

**Agricultural Advisory Committee
Minutes
Thursday, October 6, 2016
7:00 PM
Ontario Room**

Members Present: Paul Reesor, Chair Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health Sonia Dhir, TRCALynne Koss Regrets: Deputy May Jack Heath Councillor Don Hamilton Bryant Hulshaf Richard Reesor Ligia DeFillippis	Staff Present: Jessica Yau, Community Engagement Assistant Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Patrick Wong, Natural Heritage Planner Pamela Cook, External Committee Coordinator
--	--

The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:14 pm with Paul Reesor presiding as Chair without a full quorum.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Committee for April 7, 2016 and May 4, 2016 were reviewed.

As per the May 4th Minutes, Kim Empringham mentioned that the storm water surcharge forms for farm property was not billed properly due to a computer glitch, but will be resent as soon as possible. As well it was pointed out that the report back to the Committee after the first year of implementation of storm water fees, should be pushed to the first quarter of 2017 as a report has to go to Council for a decision in June, 2017. The OFA are still waiting on information on water run off.

2. Update on York Region Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group

Kim Empringham reported that the final version of the York Farm Fresh Market Project is ready and is currently available online for Committee members to review. Participants who answered surveys or attended workshops will be able to request a digital copy. The recommendations include forming a formal association, developing funding, designing a logo with a website social

media access. After the document is formally released the plan is to have small working groups set up in the next couple of weeks to develop the constitution and by-laws by the summer and to hold a formal meeting in the Fall, 2017. A deputation to Regional Council in April, 2016 made a request for a dedicated budget and staff to work that on the project. Some of the workload has been moved around in the Economic Development Department to work on Agriculture, but a formal budget is required to solidify the dedicated staff member – we are the only group in the Greater Golden Horseshoe that does not have a dedicated staff. The first big project is to develop an RFP for an Agricultural Economic Strategy for the Region.

3. Provincial Plans – Coordinated Land use Planning Review e

Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator introduced and welcomed Patrick Wong, Natural Heritage Planner to the Agricultural Advisory Committee members. Patrick will be replacing Ruth Rendon on the Committee.

The Senior Project Coordinator made a presentation to the Agricultural Advisory Committee on the *'Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review: Proposed Amendments to the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan'* which will be presented to the City of Markham Council on October 18th for their approval to submit the document to the Province in order to meet their October 31st deadline. The Province has decided to take all four provincial plans and incorporate them into a Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review. It is expected that the Province will approve the document in December 2016 and anticipate release of their guidance documents / mapping for release in 2017 / 2018. Policy changes will include building complete communities, supporting agriculture, protecting natural heritage and water, growing the Greenbelt, addressing climate change, integrating infrastructure, improving plan implementation and measuring performance.

4. Markham's Pollinator Strategy

Jessica Yau, Sustainability Coordinator provided an overview of the City of Markham's Pollinator Strategy for the Committee. In celebration of the City of Markham's efforts to plant milkweed gardens and distribute seeds to residents to help with pollination, David Suzuki has declared Markham Canada's first Monarch Friendly City. Council supports the strategies and has recommended it be extended to include protection and support of bees, flies, birds, mosquitoes and other animals. Kim Empringham commented that, up until a few years ago, milkweed was on the noxious weed list that can create crop loss. It was confirmed that the Pollinator Strategy focuses on contained gardens in non-agricultural areas. Kim further confirmed that Neo-nics are used to treat grubs and not to kill plant growth.

5. New Business None

6. Correspondence

a) Comparison of Building Permit Fees for Agricultural Buildings 2016 Work Plan (Item # 3)

It was commented that the building permit fees for Markham seem high in comparison to other municipalities throughout the province. The OFA has given exemption to develop charges in approximately 60% of the building permit applications across the Province. Markham still charges on development charges. Lilli commented that the City does entertain requests for exemptions, and further that on the next review of charges, it would be prudent to address blanket exemptions for developments charges and building permits for agricultural buildings.

b) Letter re Private Member's Bill on Certified Crop Advisors

The Committee reviewed a letter from Lisa Thompson, MPP for Huron-Bruce to Paul Reesor requesting support to eliminate the limitations placed on Certified Crop Advisors with respect to their employment opportunities. The prevention of Certified Crop Advisors employed by manufacturers or retailers to act as a professional pest advisor would significantly restrict the timely access for farmers looking to purchase seeds and treatments. Ms Thompson is requesting support in eliminating the exceptionality clause and to allow farmers to work with advisors of their choice. It was agreed that Paul will contact Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator and advise Ms. Thompson that the City of Markham Agricultural Advisory Committee supports this request and a formal letter to be sent in response.

7. Next Meeting Date

November 3, 2016

December 1, 2016

8. Adjournment

The Markham Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:44 pm.