

The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 13, 2020

A meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:31 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
B. Howsam, Member at Large
K. Kemp, Scugog attended the meeting at 7:46 PM
K. Kennedy, Member at Large
P. MacArthur, Oshawa attended the meeting at 7:32 PM
G. O'Connor, Member at Large
F. Puterbough, Member at Large, Vice-Chair
D. Risebrough, Member at Large
H. Schillings, Whitby
B. Smith, Uxbridge
G. Taylor, Pickering
T. Watpool, Brock, Vice-Chair
***members of the Committee participated electronically**

Also

Present: G. Highet, Regional Councillor

Absent: D. Bath-Hadden, Regional Councillor
B. Winter, Ajax

Staff

Present: K. Allore-Engel, Senior Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development
A. Brown, Agriculture Economic Development Program Coordinator
L. Fortuna, Director of Health Protection
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
S. Jibb, Manager, Agriculture and Rural, Department of Planning and Economic Development
S. Struna, Manager, Durham Region Health Department
N. Prasad, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by G. O'Connor,
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee
meeting held on September 15, 2020 be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Presentation

A) Protecting the Health of Temporary Foreign Workers during COVID-19: Lisa Fortuna, Director of Health Protection and Sendi Struna, Manager – Durham Region Health Department

Lisa Fortuna, Director of Health Protection and Sendi Struna, Manager, Durham Region Health Department provided a PowerPoint Presentation with regards to Protecting the Health of Temporary Foreign Workers during COVID-19.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Agenda
- Update on COVID-19 Response
- Durham.ca
- Role of Durham Region Health Department/Public Health
- COVID-19 and Farms
- Section 22 Class Order to Temporary Foreign Workers' employers
- Class Order FAQ
- Housing Risk Factors
- Federal/Provincial TFW Supports
- Housing Recommendations
- Alternate Bed Layouts
- Other COVID Prevention Strategies
- Resources
- 2021 Agricultural Season

L. Fortuna stated that with the increase of COVID-19 cases and the second wave, the Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) is expected to see an increase in workload with respect to:

- Case and Contact Management
- Investigations and Inspections
- Responding to inquiries

- Supporting schools
- Supporting compliance
- Swabbing

L. Fortuna provided a statistical breakdown of the DRHD's COVID-19 response activities as of September 23, 2020 as well as an overview of the Durham.ca website. She advised that in addition to the COVID-19 Data Tracker, there are many other helpful resources available on the site.

S. Struna stated that the role of the DRHD with regards to the pandemic are as follows:

- Management of COVID-19
- Inspection of migrant farm housing accommodations
- Monitor quarantine requirements
- Provide education and information
- Collaborate with other ministries and agencies

She stated that 48,087 confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported in Ontario from January 15 to September 22, 2020. Of these cases, 1,365 were linked to farms; 22 individuals were hospitalized; and there were 3 deaths reported.

S. Struna advised that a Section 22 Class Order was issued by Dr. R.J. Kyle, Medical Officer of Health, on June 24, 2020 to all owners and operators of agricultural farms in the Regional Municipality of Durham to identify the actions required to comply with the Order; limit work to 1 workplace; outline quarantine requirements; and ensure adherence to public health measures.

S. Struna stated that some of the housing risk factors for foreign workers were congregate living settings; vulnerable populations; and the inability to maintain physical distancing. She stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, housing recommendations have been updated to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 as follows: additional housing; private rooms or rooms with fewer occupants; change in furniture placement to allow 2 meter distancing; limits to the number of people sharing a washroom; barriers in sleeping areas; decrease in bed occupancy; avoid the use of bunk beds; and consider different bed layouts. She stated that in addition to the previously stated measures, the following strategies need to also be implemented: communication; active screening; employee attendance policy; cohorting; cleaning and disinfecting of living spaces; and the use of personal protective equipment.

S. Struna stated that due to the pandemic, DRHD has had to review practices to protect and better support agricultural partners. She stated that for 2021, they will be enhancing their inspections process, as well as developing resources to provide operators and temporary foreign workers with better guidelines and measures.

5. Discussion Items

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update – S. Jibb

S. Jibb advised of the following:

- Provided an update to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on October 6th regarding the Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Project. Details are listed in Report #2020-EDT-8 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development.
- Staff will be supporting Durham Farm Fresh with their annual general meeting in November. The meeting will be hosted through Microsoft Teams.
- Staff will be attending the Durham Federation of Agriculture Regional Meeting next week. There will be a presentation on the Emily Project (Farm 911 Project).

A. Brown advised of the following:

- Ontario Agriculture Week was the week of October 5th. Ten Twitter posts were launched from the Agriculture and Rural Twitter account to promote the agricultural community. There was a lot of engagement and more followers were gained. The Twitter account is a helpful way to push out information to the community.
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) runs a Community of Practice which helps to educate economic developers and planners on agriculture related topics. Staff will be providing a presentation on October 14th.
- Staff is working on creating a Specialty Crop survey to gather information on whether there is an interest in diversifying or trying new crop for a workshop. The workshop will be in partnership with OMAFRA.

B) DAAC Farm Tour Recap – D. Risebrough

Discussion ensued with regards to the Virtual DAAC Farm Tour and the following comments were provided:

- The Virtual Farm Tour was a resounding success;
- There were 150 participants which is almost double the attendance at previous in-person farm tours;
- There were 65 responses received to the survey and the comments provided were positive;

- Would be nice to have a question and answer portion at the future farm tours;
- Need to have discussions with regards to sharing the video for educational purposes; and
- Maybe get the local newspapers involved next time to encourage even greater participation.

6. Information Items

A) Report #2020-INFO-85 Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, 2020 Virtual Farm Tour

A copy of Report #2020-INFO-85 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development regarding the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, 2020 Virtual Farm Tour, was provided as Attachment #2 to the Agenda and received.

B) DAAC Farm Tour Survey Results

A copy of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Farm Tour Survey Results was provided as Attachment #3 to the Agenda and received.

C) Email to TFW Employers from Durham Health Department

A copy of the email correspondence to Temporary Farm Worker Employers from the Durham Region Health Department was provided as Attachment #4 to the Agenda and received.

D) Government of Ontario Toolkit

A copy of the email correspondence regarding the Government of Ontario Toolkit was provided as Attachment #5 to the Agenda and received.

E) Housing for Migrant Workers (Clarington Farmer)

A copy of the email correspondence regarding Housing for Migrant Workers was provided as Attachment #6 to the Agenda and received.

F) Food Industry Worker Day Motion (Ajax)

A copy of the correspondence from the Town of Ajax regarding the resolution passed with regards to Food Industry Worker Day was provided as Attachment #7 to the Agenda and received.

G) Bill 156 Letter & Discussion Paper

A copy of the correspondence from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with regards to Bill 156 was provided as Attachment #8 to the Agenda and received.

7. Other Business

A) THEE Farmers Parade of Lights

T. Barrie advised that the THEE Farmers Parade of Lights will not be held this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

B) Cancellation of the Durham Soil and Crop Annual Meeting

T. Barrie advised that the Durham Soil and Crop Annual Meeting scheduled for January 2021 has been cancelled.

C) Proposed Regulations for Canada's Clean Fuel Standard

Z. Cohoon advised that he has issues with the proposed regulations that were announced in September 2020. He advised that there are concerns for Ontario farmers that the regulations will introduce crop production constraints. It was the consensus of the Committee to form a sub-committee to discuss this further and present more information at the November meeting. The following members volunteered to sit on the Committee: T. Barrie; B. Smith; D. Risebrough; and Z. Cohoon.

D) Future Presentations to Committee

Z. Cohoon requested that members advise of any presentations they would be interested in hearing at future Committee meetings. H. Schillings requested a presentation on regional road improvements.

E) Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)

K. Kemp advised that the Canada Emergency Business Account has been extended to December 31, 2020.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 starting at 7:30 PM.

9. Adjournment

Moved by G. O'Connor, Seconded by T. Barrie,
That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Z. Cohoon, Chair, Durham
Agricultural Advisory Committee

N. Prasad, Committee Clerk