

PITT MEADOWS AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Agricultural Advisory Committee held at 10:00 a.m. on November 8th, 2018 in the Council Chamber of the Pitt Meadows City Hall, 12007 Harris Road, Pitt Meadows, British Columbia

PRESENT:-

Committee Members:- Joe Bachmann, Chair
Macky Banns
Hank Bitter
Dieter Geesing, Ministry of Agriculture
Bob Hopcott
Mike Manion
Bill Park
Wayne Wisselink

Guests:- Jennifer Foxley
Patricia Gordon
Dan Kosicki
William Wild

Staff:- Randy Evans, Manager of Parks and Operations
Colin O'Byrne, Development Services Technician
Dana Parr, Senior Planner, Meeting Chair
Elaine Harrison, Recorder

REGRETS:- Alana Aquilini
Lynn Kemper
Philip Robinson

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am.

1. LATE ITEMS

The following late items were submitted:-

- Mike Manion to continue as the City's representative on Metro Vancouver's AAC
- Joe Bachmann asked to discuss the City's fill site on Neaves Road

The Meeting Chair agreed that both items could be included on the Agenda.

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Bill Park and **SECONDED** by Mike Manion, **THAT** the minutes of the September 13th, 2018 committee meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

3. OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW

Dana Parr, Senior Planner gave a presentation to the Committee about the review of the Official Community Plan. She said that farmers had had a large role in the plan that had been adopted in 2008

and she encouraged their comments and participation this time. The Plan provides policy and vision with policies designed to maintain and enhance farming. The draft vision and goals would be presented to Council before the end of the year and she suggested that the Committee to look at the Abbotsford OCP which had recently been completed and may contain ideas which the committee may be interested in incorporating.

4. NON-FARM USE APPLICATION – 18385 OLD DEWDNEY TRUNK ROAD (HOPCOTT)

Colin O’Byrne, Development Services Technician reported that a non-farm use application had been received for 18385 Old Dewdney Trunk Road to bring an existing 100 seat bistro into compliance with the Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation and allow a proposed catering business to operate in the existing farm retail building. The construction had been completed in 2015 and approved by the Building Inspector but at that time the Planning Section had not been informed so a retroactive application had been submitted to bring it into compliance with ALC policies.

The committee mentioned the desire not to set a precedent when approving such applications; the need to comply with the OCP; the application is a small development on a large parcel; the fact that the products sold come from the farm land; the farm is multi-generational but once an asset is on land it can make it difficult for succession; the asset may be converted once ownership changes. They also mentioned that this particular farmer grows intensely on the farm but with such applications you have to ensure the farm is farmed and people do not buy farm land solely with the intention of putting a restaurant on it. The committee also said that fill sites, weddings, breweries had all been allowed on farm land in Pitt Meadows in the past.

RECOMMENDATION

MOVED by Wayne Wisselink and **SECONDED** by Hank Bitter, **THAT** Council be informed that the Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the entire application to allow

- (a) The on and off-site catering operations and bistro to operate in the farm retail sales building as a non-farm use; and
- (b) The retail floor area to exceed 300 sq. metres at 18385 Old Dewdney Trunk Road

With the proviso that the conditions remain in effect only if the farm stays within family ownership.

CARRIED

5. METRO VANCOUVER AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mike Manion advised the Committee that his term of office on Metro Vancouver’s AAC was about to expire.

The Committee said that they were happy for Mike to continue as Pitt Meadow’s representative and asked that a letter be sent to Metro Vancouver to this effect.

6. CITY SPOIL SITE

Joe Bachmann asked if the City’s dump site had closed and if this was the case that it was concerning as the costs of transporting spoil to other locations such as Alberta is extremely expensive.

Mr. Evans said that the City was still actively using the site which they are lucky to have but it was almost at capacity so a consultant was looking at this site and possible locations for a future site. The consultant was also looking at options such as a transfer station where wet cells are dried which then become useable; raising up the height of the current site; other uses for the material; other locations; and using the spoil for ditching; off-siting.

The committee mentioned the idea of using the product to strengthen the dike around area #1 or filling burrow pits to stop beavers which are a big threat. They also commented that the parking lot on Harris Road was the original dump site and that farmers need to be allowed to continue to farm.

7. ROUNDTABLE

Macky Banns – commented that he had been trying to obtain an open burning permit from Metro Vancouver but had encountered numerous problems. Mike wondered whether Metro Vancouver's AAC could assert any influence to improve the process. Dieter said that he had heard similar complaints from other AACs and felt that a co-ordinated voice had more weight than the complaints of individual farmers.

Mike Manion – talked about the amount of vegetable crops by greenhouse growers being lost to the production of marijuana and also the fact that farmers are having to get creative to make an income.

Bob Hopcott – asked for clarification of Pitt Meadow's policy for growing marijuana in greenhouses. Staff advised that it can only be grown in existing greenhouses if not soil based.

Hank Bitter – commented that farmers have difficulty getting their products to retail markets as large conglomerates dominate the retail sector.

Joe Bachmann – made the following comments

- local MP Dan Ruimy and the Province's Liberal Leader had been made aware of his list of concerns for the sustainability of farming
- a group of veterinary students from Douglas College had recently visited his farm and it was good to see a group of students who were enthusiastic about farming
- golf courses do not have to farm their land in order to operate a restaurant
- he was disappointed that nobody spoke for farmers at the recent riparian planting event

Bill Park – spoke about an article in the Country Life periodical where fish had been introduced to a watercourse at an orchard in the Okanagan and the problems that this had caused.

Dieter Geesing – told the committee about the "Every chef needs a farmer, every farmer needs a chef" event coming up on November 13th.

8. INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor Dingwall, Councillor MacDonald and Councillor Meacham joined the meeting and introduced themselves to the Committee. The Mayor said that he was hoping to attend many meetings of the AAC in the future and that Councillor MacDonald and Councillor Simpson would be the Council liaison on the AAC.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The next Committee meeting will be held on December 13th, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.