



FAIRFIELD GONZALES  
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## **FGCA Nomination Report**

**October 24, 2023**

The nominating committee is always looking for members who are interested in serving as directors. Our goal is to have a wide range of skills and experience on the Board. We use a matrix to determine what skills and attributes our Board has and what needs we have for recruiting. This matrix demonstrated that our board has a wealth of knowledge in many core areas, like non-profit governance and human resource management. Skills areas that could be further developed included financial oversight and strategic planning, and we continue seeking potential candidates that could contribute these skills. We are also committed better reflecting the demographics of our community on the board.

Directors must be members of the Association, must consent to serve as Directors, and must not be disqualified from being Directors under the BC Societies Act, which lays out a number of conditions for Directors of non-profit societies.

Under FGCA bylaws, we may have up to 14 directors. This year we have seven (7) available vacancies and six (6) nominees. Nominations closed five business days prior to the AGM. There will be no nominations from the floor. The Board may choose to accept additional directors throughout the year when there are vacancies.

The eight nominees for the 2023-2024 term are:

Philip Sawkins  
Desiree Neufeld  
James Coccola  
Hayley LaPalme  
Vanessa Gelhaar  
Daniel Powell

Because we have more seats than candidates, no election will be required and all nominees will be acclaimed.

We wish to thank all the outgoing Board Directors for their commitment, time and good work on the Board. All the best in your next endeavors!



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## **Candidate Bios:**

### **Philip Sawkins**

Philip is a graduate of UBC and spent much of his professional life in heavy construction (or related fields) as a financial officer/manager. He has worked on volunteer boards in various capacities and was the executive director for 7 years of BC & Yukon for Canadian Youth Hostels, a not-for-profit society. Philip has lived in Fairfield-Gonzales since 2010, and has been on the FGCA Board for multiple terms, most recently since 2021. Philip is interested in and committed to the services offered that can be provided by and to the community through organizations like the FGCA. Philip is FGCA's current Treasurer.

### **Desiree Neufeld**

Desiree has been working in the non-profit sector for the last decade, most recently in funding administration for federal and provincial programs that aim to support agriculture and food security here in B.C. She holds a Masters of Public Health from the University of Alberta, and a Certificate in Project Management through the University of Victoria. Before moving to Victoria, Desiree worked in the grape and wine industry in Ontario. Her spare moments are filled with a myriad of outdoor activities, including hiking and camping as well as dabbling in various art mediums. Desiree is eagerly looking forward to getting more involved in FGCA's operations and community work.

### **James Coccola**

James Coccola, a resident of Fairfield Gonzales for the past two years, is a policy analyst in the provincial government, concurrently holding an elected executive role within his union. With a strong background in governance and policy, James has also contributed to various provincial boards. He is excited to use his experience in these areas, along with a deep commitment to community organizing, to support the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association.

### **Hayley LaPalme**

Hayley Lapalme is founding Co-Executive Director of Nourish Leadership, a national charity harnessing the power of food in health care for planetary health. Hayley is a systems thinker and facilitator who has spent a decade working with public institutions on pathways to more sustainable futures. She designed and led Nourish's 2016-2019 national leadership program and previously started My Sustainable Canada's mentorship program on public procurement. Previously Hayley has worked as a writer-broadcaster for the CBC, a backcountry canoe guide, and as a convenor of farmers, processors, and public buyers across

Canada. Drawing on a background in adult education, community development, and systemic design, she weaves collaborations that rebuild connections to land, health, and each other. She is an eleventh generation franco-Ontarian settler who recently relocated to Fairfield with her Victoria-native husband, toddler, and newborn. Hayley is a graduate of McGill and the University of Toronto, where she earned an M.Ed in Leadership, Adult Education, and Community Development.

After traveling back to Victoria for fifteen years with husband Scott, Hayley is thrilled to be making a perch under Moss Rocks in her family's home and is invested in building strong community. She is currently on maternity leave until the summer of 2023 and is actively jumping into the incredible programs offered by the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association and looks forward to supporting them further.

### **Vanessa Gelhaar**

Vanessa has a background in environmental sciences and renewable energies, with several years of experience working in communications and event management for an environmental non-profit in her hometown of Berlin, Germany. After a brief stint in Toronto, she moved to Victoria in the summer of 2018 and settled in Cook Street Village. While she misses Berlin's culinary and cultural scene, she has fallen in love with Victoria, the Pacific Ocean, island-grown produce, and BC's many museums - large and small. Vanessa is the Operations Manager for the British Columbia Museums Association, advancing sustainability, accessibility, and decolonization in the cultural sector as part of a small but mighty team.

### **Daniel Powell**

Daniel is interested in joining the FGCA Board because he believes he can make a substantive contribution to the ongoing work of the Association with his skills in project/change management, research and writing, and progressive advocacy. He believes that the FGCA is poised to play a critical role in upcoming work with the city, CRD, and the Province, including but not limited to the 10 Year Official Community Plan Update, the ongoing refinement of Missing Middle Housing Guidelines, efforts to address homelessness, and climate change adaptation, and he hopes to be part of these upcoming efforts.

Daniel earned a doctorate in English from the University of Victoria in 2016, and from 2014 - 2017 held a European Union-funded fellowship at King's College London in the United Kingdom. Since returning to Canada in 2017, he has worked as a digital systems strategist in the nonprofit sector, as an innovation researcher in the BC Public Service, and as nonpartisan administrative staff at the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia; his current focus is on information management and the publications, collections, and records of the Assembly.



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Daniel has come and gone to and from Victoria several times and rented in multiple neighborhoods; in 2021 he and his partner bought a condo in Northwest Fairfield adjacent to Cook Street Village, the AAA cycling network, and the Downtown Core. They live there with their two children and many, many books. Daniel believes in working to improve our neighborhood (and our city) not only for his boys, but for all residents and the generations to come after us.

Daniel currently serves as Treasurer on his building Strata Council, and has a deep interest in urbanism and land use, stemming partially from living abroad for several years and encountering first hand the many viable ways to structure our urban fabric for better access to services, safer communities, and happier residents.