

## **Comox Valley Food Hub Stewardship Group Terms of Reference**

The purpose of this Terms of Reference is to present clear guidelines for the creation and functioning of a multi-stakeholder Stewardship Group that will guide development of the Comox Valley Food Hub (CVFH).

### **Background**

In 2021, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries partnered to complete a feasibility assessment for establishing a food hub in the Comox Valley. The [Feasibility Study](#) was completed with the support of a working group of representatives from various agriculture and food-related organizations operating in the Comox Valley, as well as, input from over 40 business, residents, farmers and interested parties. A business strategy was identified for the establishment of a local food hub and the CVRD is moving forward with the first step of recommendations in the implementation plan which include the establishment of the Comox Valley Food Hub Stewardship Group to explore the implementation of the Food Hub business strategy

### **Purpose of the Stewardship Group**

The CVFH Stewardship Group (FHSG) will work with the CVRD to:

1. Guide the development of a detailed business plan/business model update;
2. Engage and inform CVFH stakeholders;
3. Secure funding for the CVFH;
4. Secure facilities(s) for the CVFH;
5. Secure commitments from regional producers, processors and purchasers;
6. Determine ownership and operating structure of CVFH;
7. Make a final recommendation on whether or not to proceed with the CVFH by the fourth quarter of 2022;
8. Facilitate a smooth transition of its duties to the ultimate CVFH owner and operator.

### **Membership of the Stewardship Group**

The FHSG will consist of a maximum of 12 members from the Comox Valley with experience, background and/or association related to:

- Business development and management
- Food distribution
- Food systems
- Fundraising
- Communications and marketing
- Farmers Institutes
- Regional food producers
- Regional food processors
- Bulk food purchasing – food & beverage, grocery
- Business/economic development support services

## **Time Commitment and Meetings Schedule**

The FHSG will meet on a regular basis (approximately monthly), according to a schedule decided by the members. The FHSG may choose to create working groups that will meet in addition to the regular scheduled meetings. The FHSG is intended to be a working committee and may require time in addition to scheduled meetings.

## **Quorum**

If at least six members are present, the meeting will be deemed to have achieved a quorum.

## **Decision making**

The FHSG will adopt a consensus decision-making process whereby an effort is made to achieve general consensus on decisions. However, where a consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be held among the members present, with the Chair voting last and only in the event of a tie vote.

## **Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Chair's role is to facilitate and chair the meeting and ensure that members have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the meeting. The Vice-Chair shall assume the authority and perform all the duties of the Chair in absence of the Chair.

Appointment and terms of the Chair and Vice-Chair roles will be determined by members of the FHSG at the first meeting.

## **Meeting Conduct**

The conduct of FHSG meetings shall enable members to consider the information presented and make informed decisions in a democratic, consensually driven environment with respect to the following:

- Group discussion is important; everyone participates;
- Provide honest, open opinions respectfully;
- Agree to disagree; consensus may not always be achieved;
- Commit to staying on track and on topic; and
- The promise of anonymity; names are not associated with comments.

Discussions related to any matter requiring a decision by the FHSG must not be conducted via email. The information must be submitted to the Chair and staff/consultants for inclusion in the agenda.

## **Minutes**

Minutes for meetings will be prepared by the consultant. Resolutions from the FHSG will be considered by CVRD staff and, when deemed necessary, CVRD Board.

## **Conflict of Interest**

FHSG members shall not knowingly take advantage of, or benefit from, information that is obtained through their FHSG duties and responsibilities and which is not generally available to the public. In the event of a potential conflict of interest, the member will declare it for discussion and recording, after which the member will vacate the meeting for the discussion and vote.

**Confidentiality**

Members may have access to confidential materials and are expected to maintain confidentiality on all information and opinions shared in meetings and in relation to the CVFH.

**Communications**

CVRD staff will be the first point of contact for all media enquiries.

**Resourcing**

The FHSG will be supported by CVRD staff and consultants.

**Dissolution of the Stewardship Group**

The FHSG will be dissolved under one of the following conditions:

- The decision is made not to proceed with the establishment of a food hub.
- The decision is made to proceed with the food hub and an ownership structure is created to implement the business plan.