

Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes
December 6, 2012
7:30 PM
Council Chamber

Members Present: Jay Reesor, Vice Chair Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Bryant Hulshaf Lynne Koss Richard Reesor Agency Representatives: Candice Einstoss, York Region Public Health 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: Regional Councillor Gord Landon, Chair Councillor Don Hamilton Mike Bender, Rouge Park Alliance Christopher Burkholder Jason Ezer, York Region Harriet Friedmann Phil Fung, Environmental Advisory Committee Doug Lindeblom, York Region Paul Reesor Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner
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The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:42 p.m. with Jay Reesor presiding as Chair.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Ruth Brock

Seconded by Kim Empringham

That the April 5, and November 1, 2012 Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes be approved as presented.

CARRIED

2. REVIEW OF SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the Agricultural Advisory Committee Sub-Committees Minutes. The following highlights were provided:

Communication/Outreach/Education Sub-Committee

- Created a webpage on the City's website on food and agriculture in Markham, which includes information on the following: (1) Facts about Farming and Agriculture; and (2) A Guide to Buying and growing in Markham;
- Created a public display on agriculture that was exhibited at Markham Fair;
- Placed an article in Markham Life on food and agriculture in Markham;
- Investigating the possibility of having signs created that promote sharing the road;
- Planning an agricultural tour for 2013.

The Committee viewed the agricultural page on the website. It was requested that the number of web hits be reported to the Committee at the next meeting.

Economic Viability and Sustainability Sub-committee

- Working on guidelines for community gardens;
- Discussed Markham's local food and procurement practices;
- Interested in Markham's existing policy on soil preservation.

Policy Sub-Committee

- Reviewing and providing feedback on the agricultural sections of the draft Official Plan;
- Reviewing policies for roadside ditches;
- Reviewing policies for wide shoulder and graduated curbs to facilitate the movement of farm machinery on City and Regional roads.

3. QUESTIONS ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTIONS OF THE OFFICIAL PLAN

Staff answered the following questions regarding the agriculture sections of the draft Official Plan:

Chapter 1

1.2 - Why is there no mention of the current agriculture/food producing areas or the Rouge Park?

Staff advised that the purpose of this chapter is to provide a legal description of the Official Plan. Therefore, this section does not include much information on the current policies governing agriculture in Markham.

Chapter 2

2. 2.3 a) What does "rural purposes" mean, and by including it here does that lead to the assumption that rural uses other than the fairly restrictive/mainly agricultural uses will be accommodated?

Staff agreed to clarify the wording in this section to avoid any misinterpretation.

Chapter 3

3.1.1.1 e) add where appropriate.

Staff agreed to add "where appropriate" to this section.

3.1.1.3 Paragraph 3 "lands can be added where confirmed through an appropriate study"

What does appropriate mean?

Staff explained that this means that minor modifications to the boundaries of the land can be made through an environmental study.

Is there an appeal process?

It was advised that if there was an objection to the minor change to the boundary of environmental lands Council would make the final decision.

Any major modifications to the lands can only be done through an amendment to the Official Plan. Through this process there is an opportunity to appeal to the OMB.

3.1.2.10 - What types of things will be in these guidelines?

Some of the areas that fall under these guidelines include: school blocks; and parks and open space.

3.1.2.17- What does provide vegetation protection zone mean?

Staff advised that the vegetation protection zone for specific features is defined in the table.

3.3.2.6 - Why should small drainage features be protected under this section?

The small streams and drains identified in Appendix B do not seem accurate. Could you bring an electronic version of the map with the property lines included to the meeting?

It was advised that the small streams/headwater streams and drains identified in Appendix B will not be a legal part of the Official Plan and that the maps will never be 100% accurate as small

streams/headwater streams and drains are always changing. It was noted that these maps are being included in the Official Plan based on Council direction through the “Small Streams Study”.

It was noted that these small streams/headwater streams play a very important role in protecting the watershed. These maps were included, as the small streams/headwater streams need to be managed when development occurs. Whether small streams/headwater streams will be protected when development occurs will depend on their function.

Chapter 4

4.3.3.1 -Parks Canada has not indicated that the Rouge National Urban Park will be an urban wilderness Park. Should those words be substituted in this section?

Staff advised that wilderness is currently in the Rouge Park’s vision and that the Rouge Urban National Park cannot be delineated in the Official Plan as the lands have not been officially transferred to Parks Canada.

The remainder of the questions pertaining to agricultural sections of the Draft Official Plan were deferred to the January 10, 2012 Policy Sub-Committee meeting. The Policy Sub-Committee will then bring back recommendations to the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

4. REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee reviewed the 2012/2013 Agricultural Advisory Committee Work Plan.

Moved by Kim Empringham

Seconded by Lynn Koss

That the 2012/2013 Agricultural Advisory Committee Work Plan be approved as presented.

CARRIED

It was noted that all of sub-committees should appoint a Chair if they have not already.

5. UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

The following upcoming agenda items were noted:

- Soil Preservation Policy
- Food Procurement Update (note: staff will meet with Local Food Plus and will then decide how to move forward)
- Community Garden Policy

6. NEW BUSINESS

Staff advised that municipalities are now permitted to add lands and urban rivers into the greenbelt lands. Any change to the greenbelt lands would need to be approved by the province and would require an amendment to the *Greenbelt Act*. It was noted that a large portion of land in Oakville is being proposed to be added into the greenbelt lands.

7. 2013 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Committee agreed to change the meeting time from 7:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on a go forward basis.

The 2013 Agricultural Advisory Committee meetings will be held on the following dates:

- January 10
- February 7
- March 7
- April 4
- October 3
- November 7
- December 5

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:16 p.m.