



## **Agricultural Advisory Committee**

### **Minutes**

**Thursday, April 7, 2016**

**7:00 PM**

**Ontario Room**

<b>Members Present:</b> Deputy Mayor Jack Heath Councillor Don Hamilton Paul Reesor Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Bryant Hulshaf  <b>Regrets:</b> Jessica Yau, Sustainability Coordinator Lilli Duoba, Manager of Natural Heritage Sonia Dhir, TRCA Ligia DeFilippis Lynne Koss Richard Reesor	<b>Staff Present:</b> Ruth Rendon, Senior Planner Natural Heritage Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator  <b>Agency Representatives:</b> Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health
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#### **1. Call to Order**

The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:05 pm with Paul Reesor presiding as Chair.

#### **2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest – None Declared**

#### **3. Additions/Changes to the Agenda - None**

#### **4. Minutes**

Moved by Kim Empringham

Seconded by Bryant Hulshaf

That the February 4, and March 3, 2016, Agriculture Advisory Committee Minutes be approved as presented.

**CARRIED**

## **5. Flood Control Program Presentation**

Robert Muir, Manager of Stormwater Management presented on Markham's Flood Control Program.

Markham's Flood Control Program has been initiated to provide a 100 year level of service for storm sewer systems across the City to improve storm drainage capacity. Markham is currently updating its sewer system in older areas of the City that currently cannot handle large storms. In 2013, Markham Council approved a 30 year program to improve sewer infrastructure in older areas of the City. By doing the work, Markham is protecting its waste water system and roads in these areas. The program includes a City wide stormwater management fee, a \$47 dollar flat fee for residential properties, and \$29/\$100,000 Current Value Assessment for non-residential properties. Farmers would pay the residential rate for their residential property, as well as, the non-residential rate for their farmland. Work to improve the sewer system is already underway. The program is projected to cost between \$234 and \$288 million dollars over 30 years.

The Committee expressed concerns that the non-residential rate fee has not been calculated adequately to consider the unique nature of the farm community and how farmland has low impervious (hard) surfaces and has minimal impacts to Markham's stormwater management system. Also, that the non-residential rate fee has been calculated the same way as other non-residential properties such as industrial/commercial areas. Some of the Committee's concerns included:

- Lack of consultation with the farming community with respect to the fee
- Inability for farmers to pay the fee, due to high costs
- Landowners will pass on the fee to tenant farmers leasing their land
- Imposing such a high levy on farmers is unfair, as farmland contributes very little to Markham's stormwater management system

The Committee suggested that farmland should be calculated differently than other non-residential properties in Markham due to their lack of runoff contribution and impact on the stormwater management system, the uniqueness of the farming community, and to ensure fairness and the farmers' ability to pay.

Moved by Kim Empringham

Seconded by Ruth Brock

That the Agricultural Advisory Committee request that Council direct staff to review how the stormwater fee for non-residential lands are calculated for farmland, as soon as possible, and consider the uniqueness of the farming community when determining the appropriate fee amount, in order to ensure fairness and the farmers ability to pay.

CARRIED

## 6. Review of Markham's Tree By-law

Kim Empringham provided a verbal review of Markham's Tree By-law, # 2008-96. It was suggested that a tree removal permit should not be required to remove trees encroaching onto farmland, noting other municipalities have similar exemptions. The diameter of the tree permitted to be removed without a permit could also be increased from 20 cm to 30 cm on farmland in order to make it easier for farmers to remove trees encroaching on their land.

That Committee requested that a memo with a formal list of suggested changes be created for the Committee to review at the October meeting.

## 7. Work Plan 2016

The Committee approved the work plan.

Tasks	Topic	Lead	Potential Dates
1	Markham Flood Control Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine flood control program to determine impacts to farming community.</li> </ul>	Water Resources staff will be invited to attend next meeting and present on matter.	April 7, 2016
2	Municipal Tree Preservation Bylaw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review tree preservation by-law to understand permissions regarding tree removals on agricultural lands.</li> </ul>	Committee to conduct research on this matter for review.  Staff to provide Markham and York Region by-laws to Committee for information.	October 13, 2016
3	Building Permit Fees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review agricultural building permit fee and application process.</li> </ul>	Staff to provide Markham and York Region building permit fee to Committee for information.	October 13, 2016
4	Rouge National Urban Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion regarding Rouge National Urban Park governance in Markham.</li> <li>Understand proposed Rouge National Urban Park policies and implications to farmers such as building permits, fire arms, etc.</li> <li>Scope urban agriculture opportunities</li> </ul>	Deputy Mayor Heath will lead discussions on this matter and provide Committee with Rouge National Urban Park governance updates.	Tbd

Tasks	Topic	Lead	Potential Dates
	within Park		
5	Provincial Review: Coordinated Land Use Planning Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of plans and provide comments to Council.</li> </ul>	Committee will review documents and provide comments, when the Provincial recommendations are released.	tbd
6	Community Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify outreach opportunities.</li> </ul>	Committee will identify outreach opportunities to promote agricultural and local food opportunities.	tbd
7	TRCA and Markham Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review potential urban agriculture opportunities.</li> </ul>	Committee will scope opportunities for urban agriculture within Markham with TRCA and other stakeholders.	Tbd
8	Local Food Procurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of existing policies and explore similar opportunities.</li> </ul>	Staff to provide committee update on City's local procurement program. Committee to explore similar opportunities within other City facilities.  Committee to explore Farm to Cafeteria Food Program – bringing local foods into the schools.	Tbd
9	Prepare 2017 Work Plan	MAAC Committee members & Planning / Sustainability Office.	Dec. 1, 2016

The Committee added potential dates to some of the work plan items and added the word “proposed” to task No. 4 Rouge National Urban Park, under bullet two.

Moved by Councillor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the Agricultural Advisory Committee endorse the 2016 Work Plan as amended.

CARRIED

**8. Terms of Reference**

The representative from the Environmental Advisory Committee was removed from the Committee's composition.

Moved by Councillor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That revised Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference be approved as amended, attached as Appendix A.

CARRIED

**9. Local Food Week**

It was suggested that Candice Eintoss, Lynne Koss, and Jessica Yau think of ideas with respect to how the Committee may participate in local food week and report back to Committee.

**10. Meeting date**

The Committee confirmed that the October meeting will be scheduled for October 13, 2016.

**11. Adjournment**

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:10 pm.