

**Minutes of Sunriver Garden Council Meeting
June 10, 2020 – 7 p.m. By Zoom video conferencing**

Welcome and Introductions:

In Attendance: Fiona, Paula, Janet, Jill, Chris, Valerie and Augusta

Regrets: Anita

Chair: Fiona

Agenda approved with additions.

Approval of May 13, 2020 Council minutes.

Proposed: Janet

Seconded: Paula

Minutes adopted. They will be posted at the garden and forwarded to Anita for posting on Sooke Food Chi's website.

To do – Fiona to forward these to Anita.

Reports:

Orchard Report – submitted by Glen Thelin. Read into minutes by Fiona.

It has been a busy spring in the Sunriver Community Orchard. The Orchard is now in its 10th year and the trees are doing very well. We have a fairly consistent posse of folk who show up Wednesdays to help with whatever maintenance tasks are on the list for the week. Not all jobs are glamorous by any stretch as volunteers can attest to when they are digging out tree wells and shovelling manure.

However, we all pitch in and even with this Covid crisis we are able to easily keep our distance and enjoy our time together in the fresh air. In late February, for the first time since 2011, we sprayed all of the orchard trees with an application of Organic Lime Sulphur and Dormant Oil to try and reduce the amount of pests and disease common in fruit trees. We are already seeing much healthier leaf growth this season. We are also seeing what looks like a bumper fruit crop, especially in the apples. The dry, sunny, weather in April was perfect timing for the pollination of the blossoms. Thanks to the folks who set up the Mason Bee colonies each year. Their dedication is much appreciated.

Our focus now is to bolster the bear fence for the coming fruit season. We had a young bear break in for the first time, late fall last year and as well as eating his share of fruit he caused much damage to the limbs on the young trees. We will be installing extra strands of electric fencing around the entire perimeter of the Orchard. When the electric Bear Fence is activated, it will be well marked with signage and public access to the Orchard will be suspended during that period. (As many of you are aware, general access during these times of Covid has already been suspended for safety reasons. Only volunteers working on weekly Orchard maintenance are allowed inside at this time)

If anyone is interested in participating in 'hands on' learning about the care and maintenance of fruit trees please join us Weds at 1:30pm.

Thanks to everyone who has participated in the care of this very successful community project these past 10 seasons, since the first tree went in.

Communications/ Plot Registrar - Janet reported that there are 13 people on the wait list. All those who have had issues with weedy plots have now been contacted. Progress has been made on all plots.

Secretary/Survey Monkey – Fiona reported on the Survey Monkey requesting input around the proposed new plot development. All but one respondent has agreed with the proposal, and the only dissenter suggests developing plots for Pod 4 plot holders only. Fiona has given Anita/Food Chi this information as requested and noted that the Board will review the proposal at their upcoming Board Meeting.

Volunteer Food Growing Program – Paula advised that the small volunteer group has continued to harvest food for the Food Bank and that all necessary Covid 19 procedures are being followed. Paula would welcome extra volunteers and thanked those who have donated tomato plants including a donation from the Victoria Municipality. Some plants remain after greenhouse planting and plot holder's uptake and discussion followed around Paula's proposal to pot these up and donate them to attendees at her upcoming Food Bank presentation. Augusta volunteered to assist with this. Motion to approve donation of plants to the Food Bank - Fiona
Seconded – Jill

General Maintenance, compost, tools etc. - Discussion of compost piles. Janet, Dave, Jim and Tom will continue to turn the compost inside the garden. Jim and Chris will start a new compost pile after Paula has emptied the existing large parking lot compost pile. New signs will be erected to assist plot holders in identifying usable compost.

New Business

Chairperson appointment - no nominations for Chairperson have been received. Council agreed to share the Chair responsibilities at upcoming council meetings. Jill volunteered to chair the next Council meeting.

Volunteer Coordinator – Janet will continue in her current role as volunteer coordinator.

Noise in the garden – Council reviewed a plot holder complaint about use of a weedwhacker at the weekend when the garden was busy. After discussion, it was agreed that the situation would be monitored but no further action would be taken at this time.

SRG Guidelines – Janet proposed that the current guidelines be reviewed to better reflect the needs of the Garden especially around the weed problem. This was tabled for further discussion.

Issues Arising from Previous Meeting.

Budget for 2020 Concern was expressed around the timeliness of reimbursement of expenses incurred by Sunriver Garden and the need for greater transparency by Food Chi as it relates to the Garden's substantial financial contribution and the yearly Budget. It was noted that only the 2018 financial statement has been posted on the Food Chi website. Questions were raised about Food Chi's responsibility to advise Food Chi members around the annual financial statement.

To Do: Tabled for further discussion.

Work bees – none scheduled pending the relaxation of Covid 19 regulations.

Covid 19 Fiona reported that she requested further information from Food Chi around changes in the Covid 19 garden regulations given the reopening of BC. She has received an e mail reply from Anita stating Anita has contacted the District of Sooke for further clarification. In the interim, Food Chi direction is that the current Covid 19 regulations will remain in place in the garden.

New Plot Development/Erosion at Pod 4 Council thanked Janet and Dave for their efforts in measuring out new plots in the Garden. Clarification was provided around the history of Food Chi and the District of Sooke's roles in stewardship of the Garden and the decision- making process. Some discussion followed.

To Do: Jill will attend the next Food Chi Board meeting scheduled for mid to late June.

Newsletter – Kimberley from Plot 20 has volunteered to assist Janet in the compilation of the next newsletter.

To Do: Janet to contact Anita to request template as volunteered at the last Council meeting.

Meeting concluded at 9 p.m.

Date and location of next meeting: July 8. Zoom meetings to continue until further notice.