

PITT MEADOWS AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Agricultural Advisory Committee held at 10:00 a.m. on March 28th, 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
Dieter Geesing, Ministry of Agriculture
Bob Hopcott
Lynn Kemper
Councillor Nicole MacDonald
Mike Manion
Philip Robinson
Councillor Anena Simpson
Wayne Wisselink

Guests:- Bill Dingwall, Mayor
Dan Kosicki
Arlene Vayda for 13926 Hale Road
Kurt Alberts for 13926 Hale Road
Kris Johnsen for 18423 Green Road
Rolf Johnsen for 18423 Green Road
Dena Berndt for 18390 Old Dewdney Trunk Road
Gordon Berndt for 18390 Old Dewdney Trunk Road

Staff:- Lisa Grant, Director of Community Services, Chair
Stefanie Ekeli, Development Services Technician
Randy Evans, Manager of Parks and Operations
Samantha Maki, Director of Engineering and Operations
Colin O'Byrne, Project Manager, Community Development
Alex Wallace, Manager of Community Development
Elaine Harrison, Recorder

REGRETS:- Hank Bitter
Bill Park

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

1. LATE ITEMS

No late items were submitted.

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Mike Manion and SECONDED by Wayne Wisselink, THAT the minutes of the January 10th, 2019 committee meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

MOVED by Mike Manion and SECONDED by Wayne Wisselink, THAT the minutes of the February 14th, 2019 committee meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

3. HOMESITE SEVERANCE APPLICATION – 13926 HALE ROAD

Colin O’Byrne, Project Manager, Community Development reported that a homesite severance application had been received for non-farm permit for severance of a 9.87ha property at 13926 Hale Road to allow the farmer to remain on the land and the owner’s daughter to purchase the remainder. The application was consistent with City and ALC regulations and policies. Staff also explained that when the ALR came into effect in 1972 a sunset clause applied to property owners up to that date to allow them to subdivide their land to family members; this property fell under those regulations.

The Committee mentioned that such applications can appear counterintuitive for farm land but the sale is for a family member, however if the land is then sold continued farming cannot be guaranteed. They also pointed out that two homes on one parcel is an asset for the family if sold separately thereby increasing the value of the land. It was noted that farm practices can cause complaints from residential neighbours adjacent to farmers. Committee members mentioned that this particular applicant had a long history of good stewardship and they were confident they would continue to adhere to the rules.

RECOMMENDATION

MOVED by Mike Manion and SECONDED by Bob Hopcott, THAT Council be informed that the Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the non-farm use application for a homesite severance at 13926 Hale Road.

CARRIED

4. GARDEN SUITE APPLICATION – 18390 OLD DEWDNEY TRUNK ROAD

Stefanie Ekele, Development Services Technician reported that a non-adhering residential use application had been received for 18390 Old Dewdney Trunk Road to allow construction of a garden suite to accommodate the applicant’s daughter and son-in law. The parcel of land had a farm house that had been demolished and the owner was seeking approval to construct the garden suite at the same time as the new principal residence.

The applicant who was present at the meeting advised that although the land was not currently farmed he was hoping to become as self-reliant as possible once the residences were constructed by growing vegetables, rearing chickens and having bees. He said that a garden suite would be the most suitable solution to alleviate the need for stairs. It would also be a similar size to a laneway house but that the site presented many challenges to construction.

The Committee questioned why two houses were being built thereby reducing the amount of land accessible for farming. Also, having two properties on the land would become assets making it difficult for the land to ever be farmed and would eventually lead to the land no longer being agricultural. They also felt that approval could set a precedent but recognized

that because of the increasing cost of housing in the lower mainland people would be looking at using farm land as a more affordable solution for residential construction.

RECOMMENDATION

MOVED by Macky Banns and SECONDED by Joe Bachmann, THAT Council be informed that the Agricultural Advisory Committee does not supports the non-farm use application for a garden suite at 18390 Old Dewdney Trunk Road but would support a second residence incorporated into the principal residence.

CARRIED

5. COMMERCIAL DOG TRAINING BUSINESS – 18423 GREEN ROAD

Stefanie Ekeli, Development Services Technician reported that a non-farm use application had been received to allow a commercial dog guard training operation on approximately 0.715ha of indoor and outdoor space at 18423 Green Road which was an existing horse arena and gravel area not currently in use.

The applicant who was present at the meeting advised that the site is adjacent to their tree farm and no overnight kenneling would be undertaken.

The Committee felt that it was a commercial venture not agricultural but it was better than having the structure remain empty. They also acknowledged that the applicant had a long history of farming.

RECOMMENDATION

MOVED by Lynn Kemper and SECONDED by Alana Aquilini, THAT Council be informed that the Agricultural Advisory Committee supports a Temporary Use Permit for a commercial dog training business at 18423 Green Road subject to the following conditions:-

- (a) No retail operations are undertaken
- (b) No expansion of the business be allowed; and
- (c) The business is limited to dog training only.

CARRIED

6. ADDITIONAL FARM HOUSE APPLICATION – 14406 RIPPINGTON ROAD

Stefanie Ekeli, Development Services Technician reported that a non-adhering residential use application had been received for 14406 Rippington Road to allow the construction of an additional residence on the land. She advised that there is currently one existing home on the property which is unsafe and inhabitable and the proposal was to demolish this, construct a new primary home plus an additional residence to be used as a farmhand house for the son who provides daily services for farming operations.

The Committee questioned what farming is being undertaken at this address and clarification on how many properties were on the site. They pointed out that the criteria for approving farm worker properties was:-

- i) the necessity for around the clock operations that required constant attendance by the farm worker, or
- ii) the property can be constructed if no homes are available in the local area for the worker to commute from to the land.

The Committee did not feel that the application met this criteria.

RECOMMENDATION

MOVED by Joe Bachmann and SECONDED by Bob Hopcott, THAT Council be informed that the Agricultural Advisory Committee does not supports the non-adhering residential use application at 14406 Rippington Road.

CARRIED

7. SOIL/FILL PERMIT – 13236 HARRIS ROAD

Staff reported that a soil/fill permit had been submitted to import 13,016m³ of fill to a depth of 1.6m at 13236 Harris Road which reaches the threshold where Council authorization is required. Under the new and updated ALC regulations that came into effect on February 22nd, 2019 the applicant was required to submit a Notice of Intent to the ALC. Staff also indicated that if approved a Highway Use Permit would be required, the potential need for a allocating staging area plus erosion and sediment control measures would all need to be implemented prior to site activities commencing.

The Committee members questioned why the applicant would require such a large quantity of fill and why berry farming would commence without any buildings on the property for berry processing. The possibility of a winery being constructed was suggested but the application did not provide information on future plans for the site. The Committee also cautioned new members of past examples of fill applicants who had not been truthful and had ultimately had fill placed on their land solely for storage.

The Committee agreed that they could not make a recommendation without more information regarding agrology, a business plan, the extent of berry farming and future plans for the site.

8. NEW AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION REGULATONS

Staff reported on changes to the Agricultural Land Commission Act which had come into effect on February 22nd, 2019 regarding residences in the ALR and soil/fill uses in the ALR. Of note to the Committee was the new maximum of 5300 sq. ft. for housing and applications that did not have their permit by that date would now be subject to the new regulations. Staff said that they were working with some applicants and asked the Committee if they wanted to be involved in the approval process or allow Council to determine and then forward to the ALC as is required by the new process. The soil and fill uses regulations now required applicants to submit a Notice of Intent when they want to remove or move soil and fill.

The Committee asked if the new maximum size of 5300 sq. ft. was just the footprint and staff advised that this amount was the whole house but not open car-ports or decks. They also asked how many applications were now in a state of flux with the change in the regulations and

staff thought it was 3 or 4 resident applications and 3 fill applications. The Committee said that as a group they had a lot of knowledge as to which applications would be questionable or legitimate and therefore would like to be able to comment on all applications.

Staff suggested that the applications come to the Committee for review if they can be dealt with in a timely manner within the limits of the meeting schedule and if all relevant background information is available at that time.

9. FARM SIGNAGE

Samantha Maki, Director of Engineering and Operations advised the Committee that the new tractor graphic signs had been installed in the rural area and the flashers would be operational from April 1st to October 31st. The flashers were solar powered and would be activated for 24 hours a day so they would be monitored to ensure they were not causing a nuisance. The suggestion for signs on Airport Way had been reviewed and it was felt that the Baynes Road/Ford Road intersection was a more suitable location.

The educational signage for the dikes was still being studied and she asked the Committee to continue to provide feedback on what information they felt was most pertinent.

The Committee commented that they were glad to see the signs and thanked staff their work.

10. KATZIE SLOUGH RESTORATION PROJECT

This item was included on the Agenda at the request of Bill Park who was not present at the meeting.

As an update staff said that they were looking for grant funding for replacement of the Kennedy pump station for 2020/21 which they estimated would cost around \$1.2 million but if this was a fish friendly pump it would add a further \$1 million to the costs. At the moment no decisions had been made on what type of pump was preferred.

The Mayor said that people want to advance their prospective with regards to environmental issues and the need for a balance was required. He said he had spoken to Watershed Watch who he acknowledged were an ambitious organisation and had drafted a letter to them as Council felt they had overstepped the boundary on some issues. This related to the requirement for the City to obtain grants not them and the fact that they had put up signage on City property which required prior approval. He said that the City was not acquiescing and would keep the AAC informed and involved. He also advocated for the Committee to elect a spokesperson to come to Council with the issues that were most important to them.

11. WATERWAYS – DISCUSSION PRIOR TO JUNE GPC

Lisa Grant, Director of Community Services encouraged the Committee to include the discussion on waterways in both the April and May Agendas prior to the June GPC to allow the Committee to capture all the concerns they would like to discuss with Council. She felt that the election of a spokesperson would be a good idea to bring forward the Committee's priorities.

12. ROUNDTABLE

Mike Manion – said that the new season of Metro Vancouver’s Agricultural Advisory Committee had commenced and encouraged Committee members to submit any comments or concerns that they wanted to be discussed.

Bob Hopcott – commented that he had been trying to obtain a burning permit and had found the process to be extremely slow.

He also reminded the Committee about an event being hosted by the Maple Ridge Agricultural Advisory Committee on April 4th, 2019 called “Let’s Get Farming” where representatives from the ALC, Ministry of Agriculture and the Director of the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at KPU would be in attendance.

Dieter Geesing – said that a Food Processing Workshop would be held on April 10th and 11th, 2019 by the Ministry of Agriculture and he encouraged any interested members to attend.

Philip Robinson – asked if calendar invites could be send out to Committee members to avoid not having a quorum at meetings. Staff said they would be happy to do this.

Alana Aquilini – said that the Aquilini Group had agreed to place four temperature recorders in waterways on their land for the Katzie First Nation so members may see them and wonder what they were for. She cautioned that the water level was currently quite low so this may affect the results of the project.

Joe Bachmann – expressed concern about sustainability with new regulations being imposed on farmers by the Ministry of Environment. The new Canada Food Guide had suggested a shift from meat and dairy to a predominantly vegetable based diet which he felt did not support agriculture and would be more costly to farmers potentially causing them to cease farming.

Dieter responded that the proponents of change are organized so the agricultural society needed to also be by creating lobby groups as a counter-balance and to get the public on their side. He reminded them of the fees that farmers pay to agricultural organisations and suggested that they should be lobbying for those organisations to provide a united voice on behalf of farmers as a whole.

Joe also said that he appreciates the attendance of Council members at the AAC meetings.

Wayne Wisselink – agreed that farmers need a designated person to speak on their behalf to Council.

Mayor Dingwall – said the new Regulation from the Province were a perfect example of items for discussion between the AAC and GPC. He said that Council are in a position to be able to send letters to UBCM and the Province as a voice to lobby and advocate for the AAC. He said the City had struggled around the issues of maintenance of the diking network for years and Council had recently passed a resolution to see if diking could become a Metro Vancouver mandate which would more fairly resolve the burden of costs similar to how water and sewerage are funded.

Lisa Grant – reminded the Committee that with the new committee structure they could now ask for a chosen project to have resources attached to it, she said this could include such issues as advocacy work or waterfowl allowing those items to be looked at more strategically.

Anena Simpson – thanked the Committee for their work and said the meeting had been very informative and helpful to Council in their decision making.

Nicole MacDonald – said that the AAC was a valuable committee and it was good to hear their voices.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The next Committee meeting will be held on April 11th, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.