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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 13, 2024

A meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 in Meeting Room 1-B, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:30 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: T. Barrie, Clarington
Z. Cohoon, Member at Large, Chair
R. Death, Whitby
N. Guthrie, Ajax
Councillor Neal, Regional Councillor Alternate
G. O'Connor, Member at Large
D. Risebrough, Member at Large, Vice-Chair
H. Schillings, Member at Large
M. Shiers, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture
B. Smith, Uxbridge, Vice-Chair
D. Stevenson, Oshawa
N. Swain, Scugog
T. Watpool, Brock

Absent: B. Hulshof, Uxbridge
J. McKay, Durham Farm Fresh
M. Somerville, Member at Large
G. Taylor, Pickering
W. Wotten, Regional Councillor

Staff

Present: A. Chung, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
C. Goodchild*, Director of Planning
M. Scott, Project Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
L. Talling, Acting Manager, Agricultural & Rural Economic Development, Department of Planning and Economic Development
*** denotes staff participating electronically**

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by B. Smith, Seconded by M. Shiers,
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting
held on Tuesday, January 13, 2024, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Discussion Items

A) Agriculture 101 Training

L. Talling advised that the Agriculture 101 Training presentation was provided by Z. Cohoon and N. Guthrie to Town of Ajax Council on January 29, 2024; by M. Sommerville to City of Pickering Council on February 5, 2024; and by T. Barrie to Municipality of Clarington Council on February 12, 2024. L. Talling provided a brief overview of the discussion items brought forward during each of the presentations.

Discussion ensued with regards to the length of the presentation; how the Provincial Policy Statement is not consistent across municipalities; how to address questions from the local municipalities; and when the backyard chicken resolution will be presented to Regional Council.

M. Scott advised that questions from the presentations related to Planning can be provided to him to assist with answering.

L. Talling advised that the Agriculture 101 Training presentation will be delivered to the Township of Uxbridge and City of Oshawa Councils on February 26, 2024, and to Town of Whitby Council on March 3, 2024.

B) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

L. Talling provided the following update:

- Canadian Agriculture Day takes place on February 13, 2024 and Durham Region has posted on social media to show its support and appreciation for the agricultural industry and the food they produce.
- The North Durham Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses (OFDU) policy and development application process project is currently in the Request for Proposal (RFP) phase and are looking to engage with consultants.
- The Agriculture Tour for municipal planners, economic developers and building staff has been set for March 27, 2024 and will take place at

Mustards Dairy Farm and Soybean Roaster, St. Lawrence Grains & Farm Supply, and Slabtown Cider.

- The application process for the Agri Food Gateway Program, delivered by Durham College with support from National Research Council Canada, Industrial Research Assistant Program and Durham Region application process is now open until March 31, 2024.

C) Agriculture Advisory Committee Clarington Update

T. Barrie stated that at the February 8, 2024 meeting of the Clarington Agriculture Advisory Committee, there was a presentation from Todd Brown of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and they were looking for advice on rural development and how to develop rural areas to be more socially favourable.

Discussion ensued with regards to entertainment available in the rural areas of Clarington.

D) Durham Farm Fresh Update

Rob Alexander, Chair, Durham Farm Fresh was in attendance in J. McKay's absence. He advised that the annual membership renewal is underway and is expected to be consistent with previous membership levels at 65-70 members. He further advised that Durham Farm Fresh received Provincial funding to hire a joint coordinator.

E) Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Update

M. Scott advised that there is no Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance update at this time.

M. Scott responded to questions with regards to who are the Regional representatives for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance and who the current Chair is.

F) Durham Region Federation of Agriculture Update

M. Shiers stated that at the last meeting there was discussion on putting together a joint meeting between the Durham, Lindsay and Peterborough Associations.

M. Shiers raised a concern received from a member regarding traffic lights installed in the Municipality of Clarington at Regional Road 34 and Concession 7 as there was not a lot of public consultation done and the space is very tight.

Discussion ensued with regards to the location of the traffic lights; whether Durham Region installed the traffic lights; and providing advice to the Works Department for driving large vehicles through roundabouts and intersections.

M. Scott advised that he having discussions with Works Department staff to provide an annual presentation to the Committee.

G) Growing North Durham Plan Annual Activity Report

Report #2024-EDT-4 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development – Growing North Durham Plan Annual Activity Report was provided as Attachment #2 to the Agenda and received.

L. Talling advised that the purpose of Report #2024-EDT-4 was to provide an annual update on the Growing North Durham: Rural Economic Development Action Plan. The Report was accompanied by staff presentations from Stacey Jibb and Glen Macfarlane to Committees of Council of each of the three Northern municipalities, as well as to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on February 6, 2024.

L. Talling stated that the action plan is structured into three pillars being People, Places and Prosperity, and the report and presentation provided an update on the activities within each pillar.

H) 2024 Farm Tour Planning

D. Risebrough advised there does not seem to be any interest from the suggested farmer to host this year's Farm Tour and suggested seeking another host.

Z. Cohoon asked Committee members for their feedback on the following questions:

- What do you think is the most important aspect or issue of agriculture that the Committee wants to highlight in today's political and social environment?

Committee members suggested lack of processing plants; transportation issues; innovation or succession shown in rural areas; food security; and education for students and youth.

- How can that be showcased at a farm tour and which would provide the best learning experience for Regional staff and those invited?

Committee members suggested Rekker's Greenhouse; Algoma Orchards; Tara Hills Stud Farm; Richter Herbs; Greenwood Mushroom Farm, potato farmers; Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority; Twin Erin Farms; and Mulders Potato Farm.

The Committee discussed past farm tour locations; farm tour community location; potential keynote speakers; and potential dates for the farm tour.

5. Information Items

- A) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Resolution re: Bill C-234: An Act to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act

Correspondence with regards to Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Resolution, re: Bill C-234: An Act to Amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act was provided as Attachment #3 to the Agenda and received.

- B) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Resolution re: Independent Electricity Systems Operator (IESO) Battery Storage Sites

Correspondence with regards to Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Resolution, re: Independent Electricity Systems Operator (IESO) Battery Storage Sites was provided as Attachment #4 to the Agenda and received.

- C) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Workplan (2024-P-1)

Correspondence with regards to Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Workplan (2024-P-1) was provided as Attachment #5 to the Agenda and received.

- D) Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC) Minutes – January 18, 2024

Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee (DECAC) minutes dated January 18, 2024 was provided as a link to the Agenda and received.

- E) Ontario Farmland Trust – Farmland Forum

M. Scott advised that registration is now open for the Farmland Forum that will be taking place on March 21, 2024.

6. Other Business

- A) Accommodations on a Bona Fide Farm in North Oshawa

Councillor Neal raised a concern received from a farmer who is having an issue with a potential by-law infraction in the City of Oshawa related to a mobile dwelling. Councillor Neal asked Committee members if there is anything they can do to assist.

Discussion ensued with regards to why the City of Oshawa is having issues with the site; whether the proper rules and permits were followed; and whether the issue is within the scope of Durham Region or the City of Oshawa.

B) Railway Crossing

H. Schillings raised a concern received from a farmer in Clarington regarding a railway track crossing on their property and the railway company wanting the upkeep of the tracks to be paid for by the landowners.

Discussion ensued with regards to similar issues in other municipalities and whether the cost of the upkeep should fall on the railway company or landowner.

C) Oshawa's 100th Anniversary

Councillor Neal advised that the City of Oshawa is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year.

D) Director of Sustainability

Z. Cohoon requested to have the Director of Sustainability invited to a future meeting for discussion on agriculture and sustainability.

E) Stormwater Management Fees

Z. Cohoon advised that the Town of Ajax has implemented stormwater management fees that are being charged to tax bills and it is significantly impacting farmers.

Z. Cohoon requested to have staff provide a presentation to the Committee regarding stormwater management fees.

Discussion ensued with regards to who is being impacted by the change; the fee being for where water cannot percolate into the ground; putting forward a motion to exempt farms from the stormwater management fees due to the nature of the business; and how many municipalities in Ontario have implemented this fee.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 starting at 7:30 PM.

8. Adjournment

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by B. Smith,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Z. Cohoon, Chair

K. Smith, Committee Clerk