

**Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes**  
**November 14, 2013**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Canada Room**

<b>Members Present:</b> Councillor Don Hamilton Guy Farintosh Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Paul Reesor Richard Reesor  <b>Agency Representatives:</b> Sonia Dhir, TRCA Carolyn Woodland, TRCA Jason Ezer, York Region  <b>Guests:</b> Dena Lewis, TRCA Laurie Nelson, TRCA Peter Doris, Ministry of Agriculture and Food/Rural Affairs	<b>Staff Present:</b> Lilli Duoba, Manager Natural Heritage Prabh Banga, Sustainability Coordinator Ruth Rendon, Senior Natural Heritage Planner Sito Soran, Manager of Environmental Assets Abdullah Hossain, Senior Environmental Engineer Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator  <b>Regrets:</b> Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Jay Reesor, Vice Chair Lynne Koss Mike Bender, Rouge Park, TRCA Phil Fung, Environmental Advisory Committee Bryant Hulshaf 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 7:04 p.m. with Kim Empringham presiding as Chair.

**1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

A slight change to the October 10, 2013 Minutes was made.

Moved by Ruth Brock

Seconded by Paul Reesor

That the Minutes from the October 10, 2013 Agricultural Advisory Committee be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

## **2. FARM DRAINAGE ISSUES - AGENCY AND STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

### Presentation 1

Laurie Nelson, Senior Manager, Development Planning and Policy for the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), provided a presentation entitled “Planning and Regulatory Role of the TRCA”. The presentation focused on the TRCA’s regulatory role in planning and development as they have been delegated by the province to look after watershed issues. Areas regulated by TRCA require permits for development (construction, site grading, filling) and interference and alterations to wetlands, watercourses and shorelines. TRCA’s legislation, policies and processes were reviewed as well as the TRCA’s role in planning. It was explained that generally, TRCA does not require permits for tile drainage, unless associated activities interfere with regulated areas.

### Presentation 2

Abdullah Hossain, Senior Environmental Engineer, and Soran Sito, Manager of Environmental Assets for the City of Markham provided a presentation entitled “Small Streams Study”. The presentation included information on why small streams are important; background information on Markham’s Small Streams Study; an overview of Markham’s classification system for small streams; and an overview of Markham’s implementation strategy with respect to small streams.

### Presentation 3

Peter Doris, Environmental Specialist for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food/Rural Affairs, provided a presentation entitled “Drainage Overview”. The presentation included: an overview of why farmers drain their fields; the environmental impacts of subsurface drainage; information on the *Drainage Act*; and an overview of what is a “Drainage Works” and what is a “Municipal Drain”.

### Questions & Answers

A Committee Member inquired about the process for having roadside ditches cleaned up. It was advised that a request to clean the ditch should be made to either the City or to the Region depending on who is responsible for the road. The municipality or the Region will then work with the TRCA, if needed to clean up the roadside ditch.

It was questioned when the farmer is responsible for the cleanup of a ditch and when approval from the TRCA is required. It was advised that the farmer is responsible for the cleanup of any ditches on their own lands and that the farmer may consult with the TRCA or a private drainage specialist to resolve any drainage issues they are encountering. TRCA approval is required when the farmer is draining a ditch onto someone else’s lands or to a water feature

A Member inquired what would occur if a farmer found redbreasted sunfish which is an endangered species under the *Ontario Endangered Species Act* in their ditch while cleaning it up. It was advised that this would indicate that the watercourse is permanently flowing therefore; the Province (Ministry of Natural Resources Aurora District Office) would need to get involved.

There was an inquiry in regards to recent changes to the *Fisheries Act*, where some fish that are not commercially viable will no longer be protected. It was advised that the TRCA is still working with the Federal Government to understand the changes to the *Act* and how it will impact its work.

There was an inquiry regarding how roadside drainage issues will be resolved in the Rouge Park if the lands are transferred to the Federal Government. It was advised that this will be dealt with under the Memorandum of Understanding prior to the lands being transferred.

Paul Reesor brought in tile drains used by farmers to drain their fields for the Committee to view.

### **3. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ON 2014 WORK PLAN AND SUB-COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

The Committee was asked to bring back suggestions/ideas for the 2014 Work Plan. A copy of the 2013/2014 Work Plan was circulated to the Committee. Staff were requested to review the 2013 accomplishments at the next meeting. Further discussion on this item was deferred to the next meeting.

### **4. OPTIONS FOR HOLIDAY CELEBRATION AT THE DECEMBER MEETING**

The Committee agreed to have a holiday celebration immediately following the regularly scheduled December Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting, as it would be difficult for most members to hold the holiday celebration prior to the meeting. Staff agreed to order slightly more food than usual.

### **5. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Markham's Revised Draft Official Plan**

Staff advised that the final version of the Draft Official Plan (November 2013) will be brought forward to the Development Services Committee on November 19, 2013. The Official Plan may then be recommended for adoption at the December 3, 2013 Development Services Committee meeting. These dates are subject to change.

It was requested that Staff review with the Committee the changes made to the agricultural sections of the draft Official Plan since the original version of the plan was presented to the

Committee. Markham staff agreed to provide a written summary following adoption of the Official Plan.

#### Markham Museum

The Markham Museum is currently developing an upcoming exhibition called *Farm to Table*, which will be open from January – August 2014. This exhibition celebrates our long agricultural traditions and looks at the fact that what we eat today, where and how it is grown and processed is quite different than it was in the past. It will explore some of the modern issues and concerns about our food supply and draw historical connections to the related concerns of the past. Some specific topics that are being explored are: agricultural planning initiatives such as The Greenbelt, education in the agriculture industries, home nutrition and cooking, pasteurization and local dairies, and Markham innovations in farming, to name a few.

The introduction to the exhibit will feature a large mural known as “Faces of Farming” that will include both historical and contemporary photographs and interesting facts about agriculture. This mural will fill a large wall at the entry of the gallery and we anticipate that its design will influence the marketing material for the entire exhibition.

The Museum would like to use this wall to depict Markham’s current farming industry by featuring photos of local farms/farmers alongside archival materials from the museum’s collection.

The Museum is looking for a selection of photographs from local farms that depict farmers/staff participating in farm activities, for example a farmer in his barn or field, a farmer on a tractor or picking produce etc. From this selection, our designers will choose contemporary images for the mural. This wall will help to educate visitors of the diversity and richness of our current agricultural industry.

All the images will be credited in the exhibition. Please include the following information: name of photographer; who is pictured in the image: what farm it comes from and if not readily apparent, details on what is going on.

Members interested in participating in this project, please contact Megan White from the Curatorial Department at the museum.

Email address: [mwhite@markham.ca](mailto:mwhite@markham.ca)

Phone number: 905-477-7000 ex. 3177

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## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:07 p.m.