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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 17, 2023

A meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 in Meeting Room 1-A, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:32 PM.

1. Roll Call

Present: Z. Cohoon, Federation of Agriculture, Chair
T. Barrie, Clarington
N. Guthrie, Member at Large
K. Kemp, Scugog
K. Kennedy, Member at Large
J. Neal, Regional Councillor Alternate
G. O'Connor, Member at Large
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Whitby
B. Smith, Uxbridge, Vice-Chair
G. Taylor, Pickering
T. Watpool, Brock, Vice-Chair
B. Winter, Ajax

Absent: B. Howsam, Member at Large
F. Puterbough, Member at Large
W. Wotten, Regional Councillor

Staff

Present: B. Anderson, Principal Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development
A. De Vos, Program Specialist, Department of Planning and Economic Development
S. Gill, Director, Economic Development and Tourism, Department of Planning and Economic Development
C. Goodchild, Manager, Policy Planning & Special Studies, Department of Planning and Economic Development
S. Jibb, Manager, Agricultural & Rural Economic Development, Department of Planning and Economic Development
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
M. Scott, Project Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by T. Barrie, Seconded by G. Taylor,
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting
held on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Presentations

A) Aseem Malhi, Volunteer & Cavita Sharma, Save Soil Toronto Coordinator – Save Soil Awareness Presentation

Aseem Malhi, Volunteer & Cavita Sharma, Save Soil Toronto Coordinator, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Save Soil Awareness.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Save Soil
- Supporters
- Soil Degradation – A Global Issue
- Living Soil
- We Should Act Now! 2050 Projections
- 100 Days; 26 Nations; 30,000 KM; 1 Lone Motorcyclist

Discussion ensued regarding the growth of cover crops and the requirement of government funding to support farmers.

B) Colleen Goodchild, Manager, Policy & Special Studies, and Brad Anderson, Principal Planner, Region of Durham Planning – Growth Allocations and Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Colleen Goodchild, Manager, Policy & Special Studies, and Brad Anderson, Principal Planner, Region of Durham Planning, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Growth Allocations and Settlement Area Boundary Expansions (SABE).

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Durham's Growth Targets Prescribed by the Provincial Growth Plan
- Growth Management Study
- Potential for SABE: South Durham
- Potential for SABE: North Durham
- Planning and Land Use Analysis: Data and Mapping Considerations
- Pickering: Draft SABE and Growth Allocation

- Ajax: Growth Allocation
- Whitby: Draft SABE and Growth Allocation
- Oshawa: Draft SABE and Growth Allocation
- Clarington: Draft SABE and Growth Allocation
- Scugog: Draft SABE and Growth Allocation
- Uxbridge: Draft SABE and Growth Allocation
- Brock: Draft SABE and Growth Allocation
- More Information

Discussion ensued with regards to Whitebelt lands being permitted for urban boundary expansion.

5. Discussion Items

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

S. Jibb provided the following update:

- Ontario's Rural Economic Development Program will open on January 23, 2023. The Program provides an opportunity for rural communities and non-profit organizations to apply for funding for projects that improve rural communities from an economic development standpoint. There may be a request for letters of support from DAAC at the next meeting.
- Working on the business toolkit for farms looking to diversify into on-farm diversified uses, which is currently in phase two, and will have a draft plan available in the coming months.

A. De Vos provided the following update:

- Looking for ways to offer agri-tech support to Durham College for companies that are testing technology on their urban farm in Ajax, through companies the federal government is working with.
- Durham Farm Connection's Annual General Meeting is being held on January 24, 2023 in Blackstock.

Discussion ensued with regards to agriculture education within the toolkit.

B) Agriculture 101 Training

S. Jibb advised that at the recent subcommittee meeting, they received feedback on the draft presentation that will be incorporated, and plan to present to Regional Council before Spring 2023.

C) Impacts on Food Prices and Opportunities for Advocacy to Improve Financial Viability for the Agri-food Sector

S. Jibb advised that the resolution below stemmed from discussion at Z. Cohoon's presentation to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on January 10, 2023 regarding the DAAC 2022 Annual Report.

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by B. Smith,
That the following recommendation be forwarded to the Planning and Economic Development Committee for approval and subsequent recommendation to Regional Council:

Whereas the agri-food industry is one of the top economic drivers in Durham Region supporting a workforce of over 27,105 people through 3,360 agri-food businesses, more than 1,200 farms and farm families, contributing upwards of \$354 million to Ontario's total farm production and supporting \$775 million in GDP;

And Whereas food prices have seen their steepest increase since 1981 with a year over year increase of 11% as of October 2022;

And Whereas inputs for farmers and primary producers have increased significantly in the last year, including fertilizer prices increasing 95.8% compared to July 2020, fuel prices have seen a historic year-over-year increase, while chemical/herbicide markets have experienced shortages and increased prices. Despite these changes, farmers have not seen a significant increase in their primary product price to compensate for the rising cost of inputs;

And Whereas the profit margin for farmers was adversely impacted by a 35% tariff placed on fertilizer imports, including fertilizer purchased prior to economic sanctions being placed on Russia and Belarus that farmers in Canada rely on to support food production.

Now therefore be it resolved that the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee requests that Regional Council recognize the importance of agriculture in Durham Region by encouraging the federal government to compensate farmers for tariffs paid on fertilizer, one of the contributing factors to increased food costs.

CARRIED

D) January 10th Annual Report Planning and Economic Development Committee Presentation

S. Jibb advised that Z. Cohoon presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on January 10, 2023 with regards to the DAAC 2022 Annual Report. Z. Cohoon advised he asked Committee members to support Durham Region on the tariff issues, food prices, and fertilizer.

Discussion ensued with regards to educating and communicating agriculture awareness to Regional Council.

E) 2023 Farm Tour Preliminary Discussion

Discussion ensued with regards to potential site locations and potential dates for the 2023 DAAC Farm Tour.

It was the consensus of the Committee that a Farm Tour Sub-Committee be formed consisting of D. Risebrough, B. Smith, K. Kemp, T. Watpool, and T. Barrie.

6. Information Items

A) 2022 Annual Reports of the Durham Active Transportation Committee, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee and Durham Environmental Advisory Committee

Report #2023-P-3 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development – 2022 Annual Reports of the Durham Active Transportation Committee, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee and Durham Environmental Advisory Committee was provided as Attached #2 to the Agenda and received.

M. Scott advised the DAAC Workplan will be presented to committee when the new members are appointed.

B) On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) Applications

A copy of the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) Applications link was provided to Committee members and received.

C) Envision Durham – Growth Management Study, Phase 2: Draft Settlement Area Boundary Expansions and Area Municipal Growth Allocations

Information Report #2022-INFO-91 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development – Envision Durham – Growth Management Study, Phase 2: Draft Settlement Area Boundary Expansion and Area Municipal Growth Allocations was provided as Attachment #3 to the Agenda and received.

7. Other Business

A) Alternate Regional Councillor Introduction

Z. Cohoon welcomed Councillor Neal to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee. Councillor Neal introduced himself and provided a brief overview of his background.

B) Appointment of Youth Member to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee

Discussion ensued with regards to appointing a youth member to the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

C) Top Soil Usage

Discussion ensued with regards to utilizing topsoil from projects in Durham Region on farmland.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 starting at 7:30 PM.

9. Adjournment

Moved by B. Winter, Seconded by K. Kemp,
That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Z. Cohoon, Chair, Durham Agricultural Advisory
Committee

K. Smith, Committee Clerk