

July 5 Meeting Minutes



SUNSHINE COAST ALLIANCE FOR SENIORS' CARE CO-OP · SUNDAY, JULY 5, 2020 · READING TIME: 15 MINUTES 16
Reads

Meeting started at 2:00 pm. 20 participants on Zoom

SCASCC: John Richmond, Paula Larrondo, Lise Kreps, Jason Lewis, Maureen Brodie
Guest Speakers: Vanessa Hammond of [Victoria Health Coop](#). [John Restakis](#) Plus 15 Coast residents.
Introductions all round.

Vanessa's presentation on Why Co-Ops?

Vanessa's comments: Charities have lots of CRA restrictions. Fundraising co-op may be charitable but working co-ops might not want to be. Coops need directors and insurance, and rules of order for meetings. Roberts Rules developed by US military. Very long. [Fred Francis Rules](#) are Canadian and shorter.

John R suggests [Roberta's Rules](#).

Vanessa: Coop Board must follow legal rules, most importantly listen to the MO's (Member Owners). How will we measure our success? Funding opportunities are limited if we pay our board members just for being on board (can pay for other specific tasks). Membership criteria: adding "and approval of the Board" helps keep membership functional

Questions and Answers

1) Cohousing vs co-ops: clarification

Lise: people often refer to the Roberts Creek cohousing as a co-op, but it isn't. Cohousing is legally a strata, where we own our housing units, plus a fraction of the shared land and facilities. In Co-op housing you own a share, but have no equity in buildings or land. Cohousing therefore is more expensive. However cohousing treats our shared land/facilities cooperatively: we have shared gardens, chickens, dining hall, kids play areas, etc. We have lots of committees and meetings to run them cooperatively. (Like a co-op on steroids!)

Maureen: An Equity Co-op is a different breed of cat. We own shares as per our square footage of our units, in a corporation that owns the building. The building is run by the owners. It was the forerunner to stratas.

2) What is the most common reason for coops to fail?

Vanessa: they stop cooperating. Somebody takes over as boss, or someone decides to do nothing. Be careful to look at definition values and principles at beginning of each meeting in the beginning. Or events beyond our control like pandemics, though coops can weather them better because of our joint commitment.

John R: Marketplace society plays a role. Sometimes coops formed to meet a need, and then need changes. Eg local food availability in mainstream stores increases.

Vanessa: if marketplace goes away, no shame in saying we shouldn't be doing this anymore.

3) What are we're trying to do here as a coop? Did it come about partly because of Trellis? Will this coop be a building for seniors who need care, run cooperatively by members and owners?

Johanna: Most people want to stay in their own home as long as possible, not a facility. I've been looking at [Village to Village](#) model, started in Boston. Like a coop but nothing is owned. Group of seniors, geographically related, cooperating to get the home care that they need: navigating health system, transportation, shopping, hiring two care aides for the group. Group pays for and manages the care aides to get better level of care in your own home. Communities across states and in Canada looking into this.

Lise: RC Cohousing interested in coop in-home care as long as possible, and LTC facility if needed.

Fran: lots of seniors I know are renting and struggling to have a home.

John R: Some people want to convert Trellis to Coop. But others saying want nothing to do with LTC facilities. Our developer is [Cooperatives First](#). Like "Dragons' Den": they want to see group of people who are diverse, interested, committed, willing to go ahead. We met that. They're willing to help us get off ground now and suggest we form a Community Service Co-op first. That's a Big Tent under which we do variety of projects. Some will be partnerships with people with land, who want to develop for a facility. Some want to do aging at home projects. Each could be sub-project or its own cooperative. As much as our resources permit, we'll try to do all these things at same time. We have lawyers and funders interested already. Once we're incorporated as a co-op, we can apply for grants and funding. Eg Vancity, SCCU, many others. Coops First will help us with that. Then we can hire people - we're all volunteers but that's not sustainable as a business model. Next steps might include projects in Pender Harbour, Roberts Creek, South Sunshine Coast, North Sunshine Coast, home care.

Johanna: in a webinar with Sandy Buchman, President of Canadian Medical Association, I asked him how many LTC folks could be cared for at home? Inference was, most of them. Home medical care has to change as well. Great programs, eg Vancouver totally at-home care of frail elders [*Lise's note: could not find online reference under this name*]. One of the doctors from that project lives in Roberts Creek now. Trying to get interest from health providers here interested.

John R: philosophical piece, how do we change the whole nature of seniors care? Something wrong in how we've been doing it. Big appetite for change, alternative models. But, practical piece: how do we do it? Need to pay as much or more attention to that. Theory and practice come together (praxis) - we have to do it quickly as the opportunities are there right now.

Johanna: On everyone's mind because 81% of deaths from COVID were in LTC (long-term care).

John Restakis: Window of opportunity right now. Should we coalesce quickly around opportunity as alternative to Trellis (if it falls)? There are already a large variety of models that address each of the seniors care approaches - LTC, in home care, shared services, coops for distributed services, teams of locally-organized caregivers that have their own platform, etc. All those examples are available as models. Do people think Trellis is immanent and should be acted upon, as an opportunity?

John R: Trellis continues to move along. They have contract with VCH (Vancouver Coastal Health). Official word from VCH and BC Ministry of Health is that they've signed off on Trellis and it's moving forward. Passed second hearing at Sechelt Council recently. Officially Sechelt District is strongly behind it. However lots of unanswered questions. Many of us attended Trellis' recent public presentation online. We asked, How will you make money for the investors? Mary & Dan MacDougall, owners, never answered that. Lots of speculation about whether project is still profitable, given changing regulatory environment. We will continue to work so if the opportunity arises (that Trellis fails) we can hit the ground running as an alternative.

John Restakis: Team needs to be aligned and ready to move if opportunity opens up (if Trellis falls).

John R: we have some great non-public partners working with us behind the scenes. And even if Trellis goes ahead, we have lots of alternatives to put in place.

4) Will builders of a facility become part of the co-op Board?

John R: Sechelt Trellis project is different than Roberts Creek potential Coop Project on your land.

Vanessa: Yes. Should be multi-stakeholder coop so each group involved has representative on the board. Residents/Family; workers - admin/care providers/cleaning & kitchen; funders; health authority - all need to be represented. Must be a Board representative of everyone who has some stake in receiving proper care. And any in community who care, eg chamber of commerce. Applies to home care too. Philosophically, see [WHO definitions of health and well-being](#).

Jill: Kevin and I are collecting Steering Committee members for our Roberts Creek building project.

Lise: clarification that members elect Board members, to represent their interests. So not all coop members need (or should) be Board members.

Vanessa: In BC a Coop Board can be 3 to 9 Board members. More than 9 would be a nightmare. Each board member has particular perspective and constituency.

John R: we're invited to be part of lab at U of Waterloo, to help people like us to really focus our thinking and resources on conversion projects. This addresses John Restakis' question about Trellis. I'll be working with them on that starting tomorrow: 10 of us, from across Canada, to hone our energies and expertise.

5) I'm interested in living in tiny house in community, multi-generational. Is that part of your vision?

John R: We have 2 priorities. First get established and registered as a full-fledged cooperative. Second step at same time is to break out into smaller groups of people with similar interests and goals, working on sub-projects. One is Jill & Kevin in Roberts Creek; one is Bruce in Pender Harbour and his neighbours.

6) Lise's comment: the time to act is now.

Aging Boomers are an oncoming avalanche of seniors' care needs. It will only get worse as we have more seniors and more with conditions like dementia. Nobody wants to go to LTC but some will inevitably need to. We need whole spectrum of services, from in-house to assisted to LTC. Co-operative piece is important for stakeholders' involvement and quality of care.

John R: Yes Bruce says Ministry is focused on Sechelt and Gibsons. He and his 100 neighbours want to be able to stay in their Pender Harbour community.

7) Jill's comment: originally we were thinking small container housing, in a few years. Have met with SCRD about this. But talking to John R we are looking at how to get from here to there. Not sure yet what that looks like. In ideal world, it'd be small single contained units where seniors could live, have animals, be close to everything. I've spoken to workers with seniors on Coast and there is huge need for this. They go as care aides to homes, check in about groceries, take them to appointments. But it could look different.

John R: I'm also meeting w BC housing about Jill and Kevin's project. Very impressed with their work and vision. Letting BC Housing know we're in process of getting started, this summer, and we're very supportive of this project and want to help in any way we can.

John Restakis; re models and support for vision in Roberts Creek, and John R's discussions with BC Housing, would be timely to connect with folks at [Cooperative Housing Federation of BC](#). They may be interested in working with co-op land, especially building affordable housing on a community land trust model. They've been doing this in partnership with the city of Vancouver and Vancity. One approach is a land trust, or commonly-owned land, and adapting that to eldercare on a smaller plot, like proposal in Roberts Creek. BC Coops Fed are experienced in how to model co-op living on commonly-owned land. Good source of info and

advice. Community Service Coop can act as catalyst for other senior care projects, providing practical advice and resources for each situation, and source of experienced consulting expertise to local community coops.

John R: I attended Coop Cafe in Vancouver in Feb. Someone from Vancity was there, and we had series of meetings w Vancity planned, which got interrupted by COVID but will get restarted soon.

Thrilled to have John Restakis in on this discussion! His book "[Humanizing the Economy](#)" is awesome. He wrote the original [2008 report on Seniors Care Coops](#).

8) Maureen's comment: at start of meeting I was assuming we were forming an umbrella coop. But so many seniors on Coast are struggling without housing security. It would be blind of us to say we're only dealing with healthcare. Without housing security how can you have good health? This is a really productive discussion. I see this committee being a steering committee to look at Trellis if that falls through, to look at in home care, assisted living - inviting community people to join us, and we will be a resource for them to forming their own coops, and we'll all be interlinked.

John R: Coops First comes to table with expertise and money; will pay for business plans etc. Would like us to have at least three Steering Committees: 1) for Community Service Coop; 2) with Roberts Creek project with Jill & Kevin; 3) for Sechelt, with key stakeholders on Coast, including the three local Coast Salish Nations.

9) Phyllis's comments: Three points.

1) [Sunshine Tiny Homes](#) owner has always been interested in doing co-ops and finding land.

2) Models of tiny homes or related dwellings: has a seniors committee on Coast done something about that? I've seen a model of a bunch of tiny homes with common buildings in the middle. Has anyone seen that?

3) 1988 magazine at library had a co-op plan of small houses, back from the hippy era. I will photocopy and send that to John R and he can send it around.

(Lise offered to help Phyllis research these sources.)

Vanessa: WHO says safe housing is essential to health factor!

10) Elspeth's comments: congrats to Paula and John for publicity! In Friday's Coast Reporter there was an [article](#) about Trellis presenting to Chamber of Commerce. Every time there's an article about that, there should be another letter to the editor or article to say, this isn't the only option. My friends' relatives in LTC here have been warehoused. Trellis has convinced people that they're the only option, they can have something up and running in a few years.

11) What can we do right now, or tomorrow?

John R: Writing letters is very important, especially to provincial govt. Our MP Patrick Weiler is interested, and one of his reps attended one of our meetings. But Prov Govt has been standoffish. Will be calling MLA Nicholas Simons this week. Anyone and everyone who wants to write a letter to VCH, to Adrian Dix Min of Health, MLA Nicholas Simons, BC Liberals opposition, to say we want an alternative to private care.

[Many of these addresses are now linked on our SCASCC website at <https://scseniorscarecoop.ca/alliance/>]

We want cooperative model at the table as an option. I'm very respectful of the many organizations that provide great care, e.g. Christenson Village. Nothing is perfect but we hear great things about them. Not-for-profit model has also been problematic, however; 97% of COVID deaths were in *one* not-for-profit facility. Nonprofit model has its own problems, as does for-profit model (as NDP etc say).

We are reaching out to First Nations Health Authority, with help of some of the coastal First Nations, to get co-op model on the table. And to the federal and provincial green parties. They have leadership races. Write to them too! Greens may hold the balance of power in BC.

Paula: Not-for-profit facilities fall into same traps other facilities face. COVID-19 Task Force said, it has to do with how deeply rooted the attitudes are to people in institutions. As well as the viewpoints of the care providers - age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Who's doing the caregiving?

If we can build something that looks different on the Sunshine Coast - really different: Pender Harbour, RC Coop, RC Cohousing home care, etc. IF it's a co-op it will address some of those systemic issues.

John Restakis: I've had my "Coop Elder Care in Canada" sent to Jagmeet Singh and NDP MLAs. Will follow up with them.

John R: [Each for All](#), great program about coops on Coop Radio Tuesdays at 8 pm: recent program said, after last provincial budget they asked Tom Armstrong, how do you feel about where BC is going? What about co-ops? He said, in 1990s, we had a minister of Co[operatives, Jenny Kwan. It was great. She was easy to work with. Hasn't been the same under John Horgan's administration. Reality is that co-operatives don't have the same place in the consciousness in BC people as they had 20 years ago. It's up to us in the co-op sector to raise the profile with the provincial government and NDP. NDP haven't been enthusiastic about for-profit model. So that leaves door open to alternatives. We have one.

12) Johanna's comment: Average time in long-term care is 18 months and you don't leave by moving out. Families of the residents in long-term care are an early warning system for unsafe care, and they tend to be ignored in most long-term care facilities.

13) Maureen's suggestion: Two years ago I was talking to Sechelt Council and SCR D, that a good place for complex care facility would be Sechelt Legion land. It was struggling then, still is now. If they were part of the co-operative they'd have a vested interest. Location is excellent. We could build high-rise with Legion on main floor, for social entertainment for residents. Gibsons Legion, same thing: struggling, great location. Plus motel in lower Gibsons: owner has been renovating for at least two or three years, but nobody's living in it.

John R: Yes two things: we do have some other unofficial offers of land - not Sechelt legion but I'll reach out to them. Couple of emails and phone calls about hotels in disrepair, could be repurposed. Also someone in real estate they'd like to see used for affordable seniors housing. Lots of oars in the water! Just need to get ourselves officially up and running. People ask, "Who are you? Charity, not for profit, corporate address? Board?"

Other piece is we approached Cap U Sechelt about staffing - lack of healthcare and affordable housing for healthcare staff on the Coast. Will talk with Cap U in conjunction w the Coast Salish Nations re training healthcare staff and housing them. Multi-pronged strategy.

Maureen: It could be a good idea to see if there are other doctors who would be in favour of a co-op model for Trellis. There is a small group of doctors who have been very vocal who have not thought beyond, "Just get Trellis built so we can get seniors out of desperately needed hospital beds".

14) Sue's comment: I think Trellis project is inevitable, unless their financing goes sideways, which is always a possibility. John Restakis' book is terrific and I use it all the time, thank you. You've got a terrific bundle of energy here. Big job to harness it all! Thanks everyone!

John R: Yes if Trellis is a done deal, you could say, don't waste any time on it. The great thing about a co-op is there isn't a "party line," like in government or even in charity. Leadership doesn't dictate. We all decide what we want to do or not do. Some folks are gung-ho about trying to convert Trellis to multi-stakeholder, and I'm in that too. Those of us still interested in that will continue to work on it. But we have 50-60 folks involved who aren't interested in Trellis for variety of reasons and will do lots of other projects.

Paula: timing is excellent in BC - new innovative projects happening after pandemic, eg dedicated staff at one facility only costs money and eats owners' profits. May not be profitable for Trellis. And won't add that many beds anyway. If all the additional 12 beds are private, and they charge whatever they want, it may not be enough to sustain that facility for profit. We're in a good spot in BC!

Gillian: Business advice is no longer saying LTC will be profitable.

John R: Alberta government loves co-ops, especially when they fill gaps in market that are not met by private sector. Maybe it's better for co-op sector to meet this need for seniors' care. You can look at it from so many perspectives.

Vanessa: So get the community service / development co-op set up asap. This is SO worth doing, and the range of enthusiasm and skill in the group is powerful!

Meeting ended at 4:20

Next meeting: Tues July 21, 7 pm. On Zoom and also limited spaces in-person in Roberts Creek. Email info@scseniorscarecoop.ca for invitation.

Like

Comment

Share



Comment as Sunshine Coast Alliance for Seniors' Care Co-op