

## **Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes**

**March 7, 2013**

**7:00 PM**

**Canada Room**

<b>Members Present:</b> Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Councillor Don Hamilton Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Harriet Friedmann Paul Reesor  <b>Agency Representatives:</b> Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health Jason Ezer, York Region Gary Wilkins, TRCA Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park Alliance  <b>Guests:</b> Kevin O'Connor, Friends of the Rouge Jim Robb, Friends of the Rouge Richard Scott, Parks Canada Pam Veinotte, Parks Canada	<b>Staff Present:</b> Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator  <b>Regrets:</b> Mike Bender, Rouge Park Alliance Bryant Hulshaf Phil Fung, Environmental Advisory Committee Lynne Koss Doug Lindeblom, York Region Jay Reesor, Vice Chair Richard Reesor
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The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:04 p.m. with Regional Councillor Gordon Landon presiding as Chair.

### **1. DISCUSSION ON AGRICULTURAL ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO THE ROUGE PARK**

Jim Robb, General Manager, Friends of the Rouge Watershed, provided a presentation entitled "Rouge National Near Urban Park Legislative, Policy & Ecological Context". The presentation provided information on the following: (1) the legislative framework protecting the Rouge Watershed; (2) the history of the agricultural lands currently located within the proposed Rouge Urban National Park (RUNP); and (3) the impact the legislation may have on the agricultural lands located within RUNP.

It was advised that this presentation was referred to the Agricultural Advisory Committee at the January 22, 2013 Development Services Committee meeting.

The York Region Federation of Agriculture prepared a response to Jim Robb's presentation and associated submissions to the January 22, 2013 Development Services Committee. This was circulated to the Committee for information purposes.

### Discussion

Mr. Robb recommended that agricultural lands located within the 600m wide ecological corridor for the Little Rouge River as identified in the Provincial Greenbelt Plan (2005) and located within the proposed RUNP be restored. The Committee discussed this possibility and several of the Members felt that agricultural lands currently being farmed and located within the proposed RUNP should continue to be used for agricultural purposes. Mr. Robb also implied that such farmers could be relocated to alternative lands outside of the corridor.

Pam Veinotte, Parks Canada, advised that the public feedback on this matter is being collected and will be incorporated into the Parks Canada Strategic Management Plan for the RUNP. The final decision regarding whether some of the agricultural lands within RUNP will be converted back to a natural state will be determined by Parks Canada.

It was noted that this Committee could pass a resolution on this matter.

Moved by Paul Reesor

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the Presentation by Jim Robb, General Manager, Friends of the Rouge Watershed, entitled "Rouge National Near Urban Park Legislative, Policy & Ecological Context" be received.

CARRIED

## **2. REVIEW OF THE JANUARY 10, 2013 AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Moved by Paul Reesor

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the January 10, 2013 Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes be approved as presented.

CARRIED

### **3. NUMBER OF WEBSITE HITS- MARKHAM'S AGRICULTURAL WEBPAGE**

Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator, reported the following number of visits to Markham's agricultural webpage:

- January – 158 visits
- February – 109 visits

### **4. REVIEW OF THE FOOD CHARTER**

Katie Burns reviewed the Agricultural Advisory Committee's feedback provided at the last meeting regarding the draft York Region Food Charter and provided a status update. The update included the following: what is a food charter; what policies and studies in Markham relate to the food charter; an overview of the Food Charter Working Group and its areas of focus; and information on an upcoming event "Food for Change 2013" on March 20, 2013.

It was noted that a revised version of the York Region Food Charter will come back to the Food Charter Working Group sometime this spring for its endorsement. The working group is also investigating the possibility of creating a Food Charter toolkit. The Committee Clerk was requested to email the Committee a copy of the Guelph-Wellington Food Charter Toolkit to provide an example of what a toolkit may look like.

The Committee was encouraged to email Katie any additional feedback with respect to the draft York Region Food Charter.

Moved by Councillor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the Agricultural Advisory Committee's feedback regarding the draft Food Charter be received.

CARRIED

### **5. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### Communications/Education/Outreach Sub-Committee

The committee reviewed the topics and sites for Markham's Agricultural Advisory Committee tour being targeted to occur in September 2013.

It was suggested that the tour include a segment on farming in the Rouge Park to educate stakeholders on the type of farming that is occurring within the park.

The sub-committee was requested to provide other segment examples at the next meeting. The Committee can then help generate ideas and provide feedback.

Moved by Guy Farintosh

Seconded by Paul Reesor

That the Communications/Education/Outreach Sub-Committee Report be received.

CARRIED

#### Economic Viability & Sustainability Sub-Committee Report

Moved by Guy Farintosh

Seconded by Paul Reesor

That the Economic Viability & Sustainability Sub-Committee Report be deferred to the next meeting.

CARRIED

#### Policy Sub-Committee

The Policy Sub-Committee requested to defer the drainage issue until the fall, as members needed an opportunity to discuss the matter with other Markham farmers.

Moved by Ruth Brock

Seconded by Maria Papoulias

That the Policy Sub-Committee report on drainage issues be deferred to fall 2013.

CARRIED

### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

#### Toronto Food Conference

It was reported that there will be a 2nd Canadian Food Summit in Toronto, April 9-10, 2013.. Members interested in attending the conference may speak to staff with respect to getting a discounted rate.

Farmland Tax Rate

Concern was expressed regarding the tax rate increase for agricultural lands in some York Region municipalities. Kim Empringham was asked to email staff this information. The matter can then be investigated by Markham's finance staff.

**7. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, April 4, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Canada Room.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:36 p.m.