

## **Agricultural Advisory Committee (MAAC) Terms of Reference**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Markham has a long history of agricultural production, which occurs on lands classified as prime agricultural lands. As part of the Greater Toronto Area, Markham has experienced the land use pressures associated with a rapidly urbanizing and today approximately 40% of the land base remains as rural and agricultural lands. Agriculture in Markham presents some unique challenges and opportunities for privately owned agricultural lands and for lands in public ownership including large tracks in eastern Markham owned by the Federal and Provincial governments and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. A portion of these agricultural lands in eastern Markham are subject to the Federal Airport Zoning Regulation and Provincial Minister's Zoning Order. In addition, portions of these agricultural lands are also subject to the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act and the Greenbelt Act both of which support long-term agriculture and natural heritage protection. These lands have been available for farming through lease arrangements. Farm lease arrangements are also evident throughout central and western rural Markham, where a significant portion of the lands are owned by holding and development companies.

To address the future role and management of its agricultural resources in the context of the requirements of the Provincial Growth Plan, the Town of Markham undertook and concluded in 2009 an Agricultural Assessment Study which was endorsed by Markham Council. A key recommendation in the study was that the Town establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee.

### **MANDATE**

The Markham Agricultural Advisory Committee (MAAC) will be a volunteer advisory committee established by Markham Council. The MAAC will provide advice to the Town of Markham on agricultural matters as they relate to lands outside the current settlement boundary, as well as urban agricultural issues affecting lands within the settlement boundary. The MAAC will conduct their business in accordance with these Terms of Reference, which may be amended from time to time as required by Council.

### **SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES**

The scope of the MAAC shall include activities such as providing advice, stewardship and recommendations to Council on issues and concerns of Markham's agricultural community related to the following:

- **Policy Development**

1. Providing advice on the implementation of federal/provincial government legislation, policies and guidelines related to the agricultural sector.
2. Providing input on agricultural policy development in any future

review/revisions to the Town's Official Plan.

3. Reviewing studies, plans proposals, as required by Provincial legislation, or as may be referred by Markham Council/staff and provide comments on agricultural implications.

- **Economic Viability and Sustainability**

1. Provide advice, comments and recommendations on alternative solutions, approaches, plans or studies dealing with agriculture and related rural issues which are within the responsibilities and financial capabilities of the Town of Markham.
2. Provide advice on the implementation of actions recommended in the Markham Agricultural Assessment Study, the Growth Management Strategy and the Town's Community Sustainability Plan (Greenprint).
3. Determine in consultation with the Rouge Park, TRCA and the Town how to support sustainable diverse agricultural operations in the Rouge Park.

- **Communications/Outreach/Education**

1. Provide advice and coordination on the identification and implementation of programs which encourage public awareness and education of land stewardship, urban agriculture, modern agriculture and the issues concerning the industry, local and sustainable food procurement, community supported agriculture and other food and rural issues.
2. Monitor and report on changes within the agricultural industry including agricultural land inventory.
3. Provide advice, comments and recommendations as requested by the Town of Markham on miscellaneous matters as they arise.

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES**

Amendments to the scope of activities can be made only by Markham Council.

## **COMPOSITION**

The Committee shall generally be comprised of upto ~~(10)~~ **(19)** members who will be appointed by Council in accordance with established policy and based on the attached membership eligibility criteria. The Committee composition may be adjusted by Council to reflect appointments made up the following groupings:

- Up to ~~5~~ **7** members representing the Town's agricultural sector including rural landowners and tenants and York Region Federation of Agriculture
- Up to 2 members representing urban issues, local and sustainable food procurement and other agricultural interests

- Up to 2 members representing the academic community or advocacy groups
- A minimum of 1 member of Council
- **(1) representative from the Federal Government (Transport Canada)**
- **(1) representative from the Provincial Government**
- **(1) representative from the Toronto Region and Conservation Authority TRCA**
- **(1) representative from Rouge Park**
- **(2) representative from York Region (preferably to include a representative for Public Health)**
- (1) representative from the Environmental Advisory Committee (note: added at the February 14, 2012 Council Meeting)

~~The Federal (Transport Canada) and Provincial governments, Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Rouge Park and the Region of York shall be invited and encouraged to identify staff support to assist and support the Committee on senior government and Rouge Park matters.~~

Quorum shall be determined based on the number of Committee members and shall be confirmed by the Clerk's Department. A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum. The members shall possess expertise, experience and willingness to devote the necessary time to the committee.

Members will be selected to provide an appropriate representation of various farming interests (dairy, beef, cash crops, market garden etc).

The Committee shall appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair. It is acknowledged that the membership is totally made up of volunteers and there are no per diems for any members of the Committee. However, Committee Members may be reimbursed for approved expenses incurred in the performance of Committee duties.

#### **TERM OF APPOINTMENT**

Committee members will be appointed to a term co-terminus with the term of Council, or until successors are appointed.

#### **MEETINGS**

The MAAC will meet at the Civic Centre Town of Markham (unless other locations within the Town are considered prudent from time to time) six (6) times per year. Additional meetings may be scheduled where needed or requested by the Chair in consultation with staff. The MAAC will establish a meeting schedule at its inaugural meeting taking into account the availability of members and business needs and schedule of Council and the Development Services Committee. The MAAC by consensus or through its Chair may invite any individual, interest group, agency or consultant to appear at a

meeting as a delegation or to submit or present information, which will assist the MAAC in carrying out its mandate.

### **STAFF SUPPORT**

The Town will provide secretariat support to the MACC including one (1) Clerk for administrative support, procedural or technical assistance as deemed necessary. Staff from the Sustainability Office will coordinate involvement of other Departments and agencies as necessary. The Development Services Commission staff shall assist with the coordination of policy and planning matters. The time commitment shall be reasonable, within the context of all assigned duties. Minutes of the MAAC will be forwarded to Council as part of Development Services Committee agendas.

### **ANNUAL REPORTS**

The Committee is expected to submit an annual report to the Town's Development Services Committee, the content of which is expected to cover but not necessarily limited to the following topic areas:

- Policy Development
- Economic Viability and Sustainability
- Communications/Outreach/Education

**See also: Membership Eligibility Criteria attached.**

**Approved by Council June 8, 2010**

# **Markham Agricultural Advisory Committee**

## **Membership Eligibility**

### **Criteria**

#### **Membership Eligibility Criteria**

While it is important to bring together a diverse range of persons for membership on the MAAC, it is also important to ensure that the members are conversant with the issues and are in a position to contribute meaningfully to the work of the Committee. Therefore in considering the membership, the following criteria will be considered.

#### **1. Residency**

To the extent feasible and practical, members should reside or actively farm land in the Town of Markham.

#### **2. Agricultural Expertise and Knowledge**

Members engaged in the agricultural industry, having the following attributes would be considered as an asset:

- Demonstrated knowledge or directly related knowledge, of agricultural and rural land use issues;
- Demonstrated knowledge of urban farming issues;
- Relevant farm experience;
- Involvement with activities of the agricultural community;
- Technical training in an agricultural-based field; and
- Knowledge of properties, farm operations within Markham, the market for agricultural products including environmentally-friendly products .

#### **3. Availability**

Members should be able to attend as many MAAC meetings as possible and may be required to work outside of the scheduled meetings. Individuals should be able to be contacted or reached at times that are convenient in order for meetings to be arranged.

**See also: Terms of Reference**

**Approved by Council June 8, 2010**

