

## **The Regional Municipality of Durham**

### **MINUTES**

#### **DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**April 13, 2021**

A meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:32 PM. In accordance with Provincial legislation, 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. Highet, Regional Councillor  
K. Kennedy, Member at Large  
P. MacArthur, Oshawa  
F. Puterbough, Member at Large  
D. Risebrough, Member at Large  
H. Schillings, Whitby  
B. Smith, Uxbridge  
G. Taylor, Pickering, Vice-Chair  
T. Watpool, Brock, Vice-Chair  
**\*members of the Committee participated electronically**

#### **Also**

Present: Councillor Wotten attended the meeting at 7:44 PM

Absent: B. Howsam, Member at Large  
K. Kemp, Scugog  
G. O'Connor, Member at Large  
B. Winter, Ajax

#### **Staff**

Present: K. Allore-Engel, Senior Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development  
A. Brown, Agriculture Economic Development Program Coordinator, Department of Planning and Economic Development  
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT  
S. Jibb, Manager, Agriculture and Rural, Department of Planning and Economic Development  
R. Razvi, Business Analyst, Durham Region Planning and Economic Development Department

M. Scott, Project Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development

N. Prasad, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

**\*all staff except R. Inacio participated electronically**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by B. Smith, Seconded by G. Taylor,

That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on March 9, 2021 be adopted.

CARRIED

**4. Presentation**

A) Riaz Razvi, Durham Region Planning and Economic Development Department – Durham Region Broadband Strategy Implementation

Riaz Razvi, Business Analyst, Planning and Economic Development Department, provided a PowerPoint Presentation with regards to the Durham Region Broadband Strategy Implementation.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Broadband Strategy Implementation
- Update on Action Plan
- Broadband Survey – Key Findings
- Durham Broadband Network: Guiding Principles
- Grant Applications
- Municipal Services Corporation

R. Razvi provided an overview of the 2019 and 2020 accomplishments and advised that future work will include the following:

- Harmonization of Municipal Access Agreements
- Automation of Municipal Consent process
- Establish a Municipal Services Corporation
- Tighter coordination with Capital Build projects

R. Razvi advised that the broadband survey ran from January to August 2020 and received over 2600 responses from across the Region, 76 of which were received from farms.

R. Razvi also advised that Universal Service Objective (USO) is a target number or speed that CRTC deems to be the minimum service that every household should be able to access which is 50 megabits (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload. He further advised that 100% of the farms that responded to the broadband survey were below the recommended speed. He provided a summary of the key findings of the broadband survey and advised that 38% of the urban respondents achieved the 50/10 target, whereas only 2% of rural respondents achieved the same target.

R. Razvi stated that the goal of the Regional Broadband Network is to service rural and underserved areas of the Region. In order to do this, 6 principles have been developed: ubiquitous; collaborative; affordable and inclusive; open access; fast and reliable; and improve service delivery. He stated that the Regional Broadband Network represents a new approach and service and requires expertise from the private sector to build and operate the network. He further advised that staff is looking to establish a regionally owned Municipal Services Corporation to oversee the operations of the network.

R. Razvi responded to questions with regards to the two Hamlets in Pickering that will be getting better broadband service and the improvement of rural internet.

B) Kiersten Allore-Engel, Durham Region Planning and Economic Development Department – Envision Durham Proposed Policy Directions

Kiersten Allore-Engel, Durham Region Planning and Economic Development Department, provided a PowerPoint Presentation with regards to Envision Durham Proposed Policy Directions.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Envision Durham – Proposed Policy Directions
- Purpose
- Policy Framework in Ontario
- Envision Durham
- Policy Review Approach
- Consultation and Discussion Papers
- Proposed Policy Directions
- Durham's Rural System
- Thriving Rural System
- Agricultural System
- Proposed Direction: Rural System
- Proposed Direction: On-Farm Diversified Uses
- Proposed Direction: Ag Related & On-Farm Diversified Uses
- Proposed Direction: Cannabis
- Proposed Direction: Lot Creation
- Types of Lot Creation

- Proposed Direction: Lot Creation
- Secondary Dwellings for Farm Help
- Lot Creation: Agriculture Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses
- Abutting Surplus Farm Dwellings
- Non-Abutting Surplus Farm Dwellings
- Enhance aggregate resource rehabilitation requirements
- Next Steps

K. Allore-Engel provided an overview of the planning hierarchy in Ontario which starts with a provincial policy statement, followed by provincial plans; regional official plan; area municipal official plan; and zoning by-law, site plan control and minor variance. She stated that the Envision Durham Project is a complex multi year process and staff is at the proposed policy directions part of the project. She also stated that the project will include: provincial plan and policy conformity; incorporate relevant initiatives from council adopted plans and strategies; comments and submissions on discussion papers; and suggestions on improving the existing Regional Official Plan (ROP).

K. Allore-Engel advised that the proposed policy directions include topics such as: prosperous economy; healthy communities; supportive infrastructure; vibrant urban system; thriving rural system; protected greenlands system; and connected transportation system. She advised that the thriving rural system section in the policies report has a lot of information that includes:

- Incorporation of Provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas in the ROP;
- Updating of rural severance policies;
- Enhancement of aggregate resource rehabilitation requirements; and
- Implementation of provincial Agricultural System and Agri-food network.

K. Allore-Engel provided an overview of the proposed directions for: the Rural System; On-Farm Diversified Uses; Cannabis; and Lot Creation. With regards to lot creation, she stated that from an agricultural industry perspective, lot creation allows landowners to: avoid tenant/landlord issues; expand farm operations by using the revenue from the sale of a surplus dwelling to purchase land and/or equipment; allows for business, estate or retirement planning; provides non-farm housing options in the rural area; and the restrictive zoning on non-abutting surplus farm dwellings helps to reduce the cost of agricultural parcels.

K. Allore-Engel stated that provincial plans continue to be restrictive in terms of lot creation and evidence shows that there is a need for the Region to continue to limit severances in rural areas. She provided a detailed review of the changes proposed to the policies with regards to lot creation, including abutting and non-abutting surplus farm dwellings. She reminded the committee that Report #2021-P-7 regarding the proposed policy directions was shared with them on March 9, 2021 and advised that it can also be found on the Region's website. She stated that the submission deadline for comments is June 30, 2021 and applications for settlement area boundary expansions are due by May 31, 2021.

Staff responded to questions regarding plans for remediation of gravel pits; and clarification of a bonafide farmer.

Discussion ensued with regards to the importance of reviewing the policies regarding severances, lot creation and on-farm diversification to be able to appropriately comment. It was stated that on-farm shops and stores will become more popular and there is a need to make sure they can be successful without incurring any hinderances. A subcommittee was formed consisting of F. Puterbough, H. Schillings, D. Risebrough and Z. Cohoon to discuss further.

## **5. Discussion Items**

### **A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update**

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S. Jibb provided the following update:

- Staff is working on putting together a formal response to the proposed policy directions regarding on farm diversification; and
- With regards to the food hub project, a consultant has been retained and is doing a business case for a food hub and logistics centre; a steering committee has been formed and the next phase will be to conduct surveys to determine the need for the facility; and there have been meetings with Durham Farm Connections to encourage collaboration.

A. Brown provided the following update:

- Staff has been working on the Agricultural Strategy; an implementation plan has been developed to help guide the workplan which has been revised to incorporate and address some of the challenges faced by the agriculture community due to COVID-19; staff is working on displaying the agricultural landscape as an introduction to the agriculture strategy and the economic benefits that agriculture brings; and

- The local food web page on the Invest Durham website is being updated; updates include up-to-date listings and a Farmers Market calendar.

B) DAAC Farm Tour

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Z. Cohoon advised that the farm tour subcommittee met prior to the DAAC meeting. He advised that they have had discussions with Bruce Sargent of Farm Boy Productions for the video production of the Virtual Farm Tour. They are hoping to get some videos of potato planting and are having discussions with regards to making the tour interactive.

C) OPA 2021-002 – Sunrise International Investments Inc.

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A copy of the Early Release Report #2021-P-\*\* from the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development was provided as Attachment #2 to the Agenda. M. Scott stated that the public meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2021 and advised that the applicant is applying to change their designation from “Prime Agriculture” to “Open Space”.

Discussion ensued with regards to the proposed use of the property and what it may allow in the future. It was stated that use of the property as a golf course and banquet facility would be better than use for development as it would not be supporting agriculture. The committee raised concerns with regards to the services available and stated that changing it to “Open Space” may open the door to having a future subdivision built, however, it was clarified that the site is not within the urban boundary so a subdivision would not be allowed at this time.

It was requested that this item be brought back to the next meeting with more information and further clarification of the proposed changes.

**6. Information Items**

A) Durham Farm Connections Barn Quilt Trail Project

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M. Scott advised that Durham Farm Connections are looking for a minimum of 10 new participants for their Barn Quilt Trail Project. He advised that the 8' x 8' wooden quilt block must be in a location that is visible from the road and is not limited to barns. Interested members were requested to send an email to [Durham Farm Connections](#).

B) Report #2021-P-8 – Region of Durham Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol

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Report #2021-P-8 of the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development regarding the Region of Durham Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol was provided as Attachment #3 to the Agenda and received.

**7. Other Business**

There was no other business to be considered.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 starting at 7:30 PM.

**9. Adjournment**

Moved by T. Barrie, Seconded by T. Watpool,  
That the meeting be adjourned.  
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 PM.

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Z. Cohoon, Chair, Durham  
Agricultural Advisory Committee

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N. Prasad, Committee Clerk