

**Agricultural Advisory Committee
Minutes
Thursday, November 6, 2014
7:00 PM
Canada Room**

Members Present: Jay Reesor, Vice Chair Ligia DeFilippis Guy Farintosh Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Agency Representatives: Sonia Dhir, TRCA Jason Ezer, York Region	Staff Present: Ruth Rendon, Senior Natural Heritage Planner Jessica Yau, Community Food Animator Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator Patrick Wong, Policy Student Regrets: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Councillor Don Hamilton Prabh Banga, Sustainability Coordinator Lilli Duoba, Manager Natural Heritage Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health Mike Bender, Rouge Park, TRCA Bryant Hulshaf Richard Reesor Lynne Koss Paul Reesor Doug Lindeblom, York Region Maria Gatti, Transport Canada Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park , TRCA
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The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:05 p.m. with Jay Reesor presiding as Chair without quorum.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The approval of the Minutes was deferred to the next meeting, as there was no quorum.

2. ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Omar McDadi, External Relations Manager and Pam Veinotte, Field Unit Superintendent, Rouge National Urban Park, Parks Canada were in attendance to provide a presentation on the Rouge National Urban Park. The presentation included a review of Rouge National Urban Park accomplishments to date, highlights of the draft Management Plan and proposed strategies, and next steps. A copy of the presentation was circulated to the Committee.

Questions:

The following questions were asked:

- **Are there still opportunities to make refinements to the Rouge National Urban Park Management Plan?**

There are still opportunities to make refinements to the plan through the legislated process.

- **What is the status of the Rouge National Urban Park land transfer?**

The agreements have been signed by all parties. Parks Canada is now reviewing the agreements to ensure that all requirements have been met.

- **How long will the agricultural leases be for?**

The lease term for long term agriculture tenants will be from 25 to 30 years. The lease term for new agriculture tenants will be for a shorter term to be determined.

- **Why is a Youth Council being included in the governance structure?**

The Youth Council is being proposed as part of the Park's governance structure, as youth indicated they wanted a voice in the parks governance. The Youth Council representatives would be recruited from universities, high schools and community associations.

- **When will the committees in the Park's Governance Structure start to meet?**

Some of the committees have unofficially started to meet, while others will not start to meet until Parks Canada takes over the management of the land.

3. EXPANSION OF URBAN AGRICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Patrick Wong, Policy Student provided a presentation entitled "Urban Agriculture in Markham's Future Development Area". The presentation included background information, an overview of the 2014 staff work plan, and staff recommendations. Some of the staff recommendations for urban agriculture included:

- Determining the feasibility of having seasonal farmer's market at City facilities
- Encouraging adequate topsoil to be placed within residential developments
- Clearly communicating timeframes for phasing in developments to encourage continuation of agricultural operations and leases on existing agriculture lands
- Consider an urban agricultural demonstration project as part of a City facility, such as an urban orchard
- Identify opportunities for urban agriculture as part of an affordable housing development

- Prioritize the use of edible landscaping in specific sub-areas to concentrate and highlight urban agriculture

Questions

- **How will an urban orchard be maintained?**

Staff advised that a management plan would be put in place if this initiative was pursued.

- **What are staff doing to improve topsoil in subdivisions?**

Staff are currently reviewing the City's guidelines and are looking at construction practices with respect to top soil.

4. MARKHAM ORGANIC HOME GARDENS

Jessica Yau, Sustainability Office provided an update on Markham's Organic Home Gardens. Some of the highlights included:

- Registered approximately 400 Markham residents as program participants
 - Over 750 total gardeners in the City
- Provided 15 gardening workshops from April 2014 to November 2014
- Launched online workshop registration in Markham Life
- Held 1st Annual Veggie Swap and Share
- Lent 2,000 residents seeds from Markham's seed library
- Opened and closed three community gardens: Cornell Community Garden; Kirkham Allotment Community Garden; and Markham Fair Community Garden.

Questions

- **Did residents return the seeds borrowed from the Markham Seeds Program?**

Staff were not sure if any seeds were returned to Markham's Seed Library. Returning the seeds is not being enforced at this time. Sheridan Nursery provided the seeds for the program this year.

5. SHARE THE ROADS

Ruth Rendon, Senior Natural Heritage Planner provided an update on the share the roads signage. Staff had approved erecting 'Share the Road' signs in the following locations:

- Elgin Mills Road at the south-east corner of McCowan Road (eastbound)
- Elgin Mills Road at the north-west corner of 9th Line (westbound)
- Elgin Mills Road at the south-east corner of Reesor Road (eastbound)
- Elgin Mills Road at the north-west corner of Reesor Road (westbound)
- South side of 19th Avenue between Hwy 48 and 9th Line (eastbound)

- 19th Avenue at the south-east corner of Reesor Road (eastbound)
- 19th Avenue at the north-west corner of Reesor Road (westbound)

The other signs requested by the Committee did not meet the City's criteria. A memo on this matter was circulated to the Committee.

The Region's approval process for erecting a 'Share the Road' sign was discussed. Requests are handled on a case by case basis and a set of criteria is used to review the request. The number of accidents on the road may also be considered.

The Committee may request that the Region erect a 'Share the Road' sign on Major Mackenzie Drive east of 9th Avenue, as this is a Regional road.

Further discussion on this matter was deferred to the next meeting, as there was no quorum.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2015 Work Plan

At the December meeting, the Committee will conduct a round table discussion to develop a 2015 work plan at the December meeting. It will then decide how many times per year it will meet. The Committee will have a holiday celebration immediately following the meeting.

It was requested that an update on the Committee's appointments be provided at the next meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:29 pm