

GABRIOLA ISLAND
COMMUNITY HALL ASSOCIATION

BUSINESS PLAN

2018/21+

Gabriola Island Community Hall Association
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Introduction

The Board of the Community Hall, in June 2016, adopted the following mission statement:

The Gabriola Island Community Hall builds community spirit through its fully utilised, multi-purpose, social, cultural and recreational facility.

The Gabriola Island Community Hall Association, which has responsibility for the Hall, is registered under the BC Societies Act and as such reports annually to the provincial Registrar. It annually elects the Board along with four officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.

The original by-laws of the Hall stated that all Gabriolans over the age of 16 were de facto members of the Association. With the advent of the revised BC Societies Act all registered associations are required to maintain accurate lists of their members – an impossibility under the former by-laws. Thus, the Association asked Gabriolans to register as Members of the association, gleaning a membership of between 200 and 300 Gabriolans, who have voting rights at General Meetings, receive regular newsletters and a proportion of whom also freely make regular donations to the Association.

The Community Hall is the largest meeting space on Gabriola. It has two floors of 2,500 square feet and 1,800 square feet respectively. The lower floor also provides room for a pre-school. It occupies a 1+-acre property at the junction of South Road and Garland Road. It has been the setting for community events for more than a century. Its annual Salmon Barbecue brings together between six and seven hundred Gabriolans and assists in providing much-needed funding. A complete history of the Hall was recently completed by Andre Lessard and may be viewed on our website.

Strategic Planning

At its most recent strategic planning exercise, the Board of the Gabriola Island Community Hall Association identified the following major goals:

- Enhance the Hall with a view to better accommodating users;
- Host a growing number of recreational activities.
- Ensure first-rate service to users;
- Strengthen the Hall's profile in the community;
- Work towards greater financial stability;
- Explore the use of the Hall as a performance space.

This Business Plan is an attempt to put these general goals into practice. In light of recent power outages, we are also committed to upgrade the Hall's capacity to serve local people in an emergency.

Current activities and structure

Alongside regular (mostly weekly) recreational uses, such as a choir, pickle ball, badminton, juggling, ping pong, darts, dancing, tai chi, and karate, the Hall hosts a number of annual Island-wide activities, such as the Gabriola Players' Annual Pantomime, the Library Book Sale, the Christmas Spirit Feast, the Gabriola Singers' Christmas Concert, and the Food Forum.

The Hall's annual Salmon Barbecue in August of each year regularly attracts crowds of six to seven hundred Gabriolans as well as dozens of volunteers. The Barbecue also provides much-needed revenue to the Association.

The Association accomplishes its mandate through an active Board of Directors and a few hard-working contracted personnel who take care of the physical plant, rentals and cleaning – all reporting regularly to the Board. This work is very often complemented by members and friends donating their time and expertise to help reduce costs.

Financial

The Board has been fortunate to secure some funding through the RDN's Community Works fund, the Gabriola Lions Club, Village Foods, and a growing number of individual donors. This has helped us replace the metal roof, re-equip the mechanical room, install a handicapped washroom and replace a large part of the roof.

Rental income: in an attempt to make the facility accessible to the largest possible number of Gabriolans, rents have been kept artificially low, resulting in the need to raise operating funds elsewhere.

Some of the major financial challenges currently facing the Board in 2019 are:

- The increasing costliness of much-needed repairs and renovations to the Hall's aging physical plant. These include (a) replacing part of the roof to avoid leakage, (b) providing back-up power to ensure that Hall is minimally usable during power outages, (c) providing more adequate storage areas for various equipment belonging to the Hall and user groups,
- The growing competition for scarce funds from so many other good causes on Gabriola.
- Preparing for the time when the Hall is no longer the only large meeting/performance space on the Island.
- Insurance charges are on the rise.

In September 2017 we had a tentative arrangement with the RDN that they would provide partial funding over a period of years (from the Community Works funds) to underwrite a phase-by-phase approach to renovating the facility. It is not clear to us whether this agreement is still in force. If so, it would still involve the Hall in some significant fund-raising from other sources – but it would certainly make the task much easier.

Project Planning

Preliminary – Feasibility Study

In order to confirm and perhaps add to the priorities listed below, it is important and urgent that the Association seek funding to engage a professional person or persons with a mandate to prepare a Feasibility Study which contains (a) an analysis of to what extent the current premises, range of activities and financial structure of the Community Hall are sustainable or could be improved, and (b) what changes and innovations could be recommended to make the Hall better meet its objectives, as identified in its mission statement, in the areas of physical plant, programming, staffing and financial management.

Phase One - 2018

Funding from the Nanaimo Regional District and the Gabriola Lions Club made possible three projects:

- Upgrade to the mechanical room including installation of new equipment – RDN Community Works fund. Completed. Installation of gutters around newly installed (2017) metal roof. Lions Club and RDN (\$5,000). To complete in spring of 2019.
- Installation of a Handicapped Person's Washroom with financial assistance from the Village Food Market and the Island Singers. Completed \$8,500

Phase Two – 2019

- Replace aging flat roof to avoid danger of leakage. Estimates of final cost range from \$34,000 to \$42,000 depending on the need for replacement of sub-roof plywood. RDNs Community Works fund has committed to 50% of cost up to \$25,000. We are seeking a donor for the remainder.
- Replace aging windows throughout. Total cost approximately \$7,000. RDN commitment of \$3,500. Request to Gabriola Lions Club for matching amount.
- Explore potential for installing supplementary electricity (generator) that would enable the Hall to be kept partially functional during the frequent power outages. With this the Hall could be used as an emergency venue for those in the South Island without heat or light. Discussion with the RDN proceeding. If successful, matching funds will be required.
- Explore the possibility of installation of a heat pump for the pre-school area. (this would obviate having to heat the entire lower floor when the school is in session).
- Gertie: Arrange a schedule for Gertie's arrival/departure from the Hall. Possibly erect a simple shelter at the roadside for potential passengers.

Phase Three – 2019/20 and beyond

- Review the adequacy of the Hall's insulation and make the necessary adjustments.

- Recognise that a new performance and community space may be constructed at the Commons at some time in the future and work towards some mutually satisfactory collaboration.
- Explore possibilities for large expansion of storage space for Hall equipment and that of regular renters for a small fee.
- Explore the feasibility of installing solar panels to minimise Hydro bills.
- Reorganise parking lot with marked spaces and dividers.
- Purchase new chairs – current ones are near the end of their useful life.

The Way Ahead

- a) Identifying: Using experienced professional advice, identify the major and minor areas in which the Hall requires upgrades or additions in order to fulfil its mandate.
- b) Friend-raising: Intensify the information given to members and other Gabriola residents. Find ways of supporting and/or working with other organisations which have similar objectives such as the Commons' Goat Barn Theatre.
- c) Administrative: Seek out new board members who are dedicated to the Hall and have the needed skills to move us ahead.
- d) Financial: Develop a financial plan in which regular income from rentals and special events such as the Salmon Barbecue cover our basic operating expenses and upgrades.
- e) Cooperation: Seek out partnerships with other Island entities, such as the Recreation Society and the Chamber of Commerce, with a view to exchanging information, avoiding duplication and providing new services.
- f) Volunteers: Formulate a policy to encourage and appreciate volunteers who bring their skills and enthusiasm to the service of the Hall.
- g) Documentation: Rationalise the maintenance of documentation regarding the Hall's operation. Ensure that there are approved policies to cover day-to-day operations: membership lists, financial approval process, insurance details, rental contracts, etc.
- h) Exploring: Research granting organisations with a view to formulating applications that fulfil our needs and fall within the granting agency's mandate.
- i) Rentals: Discuss modest changes in rental arrangements and fees.
- j) Events: Explore the potential of attracting more Island-wide events to the Hall, some of which could possibly have fund-raising potential, such as the Island Singers' and Paul Gellman's very welcome benefit performances. Also purchase special event supplies such as drape panels, table linens etc that would add value to rental packages.