

**Agricultural Advisory Committee
March 1, 2012
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Council Chamber**

Members Present: Ruth Brock Kim Empringham Guy Farintosh Harriet Friedmann Jay Reesor Lynne Koss Paul Reesor Richard Reesor Agency Representatives: Jason Ezer, York Region Alan Wells, Rouge Park Carolyn Woodland, TRCA Guests: Maria Papoulias	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 Christopher Burkholder Maria Gatti, Transport Canada Bryan Hulshaf
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The Agricultural Advisory Committee convened at 7:33 p.m. with Jay Reesor presiding as Chair.

**1. Review of the February 2, 2012
Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes**

It was requested that the list of future agenda items included in the February 2, 2012 agenda package be added to the minutes.

Moved by Kim Empringham
Seconded by Lynne Koss

That the Minutes from the February 2, 2012 Agricultural Advisory Committee be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

2. Rouge Park Update

Mr. Alan Wells, Rouge Park, provided a presentation entitled “Agriculture: An Important Part of Rouge Park”. The presentation included: an update on the mandate of the Rouge Park Alliance (RPA); an overview of the RPA Agriculture Policy; a review of farmlands within the park; information on preserving farmland while accommodating natural heritage areas; areas proposed for heritage restoration; and the parks plans for keeping heritage farms viable through providing long-term leases.

Mr. Wells reported that his term with the RPA will end July 31, 2012. At this time, Maria Papoulias, Rouge Park, will take over as the Rouge Park agency representative on the Markham Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Discussion

Mr. Wells recommended that Markham be more aggressive in its tree planting on roadsides to encourage a greater percentage of natural cover within the park.

There was a discussion on the possibility of having a community garden in the Locus Hill Area in Markham.

3. Update on Farmland Forum

Ms. Katie Burns, Sustainability Coordinator, provided information on the Farmland Forum hosted by Farmland Trust. The forum focused on balancing agriculture and resource demands in rural Ontario. Some of the topics discussed included: how both land conservation and rural economic development can be supported; the state of the farmland loss in Ontario and the relationship to population growth; the Niagara Region as a leader in policy development and planning for agriculture (e.g. engaged multiple levels of government, the farm community and the academic community regarding agriculture policy and research).

It was noted that the presentations provided at the Farmland Forum are available on the Farmland Trust website. The Committee Clerk was requested to email the Committee the link to the presentations.

4. Food Charter Update

Ms. Burns provided an overview of the Food for Change Action Day that was held today at Angus Glen. There was a discussion on Wayne Robert's keynote presentation. The presentation examined food as part of an "Agricultural Economic Development" strategy and it showed how unlikely partners can collaborate on a common dominator, such as food. A glance of where we are now with respect to the loss of agricultural land to urbanization was provided.

The Committee discussed whether food is pleasure or fuel and what local versus sustainable means. It was noted that one's perspective regarding food changes based on one's social economical class.

Mr. Burns reported that the Sustainability Office will be working with students from York University to create an interactive map, which will display food related places (e.g. food banks and farms).

It was reported that feedback from other municipalities will be gathered in order to obtain a balanced view of what should be included in a York Region Food Charter. It was noted that it is important to obtain both urban and rural feedback. It was identified that Toronto was one of the first municipalities to establish a Food Charter.

The Committee was recommended to read the book "[The Urban Food Revolution](#)" by Peter Ladner.

Richard Reesor advised that he will provide the Committee with a copy of the article “Yes We Have No Bananas”, written by a geography professor at the University of Toronto. This article provides an insightful perspective on local versus sustainable. It was suggested that a presentation be provided on the meaning of both local and sustainable and on the relationship between the two.

It was reported that the United Way has approved funds for staff support to move ideas from the Open Space Forum forward.

5. Update on Future Presentations

The following future presentation topics were discussed:

- Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan
- Agricultural Processing Facilities
- Traffic Issues/Road signage (e.g. installing “share the roads” signs)
- Educating youth on farming
- Topsoil distribution and depths for new developments
- Access to healthy food for lower social economical classes
- Mapping of “food desserts” (note: part of York University map project)
- Farm tours
- Promotion of nutritional food

Members were requested to email the Committee Clerk suggestions for upcoming presentation topics.

The Committee questioned if Markham regularly reviews its food procurement practices, noting that it would be interested in reviewing Markham’s food procurement practices.

The Committee agreed to spend half of the next meeting on goal setting and on the establishment of a work plan. The completed work plan will be presented to Council for information purposes.

The Vice-Chair requested to be included in the agenda preparation for the next meeting.

6. Recommendation from Toronto Executive Committee

Ms. Harriet Friedmann identified that the “Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement Canada-European Union” (CETA) is an important emerging issue. The Key issues of concern included:

- CETA explicitly restricts the powers of municipal government to support local businesses and direct spending to create employment, environmental benefits, and other social or economic priorities;
- The agreement favours export industries at the expense of farms producing for the domestic market;
- The intellectual property stipulations under CETA would allow corporations to seize farms, farm assets and freeze bank accounts of any farmers alleged to have infringed corporate intellectual property rights.

It was noted that there are many implications of CETA for food security and sovereignty, for the economic viability of our regional farms and food sectors and for the health of Canadians.

Staff were requested to investigate whether Markham has a position on this matter and report back at the next meeting. The Committee Clerk was requested to email the Committee more background information on CETA.

7. Other Business

a. Markham's Food Guide

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

b. Agriculture Tour

The Committee spoke briefly about the possibility of having an agricultural tour. It was recommended that the tour be smaller than the Sustain Ontario Tour and that a placeholder possibly be placed in the 2013 budget.

8. Next Meeting Date

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee the first Thursday of April rather than the first Thursday of June.

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, April 5, 2012 in the Canada Room.

9. Adjournment

The Agricultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Action Item	Meeting Date	Responsibility of Staff/Committee Member	Meeting Date to be Completed By	Status
Invite York Region Public Health as an “observer” to future meetings.	Dec. 1, 2011	Katie Burns	March Meeting	
Create a glossary of key terminology to ensure that everyone has the same understanding of the subject matter	Dec. 1, 2011	Lilli Douba & Elizabeth Wimmer	To be included in draft Official Plan	
Invite Sustain Ontario to a Future Meeting	Feb. 2, 2012	Lilli Douba & Elizabeth Wimmer	April Meeting	
Bring Revised Terms of Reference to Council for Approval	Feb. 2, 2012	Laura Gold	March Meeting	
Update Feb. 2 Minutes to include the list of suggested agenda Items	March 1, 2012	Laura Gold	April Meeting	Completed
Email link to presentation provided at the Farmland Forum	March 1, 2012	Laura Gold	April Meeting	Completed
Read <u>The Urban Revolution</u> and the article <u>Yes We have No Bananas</u>	March 1, 2012	All Committee Meetings	October Meeting	
Email the Committee Clerk recommended presentation topics for future meetings	March 1, 2012	All Committee Meetings	April Meeting	
Investigate Markham’s position on CETA and report back at the next meeting	March 1, 2012	Elizabeth Wimmer, Lilli Duoba	April Meeting	

Action Item	Meeting Date	Responsibility of Staff/Committee Member	Meeting Date to be Completed By	Status
Email the Committee background information on CETA	March 1, 2012	Laura Gold	April Meeting	Completed