

PITT MEADOWS AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Agricultural Advisory Committee held at 10:00 a.m. on February 14, 2019 in the Meadows Room of the Pitt Meadows City Hall, 12007 Harris Road, Pitt Meadows, British Columbia

PRESENT:

Committee Members:

Joe Bachmann, Chair
Dieter Geesing, Ministry of Agriculture
Bill Park
Wayne Wisselink
Lynn Kemper

Guests:

Councillor Bob Meachen
Kurt Alberts, Representative for Vader Family
Gerry Kosicki

Staff:

Mark Roberts, Chief Administrative Officer
Carolyn Baldrige, Manager, Comm's & Community Engagement
Sam Maki, Director of Engineering & Operations, Meeting Chair
Dana Parr, Senior Planner
Tanya Barr, Recorder

REGRETS:

Alana Aquilini
Philip Robinson
Mike Manion
Macky Banns
Hank Bitter
Bob Hopcott

With only five voting committee members in attendance, **quorum was not achieved**. There was general consensus to continue with an informal meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 am.

1. LATE ITEMS

Bill Park requested to add item relating to the Katzie Slough restoration project and would like to seek Council thoughts and views on restoration as outlined in a recent newspaper article.

Meeting Chair requested to add as Item #3.4 for discussion.

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Due to lack of quorum, the minutes of the January 10, 2019 committee meeting will be carried forward to the next AAC meeting for adoption.

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.1 Farm Signage

Sam Maki presented information intended for feedback purposes only.

New signage templates are in conceptual form for consideration for farm use. New signs would incorporate a neutral colour palate more conducive to natural park elements.

Carolyn Baldrige spoke to highlighting the softer colours scheme which enhance the natural environment and are more complimentary than existing branding. Graphics would include berries, water, wood; less about being bright neon, more about the natural environment.

Sam Maki identified that there were two conceptual designs: one for cautionary signage (i.e. RESPECT Slow Moving Vehicles), and the other infographic signage to bring awareness to residents and visitors about our farming community (i.e. highlighting harvesting season). These are in addition to existing signage currently on Old Dewdney Trunk Road.

Initial discussion around signage was to advertise strictly during harvesting season, but staff felt a better approach would be to keep the signs in rotation year round. Selecting localized areas where these signs would best serve the community. Infographic sign placement is thought best to be in a location where residents and visitors have an opportunity to actually read the messaging (ie: dike entrances) and keep separate from the road ways. She then opened up the floor for feedback from the committee.

Discussion:

- Joe Bachmann referenced one cautionary sign that used to be on ODTR and requested that it be erected once again.
- Sam Maki noted the location of the sign that was removed and brought to the committee's attention the other locations along ODTR and Lougheed where proposed signage could be installed.
- Joe Bachmann would like to see signage on Rannie Rd.
- Wayne Wisselink recommended installing signage at the end of Airport Way, adjacent to the Katzie Slough sign at the north end of the Golden Ears Bridge.
- Dieter Geesing questioned the replacement of neon yellow/orange signs and concerns that new signs may not be reflective of provincial messaging and authority. Orange is cautionary and more known / respected. The new branding is fine for simple community messages, but cautionary signs should remain.
- Wayne Wisselink suggested a simple sign. Too many words for commuters to read. Agreed that coloured signs would be good messaging near dikes. During peak season would like flashing amber lights on cautionary signage.
- Sam Maki agreed to investigate possibility of using flashers.
- Joe Bachmann suggested larger, more informative signs at entry to Pitt Meadows; both ends of ODTR. Smaller ones elsewhere.

- Sam Maki requested feedback on content for community messaging signs / timeline (seasonal timelines, e.g. cranberry harvest in September). Encouraged committee members to submit feedback by email.
- Wayne Wisselink suggested advertising a visual of what farmers are doing at certain times near specific fields (i.e. identifying that this is a cranberry field and a few words reflective of cranberry harvesting, this is what we do...). Informative and educational.
- Dieter Geesing suggested putting signage up similar to Delta where they identify items included in the crop (i.e. corn, potatoes, blueberries, cranberries etc.). Lots of positive feedback has been received from residents in the municipality. 'Food to Table' type messaging.
- Sam Maki clarified the intent of the community signs would be reflective of Pitt Meadows Agricultural community feedback (e.g. blueberry, haying, cranberry) and not City mandated messages. Representatives for each area of the farming community to provide feedback to build a draft plan around location, site specific purposes, processes and messaging. Sam Maki requested individual feedback by email with suggestions for sites and content for community messaging.
- Joe Bachmann suggested sending to all AAC members with the feedback requested to ensure each commodity is represented.
- Wayne Wisselink concerned that there is no representation from 'greenhouse'. Joe Bachmann suggested Leo Captein as a good source of feedback.
- Sam Maki suggested if we don't get the feedback, we'll consider additional methods to bring awareness of the agricultural community such as print, social media, and website.
- Lynn Kemper wanted clarification on what the overall ask of signage was. Sam Maki clarified that the cautionary signs would remain. The newer community messaging signage is more for dike/park locations. Lynn Kemper suggested a rotation of community messaging signs.
- Wayne Wisselink cautioned against signs with too many words; suggested no extra text on signage. Keep it simple.
- Bill Park was concerned that the signs couldn't be read by a passing motorist.
- Carolyn Baldrige referenced removal of one or two words from cautionary signs to simplify.
- Mark Roberts inquired re: timeline of installation of cautionary and community signage. Sam Maki referenced that the park and diking signs would take some time. Cautionary signs could be done rather prompt. Community signage could be sent to committee for feedback and installed by April 1.
- Wayne Wisselink shared concerns with removing words from cautionary signs. Sam Maki reassured the farm vehicle sign image would remain.
- Bill Park wants the word RESPECT in the cautionary signs to remain.

The discussion concluded.

There was general consensus to move forward with the installation of top left cautionary vehicle sign, and suggested locations with the addition of Rannie Rd and Airport Way.

Mark Roberts questioned whether sizing was mandated by Motor Vehicle Act. Sam Maki referenced that the proposed signs are standard size, however if we wanted to enlarge, that would take some time and additional costs. Sam Maki to investigate the use of flashers on signage and maximum size.

Carolyn Baldrige left meeting at 10:31 am.

Bill Park raised concerns regarding making motions without quorum. Mark Roberts clarified that the motion to approve farm signage had already been approved by Council. Today's discussion was to provide Staff with feedback to help them implement the project.

3.2 Homesite Severance Application – 13926 Hale Road

Dana Parr recommended deferral of agenda item until the next AAC meeting **due to a lack of quorum.**

Discussion points included:

- Concerns regarding how long the applicant has been waiting (application is from November 30, 2018)
- Whether the application could be sent to Council without a recommendation from AAC. Mark Roberts responded that Council would likely defer back to staff to engage with AAC.
- Background information on the application was provided.
- Potential hardship re: postponing until the next AAC meeting was discussed.
- The spokesperson on behalf of the applicant, Mr. Kurt Alberts, spoke to the application.
- Concerns re: making a decision without quorum were discussed.
- Joe Bachmann mentioned a potential conflict of interest; Mark Roberts reassured that Council is the decision maker and no conflict exists.
- It was confirmed that the applicant wishes to continue to farm the parcel. The title of the house would be the mother and the land title for the farm would be the daughter.
- Mr. Alberts explained that the separation of title for house and land were because of the mother's wishes to transfer the title as part of a family succession plan.
- Concerns re: adding a residential component to farm land were discussed. At some point, the homeowner will pass, and the small parcel of land is not conducive to farming.
- Mr. Alberts believes the application is within guidelines and consistent with the City's zoning bylaw, OCP, the Pitt Meadows Agricultural Plan, and provisions for size of parcel.

- Dieter Geesing agreed that the application meets all policy requirements, but reiterated that each application is based on a case by case situation.
- The committee discussed whether a hardship would be created for the applicant should the severance be denied.
- Mr. Alberts believes that the policy makes it difficult to qualify.
- Potential consequences of granting the application were discussed, including: what might happen when the mother passes away and the home is potentially sold to a new owner; ALR parcels with two homes; and setting precedence for future applications.
- Mr. Alberts believes that, based on past applications, Council has already set precedence by approving homesite severances.
- Bill Park shared his belief that this is a genuine application and not an attempt to build two homes on one parcel in ALR.
- Sam Maki asked for clarification from the committee if they would like to see the application go to Council or if it should be directed back to the applicant for further information.
- Importance of succession planning was discussed.
- Importance of proceeding with caution, regardless of past decisions, was discussed.
- It was asked whether quorum could be obtained via email. Mark Roberts suggested it's problematic and not recommended.

There was general consensus that the agenda item 'Homesite Severance Application – 13926 Hale Road' be deferred until the March 14, 2019 meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, due to lack of quorum.

Dana Parr and Mr. Alberts left the meeting at 11:03 am.

3.3 Committee Membership – New Members

Mark Roberts discussed AAC membership and upcoming vacancies. The process to recruit for vacant positions will begin shortly. Would like to ensure committee is content with 11 members as identified in the Terms of Reference and opened the floor to comment/issues that would assist staff in moving forward with committee selection.

Mr. Roberts confirmed that the committee recruitment process was an administrative process, led by the CAO, to ensure candidates meet qualifications for committee.

Discussion:

- Bill Park would like to see younger people in farming industry, direct farm sales, and would like print ads to encourage participation in the committee.
- Joe Bachmann hopes someone from greenhouses is motivated to participate and is disappointed with turn out as is. Encouraged people to show up.
- Dieter Geesing would like to entice people from the poultry community.

- The committee reaffirmed that 10:00 am standing meetings were ideal for the AAC.
- Lynn Kemper wants to encourage RSVP's for meetings to confirm attendance.
- Sam Maki highlighted that the next meeting is scheduled to occur the week before Spring Break.

There was general consensus that committee members should confirm attendance prior to AAC meetings to confirm quorum in advance of the meeting.

3.4 **Katzie Slough Restoration Project**

- Bill Park expressed concern with non-government officials impacting maintenance of the slough. Wants to improve the slough and remove invasive species, but drainage and irrigation have to be the priority. Need to find a way to work together. Slough must be cleaned every 3 – 5 years. Needs discussion.
- Lynn Kemper requested the item be added to March 14th agenda.
- Bill Park provided news article of restoration of Katzie Slough to Staff.
- Bob Meachen agreed this topic should be discussed with all AAC members. Highlighted the value of discussing this topic at GPC and council's reliance on expert opinions to make the right decisions.

There was general consensus to defer the late item 'Katzie Slough restoration project' to March 14th, 2019 AAC meeting for a fulsome discussion with all AAC members. Mark Roberts will follow up with the Mayor regarding an AAC delegation at the April GPC meeting.

4. **ROUNDTABLE**

- **Bob Meachen** - attended on behalf of Nicole MacDonald. Expressed disappointment in attendance.
- **Joe Bachmann** – reiterated the 'say what you think' when participating during these meetings. Staff selection for new members is the right decision. Currently lacking membership / representation in trees, nurseries/greenhouses sector. Would be good to see representation from folks like Piroche or Specimen Trees. If slough is about the salmon, they need to be moved out and not in the slough.
- **Mark Roberts** - will look to target specific names when advertising for members. Joe Bachmann to forward names to Mark Roberts.
- **Wayne Wisselink** – 2019 Tracking sheet update, Cranes on Aquilini property all cleared up – wasn't on the tracking sheet, but would like it added.
- **Bill Park** – loss of Loveridge Dairy Farms was tragic; acknowledgement of Fire Department efforts. Other dairy farmers rallied to assist. Appreciated Council representation.

- **Lynn Kemper** – strong interest in Katzie Slough discussion. Lacked water this past summer and would like this sorted out.
- **Dieter Geesing** – appreciates the frank discussions of the AAC meetings. MOE has new agricultural code as it relates to climate change strategy to be enforced starting on February 28, 2019 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/waste-management/industrial-waste/agriculture>. Some major changes that affect dairy farms. Series of workshops for small processing farms. For more info, visit <https://farmfooddrink.ca/2dayworkshop/>. Any interest, please contact Dieter Geesing.
- **Bill Park** – referenced getting information / agenda sooner. Would like it a week or two in advance. Would like history of property etc., making the conversation relevant.
- **Sam Maki** mentioned that once the agenda is sent, nothing is added / changed.

5. AAC TRACKING SHEET & DOCUMENT REVIEW

Not reviewed.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The next Committee meeting will be held on March 14, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 am.