



**Agricultural Advisory Committee
Minutes
Thursday, April 3, 2014
7:00 PM
Canada Room**

Members Present: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Guy Farintosh Bryant Hulshaf Ligia DeFilippis Kim Empringham Lynne Koss Paul Reesor Agency Representatives: Sonia Dhir, TRCA Jason Ezer, York Region	Staff Present: Lilli Duoba, Manager Natural Heritage Ruth Rendon, Senior Natural Heritage Planner Prabh Banga, Sustainability Coordinator Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator Regrets: Ruth Brock Jay Reesor, Vice Chair Richard Reesor Phil Fung, Environmental Advisory Committee Mike Bender, Rouge Park, TRCA Doug Lindeblom, York Region Maria Gatti, Transport Canada Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park , TRCA Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health
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The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:02 p.m. with Regional Councillor Landon presiding as Chair.

**1. Review of January 9, 2014
Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes**

Moved by Guy Farintosh
Seconded by Bryant Hulshaf

That the Minutes from the January 9, 2014 Agricultural Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

CARRIED

2. York Region's Context Solutions for Regional Roads

Angela Gibson, Head of Policy and Planning, York Region, was in attendance to provide a presentation on York Region's Context Solutions for Regional Roads.

It was reported that the Region has been working with the community and lower tier municipalities to improve the design of regional roadways. The roads are being designed based on the community's needs for the roadways, while maintaining the safety of the roadway. A vision for its roadways is being developed to ensure they become vibrant roadways, as York Region changes/develops overtime.

The Region has grouped its road types into the following six (6) typologies/categories: (1) urban centre; (2) urban avenue; (3) main street; (4) connector; (5) rural road; and (6) rural hamlet. The different road types will require different solutions. Slides of what the different road types may look like were displayed to the Committee and examples of the different road types were provided.

Questions

1) Is the Region looking at ways to extend the lifecycle of its asphalt?

It was advised that the Region is always working towards extending the lifecycle of the asphalt of its roadways by using the best materials and approaches to maintaining the roadways.

2) Is the Region trying to improve the timing of traffic lights to improve traffic flow?

It was advised that more traffic controls are required as an area intensifies, which may slow traffic down.

3) Is the Region planning to move its hydro wires underground on regional roadways?

It was advised that a study is currently being conducted to evaluate if there is enough space to move the hydro lines underground on regional roadways. If it is determined there is enough room for the lines to be moved underground, the cost and benefits of this undertaking would then be evaluated. Currently, there are no funds allocated to this project at this time.

4) Are wildlife conflicts considered when designing regional roadways?

It was advised that the Region looks at wildlife conflict/road ecology when designing regional roads as part of the existing environmental assessment process. The Region is going beyond the minimum requirements outlined in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Manual.

5) Does this study on regional roads look at the size of the swale and roadside ditches when designing regional roadways?

It was advised that this would need to be addressed with the planner designing the roadway.

Committee Feedback

The Committee provided the following feedback on cycling facilities on regional roadways and how they impact farmers trying to move farm equipment:

- Cycling lanes without a barrier are preferred over vertical curve cuts for moving farm equipment on rural roadways;
- Roadways with both centre and cycling lane dividers make it challenging to move farm equipment on rural roadways;
- Road signs should be placed far enough back from the road so that the farmer does not have to go into ongoing traffic to go-around the sign when moving farm equipment.

The Committee noted that it is difficult to move farm equipment when the guardrail is too close to the intersection. For example the guard rail at Elgin Mills and McCowan is only 13 feet from the intersection, which makes it challenging for farmers moving farm equipment if someone turns onto Elgin Mills. When the guardrail is 24 feet from the intersection it is more manageable for farmers to move farm equipment.

The Committee recommended that York Region staff consult with York Region's Agricultural Committee and York Region's Federation of Agriculture when making changes to the design of regional rural roadways.

3. Discussion on the Final Agricultural Policies in the Adopted Official Plan

Lilli Duoba, Manager of Natural Heritage, provided a presentation on the final agricultural policies in the Council adopted Official Plan. The revisions that were made to the plan based on the feedback from the Committee were highlighted.

The next step is for York Region to approve Markham's new Official Plan, which will be a legal document prescribing Markham's land uses for the next twenty years. There are still opportunities to change the document until it is approved by York Region.

A copy of the Province's new policy statement was circulated to the Committee. It was noted that Markham's Official Plan was adopted under the Province's 2005 policy statement and that it is up to the Region and to the Province to determine if any changes to the document will be made to reflect the new policy statement.

4. Sustainability Office- Food Security Programs Update– Prabh Banga

Community Garden Update

It was noted that the first community garden was created under Markham's new Community Garden Policy near the Cornell Community Centre. There are 30 families that have signed up to use the community garden to date. Many of these residents live within walking distance from the community garden.

Organic Home Garden Program

The Organic Home Garden Program is being launched City wide this spring. A series of basic gardening workshops are being held. Approximately 400 residents have already enrolled into the program.

Audit of Civic Centre

An audit of Civic Centre will be conducted to see how the City is doing in regards to the purchasing of local food. Staff will then evaluate whether this initiative will be opened up to other City facilities.

5. Seeds for Change School Garden Initiative

Lynn Koss provided a presentation on the Seeds for Change program. The presentation on the Seeds for Change program included the following: (1) its mission statement; (2) a list of its partners; (3) an overview of its programs and initiatives; (4) information on why it undertakes its programs and initiatives; and (5) how its program and initiative fits into Markham's strategic priorities.

Moved by Jason Ezer
Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the presentation on "York Region's Context Solutions for Regional Roads" be received; and,

That the presentation on the "Final Agricultural Policies in the Adopted Official Plan" be received; and,

That the "Sustainability Office-Food Security Programs Update" be received; and further,

That the "Seeds for Change" presentation be received.

CARRIED

6. Correspondence

The article “What to do about narrow local roads and ever-wider farm equipment?” was circulated with the Agenda Package.

7. New Business

There was no new business.

8. Next Meeting Date

The Committee agreed not to hold a May Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting.

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on October 9, 2014.

City staff will work with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) staff in planning a TRCA agricultural lands tour this summer. Details regarding potential dates and tour locations will be circulated via email to committee members for approval

9. Adjournment

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:57 p.m.