more food locally means shipping less food in from distant locations—another way to reduce carbon emissions.

The Gardening Club meeting (March 6, 6:30 at Rollo Centre) will feature a presentation on biochar by Robbie Huston. A hands-on biochar workshop is planned for the end of March. For more information go to blueheronlearning.ca

9) GILSS — No report

10) Global climate news (Deb) — appended below

11) Harmac rezoning to Industrial Lands (Bob A) — A subsidiary of Nanaimo Forest Products Ltd. has submitted a zoning application to turn 98.3 hectares west of the Cable Bay trail into an industrial zone. The SW side of Gabriola overlooks this land. Application is sitting with staff. A petition has been created and was passed around, requesting City of Nanaimo not rezone this land.

12) Gabriola Health & Wellness Collaborative (Kes) — Penny Scott is the new Coordinator. Strategic planning workshop is in the works, likely in March.

13) Note from note-taker (Bob A) — Suggestion re notes on discussion items: Either send written notes to SG members ahead of time, OR print and present at the meeting, OR send to the note-taker after the meeting. This would make meeting notes more thorough and the note-taker's job easier.

Next meeting: **Sunday, March 30**, 3:00pm. Facilitator Bob McK, note-taker Steve E.

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Global Climate News – Feb 23, 2025

From Global Finance Hopes to Commercialization of Weather Reporting

1. Doomsday Clock 2025

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists sets the Doomsday Clock to 89 seconds to midnight in 2025, the closest it has ever been to catastrophe. The statement warns of the dangers of nuclear risk, climate change, biological events, and disruptive technologies, and urges global leaders to take bold action.

<https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/2025-statement/>

2. We Don't Have Time

We Don't Have Time (app.wedonthavetime.org) is the world's largest media platform for climate action—with a mission to democratize knowledge about climate solutions and inspire and mobilize global action toward a prosperous, fossil-free future. Some recent items:

- Despite the headlines, CFOs around the world are stepping up for climate action. According to a recent report, data reveals a shift in corporate finance: sustainability is no longer viewed as a niche concern but as a core business strategy.
- Ecuador's historic ruling, coastal ecosystems gain legal rights to protection. A first-of-its-kind ruling for nature! Ecuador's Constitutional Court, its highest court, has affirmed that coastal marine ecosystems possess intrinsic value and legal rights.
- How small hydro plants are transforming rural communities in Kenya.
- Protecting peatlands and mangroves could halve Southeast Asia's land-use emission.
- [Filling Greta's Shoes: A New Generation Of Young Climate Activists Steps Up](#) — Watch for Agustin Ocaña, an inspiring young climate activist from Ecuador and leader of Global Youth Coalition.
- The Trump administration is not just rolling back climate initiatives—it is actively dismantling the ability of federal agencies to respond to climate-driven disasters. It is a calculated attempt to align government messaging with fossil fuel interests, disregarding both scientific reality and public safety.
- [Pay to Receive Tornado Warnings? Trump's Commercialization of Weather](#) — *Sweta Chakraborty* discusses the implications of the Trump administration's crusade to privatize the US government's meteorology services.

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