

Agricultural Advisory Committee
April 5, 2012
7:30 PM
Canada Room

Members Present: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Councillor Don Hamilton Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Bryant Hulshaf Jay Reesor Lynne Koss Paul Reesor Richard Reesor Agency Representatives: Mike Bender, Rouge Park Alliance Jason Ezer, York Region Doug Lindeblom, York Region Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park Alliance Carolyn Woodland, TRCA Gary Wilkins, TRCA	Staff Present: Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator Regrets: Christopher Burkholder Harriet Friedmann Maria Gatti, Transport Canada Alan Wells, Rouge Park Alliance
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The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:35 p.m. with Regional Councillor Gord Landon presiding as Chair.

1. REVIEW OF THE MARCH 1, 2012 AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Moved by Kim Empringham
Seconded by Paul Reesor

That the March 1, 2012 Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes be adopted as presented.

CARRIED.

2. 2012 WORK PLAN

The Committee reviewed the following items proposed to be included in the Agricultural Advisory Committee 2012 Work Plan:

Communications/Outreach/Education Objective

1. Develop a program to raise awareness of local farming

- Coordinate with the Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Action Committee, York Region Agriculture Advisory Group to prepare an information booth for the Markham Fair;
- Plan and coordinate an agricultural tour. The Sub Committee will recommend the type, the purpose, the time of year and target audience of the tour;
- Develop a mentoring program for new farmers;
- Research review and identify options for road signage to address travel speeds and safety and road conflicts with farm equipment;

2. Liaise with York Region Agricultural Advisory Group to identify common issues and support actions that address farming issues in Markham – It was agreed that this will be a standard Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting agenda item. The objective will be to keep the Committee aware of the York Region Agricultural Advisory Group activities without duplicating its efforts.

3. Prepare a comprehensive list of programs and grants that support agriculture and farming.

4. Prepare annual report for Council. (Required)

Economic Viability and Sustainability Objective

5. Identify the Agricultural Advisory Committee's position on the promotion of local food and sustainability – this will be an activity that involves the entire Committee.

6. Review Town's Food Procurement Policy and recommend changes if appropriate to ensure access by local farmers – Staff should be included in this discussion.

7. Supply/inventory of Markham Farmer's Market's – This will include a broad discussion on where farmers are selling food, how they are currently selling food and how they may sell food in the future. The Sub-Committee will also investigate who is selling food at Markham's farmers markets.

Policy Development Objective

8. Participate and promote Food Charter with objective of future Council endorsement – Staff will provide regular updates on this matter and discussions on the matter will include the whole committee. Any Committee Member who would like to be more actively involved with the promotion/establishment of a food Charter should speak with Katie Burns.

9. **Research and review policy for opportunities to preserve topsoil in new developments to support household gardens** – Markham has an existing policy on preserving topsoil. Staff will review and bring forward to a future meeting.
10. **Research and review policy for “road side” ditch clean out as related to field tiles and the prevention of “salty water” flooding onto farmland** – The Sub-Committee will investigate both the issues and potential solutions regarding ditches on farmland. The Toronto Region and Conservation Authority should be included in this discussion.
11. **The Dumping of Garbage on Rural Farmlands** - The Sub-Committee will review this matter and bring information to a future meeting.
12. **Research and review policy for wide shoulders and graduated curbs to facilitate the movement of farm machinery on town and regional roads** – The Sub-Committee will investigate this matter further.
13. **Research and review policy for “weed control” along roads and on private property and within the Rouge Park** – The Sub-Committee will review this matter and bring forward information to a future meeting.

Markham’s strategy for managing weeds on boulevards was to increase the number of times the grass is cut.
14. **Undertake a review of food processing and distribution in Markham and make recommendations for Town wide policy** – This matter could possibly be investigated in collaboration with York Region. It will also be part of the Region’s Food and Farming Action Plan.
15. **Review Town of Markham draft Official Plan when available and provide input on agricultural policies** – The Committee will be asked to review and provide comments on the proposed Official Plan for Markham.
16. **Tree By-Law Review** – Staff will bring back information on this at a future meeting.
17. **Review and research wildlife and farming conflicts** – The Sub-Committee will discuss how wildlife conflicts on farms can be mitigated. The Toronto Region and Conservation Authority can provide an update as to the nature of the issues.

The following Agricultural Advisory Committee Sub-Committee's were formed:

Communications/ Outreach/Education Sub-Committee

Katie Burns
Bryant Hulshaf
Lynne Koss
Kim Empringham
Paul Reesor

Economic Viability Sustainability Sub-Committee

Gary Wilkins
Mike Bender
Jay Reesor
Doug Lindeblom (or other Regional Representative)
Richard Reesor
Katie Burns
Elizabeth Wimmer
Phil Fung

Policy Development Sub-Committee

Guy Farintosh
Maria Papoulias
Bryant Hulshaf
Ruth Brock
Kim Empringham
Lilli Duoba
Katie Burns

The Committee Clerk was requested to book the first Sub-Committee meetings. It was recommended that each Sub-Committee appoint a Chair.

Immediately following the meeting the following Sub-Committee meeting dates were set:

Communications/ Outreach/Education Sub-Committee

April 26, 2012 (12:00 -2:00 p.m.) – Room TBD

Economic Viability Sustainability Sub-Committee

April 18, 2012 (1:00- 3:00 p.m.) – Room TBD

An outlook meeting request will be sent out for these Sub-Committee meetings.

3. REVIEW OF FOOD MAP

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

4. NEW BUSINESS

The Chair reported that a buyer from Seoul Korea has demonstrated an interest in importing organic food from local Markham farmers.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:59 p.m.