

# FGCA Constitution update: FAQ

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## **What is the Constitution?**

Our Constitution is something we are required to have as a registered non-profit society in BC and as a registered charity in Canada. It tells members, the public, BC Societies, and the CRA exactly what it is that we are doing, and where we are doing it.

## **Why is this change being proposed?**

The FGCA Constitution has not been substantially updated since 1999, except to add reference to the Gonzales neighbourhood in 2009. The current Constitution is a long list of items. Some of these overlap and duplicate one another. Others are too vague to meet the current requirements of the CRA. The current document does not give people a clear picture of what the FGCA actually does.

The new BC Societies Act requires changes to our Bylaws and Constitution, so this was seen as a perfect opportunity to update the Constitution to reflect the current reality of the FGCA and to meet regulatory requirements.

## **Who drafted the changes?**

The changes were drafted by the FGCA Governance Committee. The Committee consists of four Board members, two community members, and one (non-voting) staff member. These members each brought unique experience, training, and perspective to the task. Collectively the committee has over 20 years of experience with the FGCA and countless years of non-profit experience. The process of drafting this document took almost a full year, with fulsome debate and discussion.

## **What is the process for approval?**

Once the Committee was satisfied with its draft, the Constitution came to the full Board. The Board discussed it, made some small revisions, and approved sending it to the members for a vote.

The vote at the AGM is not the last step! Once approved, any changes to our Constitution need to be approved by the CRA, to ensure that our activities are charitable. It may take up to a year to obtain approval. However, due to the hard work of the Governance committee, we are confident that this version will meet with the CRA's approval.

## **Does this change anything that the FGCA is doing?**

No. The Governance Committee carefully referenced all of the FGCA's current activities to ensure they are captured in the purposes of the new Constitution.

Some purposes are very specific (like school-based counselling). Others fall under broader categories. One example is land use: we facilitate civic engagement and community development about land use, but also about other things, such as cycling and reconciliation. We kept the statement broad enough to capture all the things we want to encourage civic engagement to be about. Things like our Book Club and Community Dinners fall under community development. Parent and Tot drop-in falls under supportive programming. Repair Café is an element of community members working together to address environmental sustainability.

We do a lot of things! We drafted this Constitution to explain them clearly, but also succinctly. It provides a framework for us to continue to do all the activities we are doing well, and to help us make decisions about what we may do in the future.