

PITT MEADOWS AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Agricultural Advisory Committee held at 10:00 a.m. on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in the Meadows Room of the Pitt Meadows City Hall, 12007 Harris Road, Pitt Meadows, British Columbia

PRESENT:

Committee Members: Joe Bachmann, Chair  
Alana Aquilini  
Macky Banns  
Hank Bitter  
Dieter Geesing, Ministry of Agriculture  
Bob Hopcott  
Sandy Howkins  
Lynn Kemper  
Dan Kosicki  
Councillor Nicole MacDonald  
Philip Robinson  
Councillor Anena Simpson  
Wayne Wisselink

Guests: Nav Parmar  
Jag Parmar  
Kulwinder Parmar  
Colin Fry (Agent)  
Xin Wang

Staff: Lisa Grant, Director of Community Services, Chair  
Tanya Barr, Legislative Services  
Allison Dominelli, Development Services Technician  
Chantal Gemperle, Supervisor of Building & Bylaws  
Colin O'Byrne, Project Manager, Community Development  
Elaine Harrison, Recorder

REGRETS: Mike Manion

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

1. LATE ITEMS

The meeting chair asked that AAC topics for 2020 Business Planning be included on the Agenda.

It was MOVED and SECONDED, THAT 2020 Business Planning topics be added to the Agenda.

CARRIED.

## 2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was MOVED and SECONDED, THAT the minutes of the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 committee meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

## 3. NORTH LOUGHEED STUDY AREA PLANNING PROCESS UPDATE

Colin O'Byrne, Project Manager, Community Development gave an update to the Committee of community engagement events that had or were due to take place regarding the North Lougheed Study Area and asked the Committee for their priorities and values along with historical context for the area

The Committee made the following comments:

- If the land is lost to agriculture, the AAC would want to see it be developed with industrial or commercial activities as that would yield the highest tax return for the City
- The wider implications of the North Lougheed connector road with regards to it linking to the Golden Ears Way and the Allen Way junctions should be explored
- The population growth in cities east of Pitt Meadows with the inevitable increase in traffic through the City
- When the South Fraser Perimeter Road was constructed, farmers worked with the City of Delta to ensure they got the project they wanted
- The need to establish a baseline of current land issues such as hydrology, prevailing water flow and flooding
- A plan be put in place for a storm retention system
- Ensure that if promises are made they are kept so that after completion of the project the developers are accountable
- The importance of conducting a traffic study early on in the process and the need to know if the new road is simply for access to the development or to assist traffic flow through the region

ACTION – staff to provide historical traffic data for the next meeting of the Committee.

## 4. NON-ADHERING RESIDENTIAL USE APPLICATION – 13740 HARRIS ROAD

Allison Dominelli, Development Services Technician reported that an application had been received for a non-adhering residential use application for 13740 Harris Road to retain an existing dwelling for farm help and to construct a second new dwelling larger than current regulations permit. The applicant had previously started the building permit process in 2009 and 2014 but this had not been completed and had subsequently reactivated it in 2018. Whilst the applicant was working through outstanding issues the Provincial Government had passed Bill 52 restricting the size of residential dwellings on the ALR but the applicant wanted to retain his original dwelling size request.

The Committee made the following comments:

- A second house on the parcel would increase the value of the land and potentially make it too expensive for future purchasers
- Is the second house for farm workers necessary to sustain a 24 hour operation and if not is other housing available locally
- No agricultural production would be lost by the construction of the second home which the Committee commended
- The City should honour the original application for a large home. Ordinarily the AAC would not agree with this stance but due to no fault of their own the applicant was caught in the transitional period after the new legislation was imposed

The applicants made the following comments:

- They do not rent out the land and farm it themselves and they also have a farm in Port Coquitlam
- They have farmed since 1995 and want the extended multi-generational family to live together in the second dwelling, hence the need for such a large property
- The second house would be built where a barn had previously stood so no agricultural land would be lost
- The application was made prior to the MoA legislation changes and significant effort and money had already been spent on the application
- The development is on the outskirts of the parcel ensuring maximum land is still available for farming

#### RECOMMENDATION

It was MOVED and SECONDED, THAT Council be informed that the Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the non-adhering residential use application for 13740 Harris Road.

CARRIED.

#### 5. SOIL PERMIT APPLICATION – 13236 HARRIS ROAD (WINERY)

Alex Wallace, Manager of Community Development reported that an application had been received for soil removal and fill deposit at 13236 Harris Road for ground improvement to plant blueberries and preload prior to the construction of a winery building.

The Committee recognized the need for fill for construction standards. They asked how much of the wine produced would be from the berries produced on the site and if it would be necessary for berries to be brought onto the site. They also questioned if wine production is a viable business based on the business plan provided as the cost of the land was not included in the calculations. The Committee also asked why the applicant wanted to sub-divide the parcel. The Committee re-affirmed that they support small businesses and that the market for selling fruit products to the China market is expanding.

The applicant advised the Committee that they anticipated being able to sustain the winery purely from the berries produced from the parcel but he has a 40 acre farm in Mission where

berries could be brought in from if necessary. He also stated not many berries are required for wine making. In the event that wine making is not successful the applicant stated that he would use the site to process berries or for coolers and storage. The applicant also said that he wanted to sub-divide the parcel to allow the installation of another culvert as only 1 culvert per parcel is currently allowed and another access point is needed for the winery.

#### RECOMMENDATION

It was MOVED and SECONDED, THAT Council be informed that the Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the soil removal and fill deposit application for 13236 Harris Road.

CARRIED.

#### 6. 2020 BUSINESS PLANNING – AAC TOPICS

Lisa Grant, Director of Community Services reminded the Committee that the new governance structure allows the AAC to submit requests to Council for funds to cover projects and asked the members for suggestions for high level costs and ideas that they would be interested in pursuing.

The Committee agreed that whilst developing new project is a good idea they were mindful of not wanting taxes to increase. They also felt that having 2 Councillors and the Mayor regularly attend the meetings provides big value and credibility to the Committee. They also said that if the OCP supports agriculture then that would enhance their authority. Members pointed out that the organizations who are challenging the role of farming have access to funds so the Committee needs to be proactive in maintaining their profile.

Staff suggested that the projects could start modestly and be reviewed each year.

Some ideas that the Committee put forward was helping small businesses and small farms. Also the lack of PR for agriculture and the suggestion of making movies for the City's website similar to ones that have been created by the City of Delta.

ACTION – staff work on high level feasibility ideas such as suggested educational awareness projects including videos and increased website presence along with advocacy to support new farmers and report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### 7. ROUNDTABLE

Philip Robinson – mentioned that at the EPC waterways meeting a comment was made that some farmers do not feel represented by the AAC. He asked that it be noted that the AAC feels well connected to Mayor and Council and asked if farmers have any items that they would like to be discussed he encouraged them to bring them forward.

Philip also spoke about issues he was having with the City of Port Coquitlam who were requiring the dike adjacent to his farmland to be significantly raised. He questioned whether

the City of Pitt Meadows would also be following suit. Staff said that this had been discussed at the recent Fraser Basin Council meeting with Metro Vancouver Mayors. Lisa suggested that Samantha Maki, Director of Engineering and Operations update the Committee regarding this at the September meeting.

Dan Kosicki – said that he has had many experiences with the movie industry and always found them to be positive, financially rewarding and does not have a negative impact on farm land. He hoped that filming was not being stymied in the City as he had sensed that this was happening.

Joe Bachmann – thanked Mayor and Council for the EPC waterways meeting which had been well presented. He said that preparation for the meeting had been time-consuming and draining but his worries about the outcome had not been realised.

Joe also thanked Mayor and Council along with staff members who had recently visited local farms and he also voiced his support for the movie industry

Councillor Nicole MacDonald – praised the group on an excellent job at the EPC waterways meeting and thanked them for all of the time and effort spent on preparation for it.

Ms. MacDonald also commented on how she had enjoyed the recent visit to local farms and encouraged farmers to keep using their voices to promote farming.

Lisa Grant – said that Barbara Morgan, the City's Emergency Management Co-ordinator, had asked that the farming community be informed of concerns about potential upcoming drought conditions with river levels being low and asked what the City could do to help support farmers if this occurred.

Lynn Kemper – said that whilst the AAC had taken the time to be well prepared for the EPC waterways meeting, the issue was not going away and they should expect future challenges.

Dieter Geesing – noted that the Ministry has a checklist for Emergency Preparedness which he would make available to Committee members.

Dieter also announced that he would soon be leaving his current role at the Ministry and he would introduce his successor to the Committee.

Sandy Howkins – mentioned that truck routes in the City are not clearly defined causing confusion for drivers.

Bob Hopcott – asked for clear feedback from staff regarding the City's Filming Policy as he had recently been denied permission to host a film company at his property. Staff mentioned that filming is classed as an 'event' and as such only 10 event, including weddings, are allowed per property, per calendar year which may be the reason for the veto.

Ms. Grant said that staff would try to discuss filming concerns at the upcoming UBCM event.

Bob also asked the group how they felt about the daylight saving time survey.

Hank Bitter – said that the Committee needs to let the community know what the struggles and legitimate concerns are for farmers and also to educate the public about farming through newspaper articles and social media.

Councillor Anena Simpson – thanked farmers for the recent farm tour. She also commended the Committee for a terrific job at the EPC waterways meeting and would support a request from the Committee for a communications strategy to support farming.

Alana Aquilini – thanked Mayor and Council for visiting her farm and also commented that she supports filming.

#### 8. ADJOURNMENT

The next Committee meeting will be held on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:14 p.m.