



Harvest Hub Working Group – Meeting Minutes

Date: January 26, 2026

Time: 2:00 pm – adjournment

Location: North Saanich Municipal Hall

Attendees

- Barb Webster, Director of Financial Services
 - Ben Martin, Director of Infrastructure Services and First Nations Relations
 - Stephanie Munro, Chief Administrative Officer
 - Sanjiv Shrivastava, Council Liaison to the AgFS Advisory Committee
 - Darlene Lavender, Harvest Hub Working Group
 - Terry Chow, Harvest Hub Working Group
 - Greg Warner, Donor and Harvest Hub Working Group
 - Bernedette Green, Harvest Hub Working Group
 - Annie Charbonneau, AMCA
 - Michael Jamieson, AMCA
 - Graham Oglend, AMCA
 - Gabe Forrester, OnPoint Group
 - Colette Miller, OnPoint Group
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1. Welcome and Opening

Ben welcomed participants and opened the meeting.

2. Purpose of the Meeting

Annie outlined the objectives of the meeting:

- Review feedback on the interior design plan.
- Identify what participants like and what changes they would like to see.
- Acknowledge constraints related to cost and timeline.
- Confirm that, if alignment is reached, the design will be adjusted and finalized for review with the construction teams Wednesday's meeting.
- Target outcome: a finalized interior plan.

3. Overview of Interior Design (Annie & AMCA)

Key Design Considerations

- Interior design footprint is larger than originally presented, closed in breezeway.
- Priority placed on maximizing primary processing space including functional freezer and cooler space.
- Design allows for future building expansion at the rear.

- Mechanical room and mop closet included intent is to maintain mechanical room size.
- Universal washroom included.
- Office space is designed to remain flexible, with visibility/access to both retail and processing areas.
- Primary processing space prioritized for maximum adaptability and multi-user functionality.
- Interior design should support future expansion.

AMCA Design Notes

- Consolidation of washroom and office areas to maximize primary processing space.
- Half of the breezeway has been incorporated into the interior to increase processing space.
- Shelving assumed to be movable, stackable trolley units.
- Covered storage space is included within the budget (confirmed by Annie).

4. Roundtable Feedback & Discussion

G. Warner:

- Suggested separate sink for washing.
- Proposed swapping the universal washroom and office for improved accessibility for both customers and farmers.
- Raised concerns about rolling doors over food processing areas and VIHA requirements.
- Noted that for primary (cold) processing, open doors have been approved by VIHA in similar projects.
- Questioned the purpose and efficiency of dry storage space.
- Emphasized need for uncluttered, accessible space.
- Suggested ductwork be located outside production space or above (e.g., mezzanine) to reduce dust.
- Noted interest from beekeepers in having space for an extractor (power access only required).
- Expressed appreciation for the development of the interior design and group feedback.

D. Lavender:

- Presented an alternate layout:
 - Washroom accessible from hallway so farmers can use it when retail is locked.
 - Point of sale positioned near entrance/exit.
 - Lockers and small storage area near wash closet for multi-user security.
 - U-shaped counters recommend efficient food production.
 - Split freezer and fridge along the wall.
 - 5-foot-deep shelving deemed inefficient.
 - Pantry required for food prep.
 - Smaller locker area within primary processing space.
 - Mop closet relocated near freezer.
 - Raised concern that rolling doors over processing areas may not pass VIHA without mitigation.

T. Chow:

- Supported the clarity of the loading zone being exterior (not taking up interior space)
- Echoed need for secondary or alternate washroom access.
- Shared experience from Kootenay Food Hub (~5,000 sq ft):
 - Individual coolers/freezers less efficient than walk-in units.
- Noted importance of considering WorkSafe requirements.

P. Chandler

- Acknowledged cost and timeline constraints.
- Feedback from farmers:
 - Strong support for location and preliminary layout.
 - Emphasis on adaptability and future expansion.
- Suggested:
 - Potential for high storage (mezzanine).
 - Keeping front façade presentable; rear used for storage.
 - Exploring rainwater collection for cost efficiency.
 - Covered loading zone with straight-in access.
 - Loading area should be permeable, cleanable, rodent resistant.
 - Raised loading area ideal for ergonomics and rodent control.
 - Weight scale near loading zone.
 - Compost area required; explore synergies with Thatch Creek and Sandown.
 - Dishwasher or sink large enough for largest trays (VIHA requirement).
 - Confirmed support for 3-phase power.
 - Asked about backup power options (solar/battery).

B.Green

- Supported design direction and DL's washroom/office access concept.
- Noted mechanical room size reduction may not be feasible.
- Suggested alternatives to rolling doors (e.g., sliding doors).
- Referenced Esquimalt Food Hub:
 - Produce not secured or partitioned.
 - Importance of finalizing floor utilities before concrete pour.
- Suggested reconfiguring point-of-sale area for retail efficiency.
- Raised need for additional counter space near sinks.
- Emphasized need for multiple access points if spaces are not in use.

B.Webster discussed some findings from Summerland and Cowichan Food Hubs to understand operational models. Will bring findings to upcoming service visioning workshop.

5. Loading Area & Expansion Discussion

- Covered loading area discussed extensively.
- Annie confirmed that early design decisions favored a level loading area to ensure accessibility for all vehicle types.

- Raised loading docks would limit access to larger trucks only.
- BM suggested exploring loading equipment (e.g., scissor lifts) depending on user needs.
- Door location at rear must remain to preserve expansion potential.

6. Storage, Mezzanine & Equipment Considerations

- Mezzanine discussed:
 - Annie noted stair requirements consume space and are outside current scope.
 - GW shared that Thatch Creek's mezzanine is underutilized.
- Dry storage purpose debated:
 - AMCA suggested packaging storage.
 - PC noted farmer interest in bin storage.
 - Concern raised that space may be underutilized or inefficient.
 - Annie agreed further definition is required.

7. Code, Capacity & Utilities

- Annie confirmed fire safety capacity will exceed expected usage.
- Mechanical and electrical systems will be designed with flexibility.
- Building will be insulated.
- Rodent control is included in construction design.

8. Next Steps

- Design team will review all feedback and assess feasible revisions within cost and timeline constraints.
- Some changes may be incorporated; others may not be possible.
- A user group workshop will be held to further define operational needs and service visioning.

9. Closing

Ben and Annie thanked participants for their thoughtful input.

Greg expressed appreciation for the collaborative process and progress on the interior design.

Minutes prepared for circulation to the Harvest Hub Working Group