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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 21, 2023

A meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:30 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Z. Cohoon, Federation of Agriculture, Chair
T. Barrie, Clarington
N. Guthrie, Member at Large
G. O'Connor, Member at Large, attended the meeting at 7:37 PM
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Whitby
B. Smith, Uxbridge, Vice-Chair
G. Taylor, Pickering
T. Watpool, Brock, Vice-Chair
B. Winter, Ajax
W. Wotten*, Regional Councillor
*** denotes members of the Committee participating electronically**

Absent: B. Howsam, Member at Large
K. Kemp, Scugog
K. Kennedy, Member at Large
F. Puterbough, Member at Large

Staff

Present: 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

T. Barrie made a declaration of interest under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* with respect to Items 5.D) ROPA 2023-001 – Bethesda Ridge Farms, Municipality of Clarington, and 5.E) ROPA 2023-002 – Thornlea Holsteins Ltd., Municipality of Clarington, as he has personal experience with both applications.

G.L. O'Connor made a declaration of interest under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* with respect to Items 5.D) ROPA 2023-001 – Bethesda Ridge Farms, Municipality of Clarington, and 5.E) ROPA 2023-002 – Thornlea Holsteins Ltd., Municipality of Clarington, as she sits on the Land Division Committee.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by G. Taylor, Seconded by B. Winter,
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Presentations

- A) Brenna Ireland, Partnership Manager, and Shane Jones, Farm Manager, The Barrett Centre, re: The Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture
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Brenna Ireland, Partnership Manager, and Shane Jones, Farm Manager, The Barrett Centre, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to The Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Outcomes
- Urban Farm Activities
 - Barrett Centre Urban Farm
 - Timeline
 - W. Galen Weston Centre for Food – Urban Farm
 - On-Campus Activities at the W. Galen Weston Centre for Food – Urban Farm
 - W. Galen Weston Centre for Organic Regeneration
 - On Farm Innovations, Equipment, Standardized Operating Procedures & Resources
- Educational Opportunities & Research Connections
 - Work Integrated Learning Opportunities
 - Curriculum Development
 - Research Projects at the Barrett Centre Urban Farm
 - Season Extension (Hoophouses)
- Community Connections
 - Durham College Tackles Food Insecurity with Market Garden Benefiting Community Care Durham

- Bioenterprise, 1855, and Durham College
- Town of Ajax – Ajax Partnership Fund
- RBC Urban Agriculture Wil Program
- Collaborative Conversations
- Next Steps

B. Ireland and S. Jones responded to questions with regards to the nature of the plot of land; whether the soil has been disturbed; the selection of the subject site; any hurdles regarding the process; types of fruits and vegetables that can be grown at the urban farm; and steps being taken for food security measures.

Discussion ensued with regards to the challenge of providing education to the community about agriculture.

B) Michael Scott, Project Planner, Region of Durham, re: Region of Durham Draft New Regional Official Plan

Michael Scott, Project Planner, Region of Durham, provided a PowerPoint Presentation with regards to Region of Durham Draft New Regional Official Plan.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Envision Durham – Draft Regional Official Plan
- Chapter 1 – Regional Structure
- Chapter 6 – Thriving Rural Systems
 - Implementation of Provincial Agricultural System
 - Prime Agricultural Areas policy changes
 - Introduction of permissions related to on-farm diversified and agriculture-related uses
 - Maintenance of rural lot creation and severance policies
- Chapter 7 – Protected Greenlands System
- Chapter 9 – Site Specific Policies
- Next Steps

M. Scott responded to questions with regards to the definition of bonafide farm in the draft new regional official plan; the process for lower tier municipalities following the regional official plan; whether municipalities can pass by-laws to override the regional official plan; how agriculture, agriculture related enterprise, and on farm diversified uses are incorporated into the regional official plan; and the requirement for agriculture impact assessments.

Discussion ensued with regards to bringing topsoil into Durham Region; the definition of a bonafide farmer within the Regional Official Plan and the impact on young farmers; development charges fees; how Bill 23 is affecting municipal planning; and when and how development charges will be required.

5. Discussion Items

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

S. Jibb provided the following update:

- Currently working on providing Economic Development comments on the new draft Regional Official Plan.
- Providing support to Durham Farm Connections for their open house on April 5, 2023 and obtaining permits from the Town of Whitby.
- The on farm diversified uses toolkit is still in development, working with the consultant with an aim to provide an opportunity for local municipalities to review by mid-late April

B) Agriculture 101 Training

S. Jibb advised that when the new committee members are appointed, the Agriculture 101 Training discussions will begin regarding the format of the presentations for presentation to the local municipalities.

Z. Cohoon advised the Agriculture 101 presentation to Regional Council on March 1, 2023 was well received and provided an overview of questions received from Council during the presentation.

Discussion ensued with regards to best way to provide the presentation to the eight local municipalities.

C) 2023 Farm Tour Sub-Committee Report

D. Risebrough provided the following update:

- The farm tour is being held on September 21, 2023 at Carncroft Farm and Swain Beef.
- A subcommittee meeting will take place before the next committee meeting and there will be an on-site meeting at the farms to review the set up.

M. Scott advised that the “save the dates” for the farm tour were sent to Regional and local Councils and will be sent to Members of Provincial Parliament shortly. He also advised that the tent and bathroom rentals have been confirmed, and he has received the quote for hats.

D) ROPA 2023-001 – Bethesda Ridge Farms, Municipality of Clarington

M. Scott advised that an application to amend the Durham Regional Official Plan, submitted by Clark Consulting Services, on behalf of Bethesda Ridge Farms, to permit the severance of a farm dwelling rendered surplus as a result of the

consolidation of non-abutting farm properties in the Municipality of Clarington, File: OPA 2023-001, was received.

M. Scott advised that the applicant is requesting to sever the existing farm dwelling which is not required for a farm employee and is surplus to the farm operation. He also advised that a concurrent zoning by-law amendment application has been submitted to the Municipality of Clarington to rezone the retained farm parcel to prohibit any further severances and the development of any new dwellings, and the use of the existing barn for housing livestock.

M. Scott provided a brief overview of the application and discussion ensued regarding the subject site.

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by H. Schillings

That the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee has no objections to the severance of land.

CARRIED

E) ROPA 2023-002 – Thornlea Holsteins Ltd., Municipality of Clarington

M. Scott advised that an application to amend the Durham Official Plan, submitted by Clark Consulting Services, on behalf of Thornlea Holsteins Ltd., to permit the severance of a farm dwelling rendered surplus as a result of the consolidation of non-abutting farm properties in the Municipality of Clarington, File: OPA 2023-002, was received.

M. Scott advised that Thornlea Holsteins Ltd. owns of total of five agricultural properties in the Municipality of Clarington with present land holdings of 175.5 hectares, of which 149.3 hectares are workable. He also advised that the applicant purchased the subject site in 2022, that the lands are used for the farm's feed crop operation, and the house located on the subject site is not utilized by a farm employee and is surplus to the farm operation.

M. Scott provided a brief overview of the application and discussion ensued regarding the subject site.

Moved by H. Schillings, Seconded by B. Smith,

That the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee has no objections to the severance of land.

CARRIED

6. Information Items

A) Proposed Updates to the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board (NFPPB)

A link to the Proposed Updates to the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board (NFPPB) was provided as Attachment #2 to the Agenda and received.

M. Scott advised that the proposed changes include supporting public participation by clarifying access to adjudicative records, processes for electronic hearings, opportunities for the public to attend hearings, providing efficient and timely proceedings such as when to dismiss applications without a hearing, and optimizing board proceedings. He also advised that comments must be submitted by April 3, 2023.

B) Envision Durham – Release of the Draft New Regional Official Plan

Report #2023-P-6 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development – Envision Durham – Release of the Draft New Regional Official Plan was provided as Attachment #3 to the Agenda and received.

7. Other Business

A) Avian Influenza in Poultry

H. Schillings raised concerns with regards to the avian influenza effecting poultry in Durham Region. Discussion ensued with regards to the avian influenza and the possibility of a motion from DAAC on this matter.

B) Committee Members

B. Winter advised that he will be stepping down from the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee and today will be his last meeting.

M. Scott advised that the May 9, 2023 meeting will likely be the first meeting with the new committee members.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 starting at 7:30 PM.

9. Adjournment

Moved by T. Watpool, Seconded by B. Winter,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Z. Cohoon, Chair, Durham Agricultural Advisory
Committee

K. Smith, Committee Clerk