

The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

June 11, 2019

A regular meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, June 11, 2019 in Boardroom 1-B, Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:31 PM

Present: Z. Cohoon, Federation of Agriculture, Chair
F. Puterbough, Member at Large, Vice-Chair
T. Barrie, Clarington
N. Guthrie, Member at Large
B. Howsam, Member at Large
K. Kemp, Scugog
P. MacArthur, Oshawa
G. O'Connor, Member at Large
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Whitby
G. Taylor, Pickering
T. Watpool, Brock, Vice-Chair
B. Winter, Ajax

Absent: D. Bath-Hadden, Regional Councillor
K. Kennedy, Member at Large
B. Smith, Uxbridge

Staff

Present: K. Kilbourne, Senior Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development
L. Mackenzie, Program Coordinator, Department of Planning and Economic Development
S. Penak, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

1. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by K. Kemp, Seconded by B. Winter,
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on May 14, 2019 be adopted.

CARRIED

2. Declarations of Interest

H. Schillings made a declaration of interest under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* with respect to Item 3. B) Durham Region Federation of Agriculture, Agriculture Education & Event Centre Feasibility Project, as he is a neighbour to one of the proposed sites.

H. Schillings made a declaration of interest later in the meeting under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* with respect to Item 6. C) Potential Development on Sunnybrae Golf Course, as he is a neighbour to one of the proposed sites.

3. Presentations

A) Bronwynne Wilton and Krista Kapitan, Wilton Consulting Group, re: Durham Agricultural Strategy Update

B. Wilton and K. Kapitan, Wilton Consulting Group, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Durham Agricultural Strategy Update.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- Purpose
 - To update the previous Agriculture Strategy (2013-2018) for the next 5 years (2019-2024)
 - Can be a tool for the Region to help the sector take advantage of emerging opportunities to support the long-term growth of agriculture and agri-food in Durham
- What did we do?
 - Kick-off meeting;
 - Online survey;
 - Interviews;
 - Community engagement sessions; and
 - Summary report & final agricultural strategy
- Agricultural Strategy 2019-2024
- Vision for Agriculture in Durham (2024)
 - The Region is driven by our agricultural and agri-food entrepreneurs. It is where multi-generational farms are sustained, and new farm and food businesses launch. It is where food processors invest to meet the demands of Canada's largest market.
- How we will achieve our vision
- Overview – Objectives (3 pillars):
 - Support our Farmers
 - Propel the agri-food processing industry
 - Raise the profile of the local food movement

K. Kapitan stated the objectives of the three pillars:

- 1) Support our Farmers
 - a. Reduce red-tape that limits business expansion
 - b. Support agricultural labour force development
 - c. Enhance education opportunities to share knowledge and best practices
- 2) Propel the Agri-food Processing Industry:
 - a. Enable foreign and domestic investment opportunities in food processing

- b. Support on-farm diversified uses and value-added processing
- c. Facilitate programming to support entrepreneurship in food processing and agricultural businesses
- 3) Raise the Profile of Local Food in the Region
 - a. Promote Buy Local initiatives and policies
 - b. Support farmers' ability to sell their food locally at farmers' markets, direct to consumer, and others

B. Wilton and K. Kapitan responded to questions from the Committee then opened the floor to comments.

Discussion ensued regarding the need to better address commercial agriculture in the strategy such as the dairy and hog producers, soybean and wheat growers etc. The Committee emphasized the need to define the word local in more detail. It was felt that the draft strategy meets a political need for addressing local food and local agriculture. It was noted that the draft strategy has made progress with regards to increased education from the previous strategy.

Further discussion ensued regarding the statement "cutting red tape" and the need for specific details on how exactly that would be accomplished. The Committee noted the extreme challenges they face with respect to signage, building permits, fire permits etc. They noted that there should be better alignment between the lower and upper tier municipalities and a simplified process for acquiring permits. Another concern that was raised was property taxes; if someone can't afford to live in Durham, how can they be expected to farm in Durham.

Z. Cohoon reminded the Committee that the agricultural strategy is a tool to be used to lever other activities that are needed.

K. Kilbourne also reminded the Committee that the strategy is still in draft form and continued input and feedback on the draft strategy is welcomed.

B) Marlene Werry and Karen Yellowlees, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture (DRFA), re: Agriculture Education & Event Centre Feasibility Project

M. Werry and K. Yellowlees provided an update with respect to the Agriculture Education & Event Centre Feasibility Project. An Executive Summary of the Feasibility Study Report was provided as a handout.

K. Yellowlees advised that the DRFA was awarded a Trillium Foundation grant in 2018 to explore the feasibility of establishing a Durham Region Agricultural Centre. She noted that if in the first phase of the feasibility analysis the concept is deemed feasible, a second phase of the study would include a detailed business plan including a recommended site, a detailed analysis and governance structure recommendation.

K. Yellowlees advised that the consultant team and steering committee established a check-list of five factors to demonstrate feasibility for the centre to be established that included:

- Ability to at least break-even on a continuing basis;
- High levels of utilization;
- Catalyst for growth and development of the agricultural sector;
- Positive economic impact to Durham Region; and
- Realistic possibility of development.

M. Werry and K. Yellowlees also provided the following materials as handouts:

- 4.1 Long List of Candidate Sites (Site Selection)
- 4.3 Site Selection Criteria Evaluation (Site Selection)
- 5.1 Functional Program (Preliminary Design)
- 5.4 Capital Cost Projections (Preliminary Design)

M. Werry noted that initially DRFA identified 22 sites as candidate locations for the DRFA Centre, and then 15 were short listed by the DRFA for further investigation based on survey results, availability, size and distance from major target markets.

M. Werry stated that the key elements that were identified that could be part of the functional program were: an event space & education area; an indoor farmer's market; and/or and outdoor farmer's market.

M. Werry and K. Yellowlees responded to questions from the Committee regarding the emphasis put on parking as a key element for site selection; the limited transportation in North Durham; the potential size of the DRFA Centre; and the emphasis on a key anchor or pull for the facility.

M. Werry and K. Yellowlees provided the following questions to DAAC for their consideration and input:

- Would you support the development of an Agriculture Centre in Durham Region?
- What site location would you think would be the best and why?
- What do you think the challenges to implementation would be?
- What would be your ideas to mitigate those implementation challenges?
- What skills/resources could you bring to help this project be implemented?
- Any other ideas that should be considered before the business plan phase of the project?

Detailed discussion ensued regarding the 4 sites that the steering committee chose for further investigation that included: Wilson & Winchester (Oshawa), Camp 30 (Clarington), Brooklin Arena (Whitby), and Private Hotel Development Partnership (Scugog). The Project Steering Committee felt that

the Brooklin Arena would be the best site but would not work with their timelines. Further discussion ensued regarding the need for a major draw and that it would depend on which site was selected.

Further discussion included:

- Capital being the biggest implementation challenge
- A private partner would work and the possibility of it being Ontario Tech (formerly UOIT) or Durham College
- The lack of a major draw to the DRFA Centre
- Possibility of it being more of a research and development space, with a farmer's market
- Setting up a meeting between Don Lovisa, President of Durham College, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Minister of Education, and the 5 local Members of Parliament, once a desired course of action is in place

K. Yellowlees advised that comments can be submitted until September and then the second phase around business planning will begin.

M. Werry and K. Yellowlees also noted that the Durham Farm Connections Celebrate Agriculture Gala is being held October 24, 2019. The nomination forms were handed out if DAAC was interested in nominating an individual, group, or organization in the following categories: the Family Farm Award; the Spirit of Agriculture Award; and the Leadership Award.

4. Discussion Items

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update – N. Rutherford

L. MacKenzie, Program Coordinator, on behalf of N. Rutherford, provided an update with regards to the following:

- The Green Tech Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands. She advised that Regional Economic Development staff and representatives from the agriculture community attended this conference. The objectives of the mission were to build relationships with international businesses and academic institutions that would lead to future partnerships, trade and export opportunities, research and development collaborations, and foreign direct investments.
- The Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project Report and Action Plan was presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on June 4, 2019. It was well received and now the implementation will begin.
- The annual Spring Farmers Market will be held at Regional headquarters on June 18, 2019.

B) 2019 DAAC Farm Tour

D. Risebrough provided a brief update with respect to the 2019 DAAC Farm Tour. He provided the following:

- The Farm Tour is scheduled for September 12, 2019
- The sample hat has been created and will be the Committee identifier for this year
- As in previous years, help will be needed at the event and will include group leaders, parking, set-up etc.
- Greenbank Park will provide the tables
- Invitations will be sent out July and save the dates have already gone out. Additionally, calendar invitations will be sent to Regional Councillors and Department Heads

Discussion ensued with regards to extending invitations to the local area municipal councillors. K. Kilbourne advised that more context may be added to the invitations this year specific to the individuals being invited for better engagement.

C) Proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment – Rural Water and Sanitary Sewer Service Connections, File: OPA 2019-001

Z. Cohoon, D. Risebrough and H. Schillings recently met to review the Proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment regarding Rural Water and Sanitary Sewer Service Connections. They recommended support of this amendment. They discussed that in any case where there is going to be a new water and sanitary sewer service connection, any wells that may exist on that property need to be properly decommissioned, and the number of holes reduced.

Discussion ensued regarding concern that water and sanitary sewer service connections are charged based on frontage, which may be prohibitive because farms are often rectangular resulting in a large frontage cost.

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by H. Schillings,
That the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee supports the Application to Amend the Durham Regional Official Plan to consider future connections to existing municipal water and sanitary sewer services outside the Urban Area, File: OPA 2019-001.

CARRIED

D) Envision Durham Update

B. Howsam, K. Kemp, F. Puterbough and B. Smith met to discuss the Envision Durham Discussion Papers.

F. Puterbough advised the Committee that two main themes arose from their discussion:

- How does agriculture tie into Envision Durham?
 - Confusion around how the agricultural strategy and the numerous discussion papers tie into Envision Durham
- Urban Boundaries
 - DAAC's primary objective is to protect prime agricultural land. There is concern that prime agricultural land is disappearing
 - South Durham is undergoing a housing boom
 - Do the urban boundaries need to be expanded?

Discussion ensued regarding the majority of growth being directed to the urban areas and to where transit is available.

K. Kilbourne noted that the requested deadlines are not firm for comments on the various discussion papers, and comments will be accepted through the remainder of this year.

5. Information Items

A) Report #2019-P-28 DAAC 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Workplans

A copy of Report #2019-P-28, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Workplan was provided as Attachment #2 to the Agenda and received.

Z. Cohoon stated that he presented the 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Workplan at the Planning & Economic Development meeting Tuesday, June 4, 2019. He noted the following topics were brought up: the role of agriculture in sequestering carbon and methane emissions from cows; broadband; and technological advances in farming.

B) Report #2019-P-31 Envision Durham – Growth Management – Urban System Discussion Paper

A copy of Report #2019-P-31, Envision Durham – Growth Management – Urban System Discussion Paper was provided as Attachment #3 to the Agenda and received.

C) Report #2019-EDT-11 Region of Durham Local Food Business Retention & Expansion Project Report and Action Plan

A copy of Report #2019-EDT-11, Region of Durham Local Food Business Retention & Expansion Project Report and Action Plan was provided as Attachment #4 to the Agenda and received.

6. Other Business

A) Report #2019-A-24: Proposed Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy, "Growing Resilience: Durham Region Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy"

K. Kilbourne advised that Report #2019-A-24: Proposed Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy, "Growing Resilience: Durham Region Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy" was endorsed by the Finance & Administration Committee Tuesday, June 11, 2019. There were no comments other than to ensure that on-going information is being provided back on the progress towards implementation and monitoring methods are in place.

B) Ontario Federation of Agriculture Advisory Committee Webinar

N. Rutherford and K. Kilbourne recently participated in an Agriculture Advisory Committee webinar hosted by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Durham was asked to participate with a few other best practice jurisdictions to share Durham's experiences with other municipalities across Ontario.

C) Potential Development on Sunnybrae Golf Course

At this time, H. Schillings declared a conflict of interest as he is a neighbour to one of the proposed sites. He vacated the meeting and did not take part in the discussion or vote on the matter.

Concern was expressed with respect to the recent announcement of a hotel being built on the Sunnybrae Golf Course and whether the Township of Scugog would support the development. Further discussion ensued regarding the hotel being built outside of the urban area boundary on agricultural land in the Greenbelt and the impacts it would have on surrounding agricultural producers such as the application of minimum distance separation. The Committee questioned whether this would be an appropriate development.

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by F. Puterbough,

That staff be requested to provide Committee with information on the Sunnybrae Golf Course development, including identification of any potential impacts on the agricultural sector and report back to the Committee at a subsequent meeting.

CARRIED

D) Construction on Durham Highway 23

B. Winter inquired about construction that is occurring on Durham Highway 23 and who is leading the project as it appears to be causing issues for movement of agricultural vehicles in that area. K. Kilbourne advised that she would look into it and get back to him directly.

E) September Agenda Topic

H. Schillings suggested that the new water reservoirs being proposed in North Oshawa and North Whitby be a topic of discussion at the September DAAC meeting. He noted that proposed locations included lands in the Oak Ridges Moraine.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, September 10, 2019 starting at 7:30 PM in Boardroom 1-B, Level 1, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

8. Adjournment

Moved by F. Puterbough, Seconded by K. Kemp,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:54 PM.

Z. Cohoon, Chair, Durham
Agricultural Advisory Committee

S. Penak, Committee Clerk