

Disclaimer: These minutes were prepared as a reasonable summary of the essential content of this meeting, not as a transcription.



Minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting

May 30, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Meadows Room

12007 Harris Road, Pitt Meadows, BC V3Y 2B5

Voting Members: A. Aquilini
 J. Bachmann
 H. Bitter
 Drew Bondar, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food (*Non-Voting Member*)
 T. Hopcott*
 S. Howkins
 W. Jack
 D. Kosicki
 T. Vader

Council Liaisons: Councillor Manion
 Councillor Meachen (Alternate)

Regrets: L. Kemper
 J. Parmar
 P. Robinson

Members of the Public: S. Robinson

Staff: M. Baski, Project Manager, Agriculture & Environment (Chair)
 M. Roberts, Chief Administrative Officer
 S. Maki, Director of Engineering
 P. Ward, Director of Planning & Development

Recording Clerk: T. McCaw, Committee Clerk II

1. CALL TO ORDER

M. Baski, Project Manager, Agriculture & Environment, acknowledged with respect and gratitude that the City of Pitt Meadows is located on the traditional, unceded territory of ᑭᓴᓴᓴ (Katzie) First Nation who were stewards of this land since time immemorial.

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 AM.

2. LATE ITEMS

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There was general consent amongst the committee to approve the May 30, 2024 Agricultural Advisory Committee agenda.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

There was general consent amongst the Committee to approve the minutes from the April 25, 2024 Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting as circulated.

5. NEW BUSINESS**5.1 Water Study Update**

S. Maki, Director of Engineering & Operations, provided an update on irrigation needs, water concerns and initiatives by the City forming a part of the minutes as **Attachment 1.**

The Committee participated in a discussion with the following main themes noted:

- Questions were raised around impacts to water licenses for the municipality and the new initiatives being implemented (Staff noted the municipality does not currently have a license and the City will determine what level of water they are comfortable with in the ditches as well as the drainage networks that will require review and assessment);
- Discussions were held around risks, costs, and recovery for the City should they become an irrigation district;
- A suggestion was made to clean out the ditches to the engineering standards which would increase the volume of water being stored (Staff confirmed that their ditch and cleaning practices have not changed);

- Salmon and fish in the ditches was discussed;
- The importance of preserving farms and farmland in Pitt Meadows was discussed;
- The recommendation was made for the City to collect more data prior to making a decision around moving towards becoming an irrigation district;
- Questions were raised around the benefits of the City becoming an irrigation district and whether consultation with the agricultural community will be had;
- Staff confirmed that data gathering will come from the Irrigation study and will involve the AAC before making any decisions; and
- A request was made for Staff to reach out to the City of Delta to come speak to the AAC regarding their experiences with becoming an irrigation district (Staff confirmed they will reach out to the City of Delta prior to extending an invitation to speak to the AAC).

**T. Hopcott joined the meeting at 10:59 am.*

5.2 Update: Metro Vancouver Regional Food Systems Strategy

M. Baski, Project Manager, Agriculture & Environment, provided an update on the Metro Vancouver Regional Food Systems Strategy.

The Committee participated in a discussion with the following main themes noted:

- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, food destruction and waste was discussed; and
- The impacts of fossil fuels and fertilizer, which are imperative to food production in farming.

5.3 Soil Fill in the Agricultural Land Reserve

M. Baski, Project Manager, Agriculture & Environment, & T. Hopcott, provided an update from Metro Vancouver on Soil Fill in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

There were no further discussions or comments made by the Committee on this topic.

5.4 Pitt Meadows Farmers Institute

M. Baski, Project Manager, Agriculture & Environment, provided an update on the opportunity for the re-instatement of the Pitt Meadows Farmers Institute.

The Committee participated in a discussion with the following main themes noted:

- Discussions were held around possible funding opportunities to support the operation of a Farming Institute in the City of Pitt Meadows (Staff confirmed there are funding opportunities available to support this initiative);
- The question was raised whether a Farmer's Institute would be a separate initiative from the City (Staff confirmed yes, this would not be a City-run initiative);
- Discussions were held around the operations of a standard Farmers Institute; and
- The question was raised whether there would be an opportunity for the AAC to provide funding for \$5-\$10k for the reinstatement of the Farmer's Institute.

5.5 Educational Signage Along Dikes & Farming Areas

M. Baski, Project Manager, Agriculture & Environment, provided an overview on new educational signage along the dikes and farming areas in Pitt Meadows.

The Committee participated in a discussion with the following main themes noted:

- Important to include the history on farming cranberries and blueberries and possibly noting how many berries/other commodities are grown and produced in Pitt Meadows each year;
- The recommendation was made to include information on the five major commodity groups within the City; and
- Discussions were held around what the primary focus of these signs would be (Staff confirmed the recommendation would lay with whatever members find value in, such as education around off leash dogs and the impacts).

5.6 AAC Application Tracker

M. Baski, Project Manager, Agriculture & Environment, provided update on the AAC Application Tracker attached in today's agenda.

There were no further discussions or comments made by the Committee on this topic.

5.7 AAC Action Items

M. Baski, Project Manager, Agriculture & Environment, provided an update on the AAC Action Item Tracker.

There were no further discussions or comments made by the Committee on this topic.

6. ROUNDTABLE

The Committee participated in a roundtable discussion, there were no motions or recommendations put forward.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 PM

The next ***Agricultural Advisory Committee*** Meeting is scheduled for
June 27, 2024 at 10:00 AM.

Certified as correct:

Tatiana McCaw, Committee Clerk II

Pitt Meadows Internal Drainage System, Irrigation Study Update, and Drought Initiatives

May 30, 2024 – AAC Meeting



How the System Works

- Designed to get water out and keep water out
- With drought, we are wanting to do the opposite
- Administration Policy for pump station set points:
 - Winter and Summer (~May/June – September)
 - If no rain and low water, pumps don't turn on
 - Farmers have different needs at different times

(c) Pitt Meadows No. 3 Drainage Area (excluding McKechnie catchment) is to be maintained:

- May 1st to September 30th at a setting of:
G.S.C. Pump on 0.00m, Pump Off -0.20m
- October 1st to April 30th at a setting of:
G.S.C. Pump on -0.20m, Pump Off -0.40m

5. Property Owners relying on the Drainage System for Irrigation Purposes are encouraged to provide for adequate On-Site Reservoirs for their own use where there is no other means of Irrigation.

6. The Council will consider the installation of Sluice Gates within the Ditch Network in order to retain water for Irrigation Purposes. Where possible, such equipment should be constructed on Private Property and be installed in a manner that does not encumber the overall Drainage System.



7. McKechnie Control Gate Settings

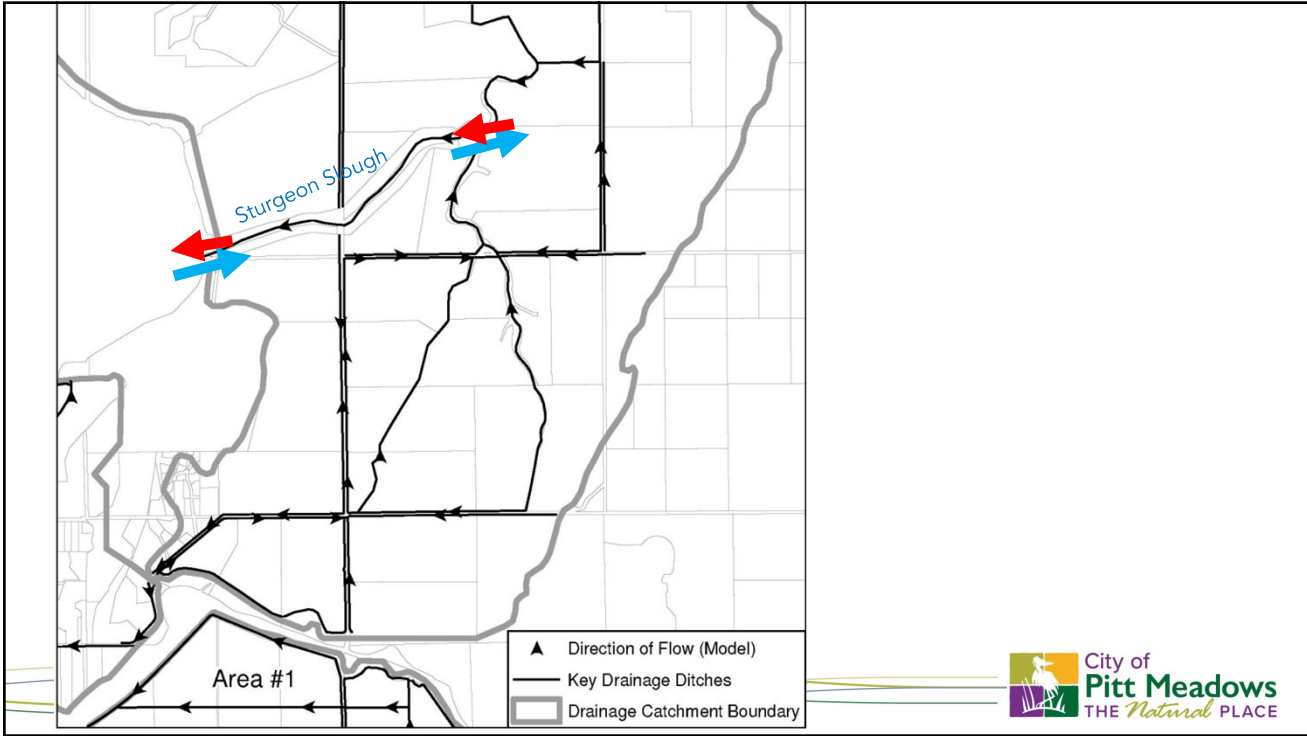
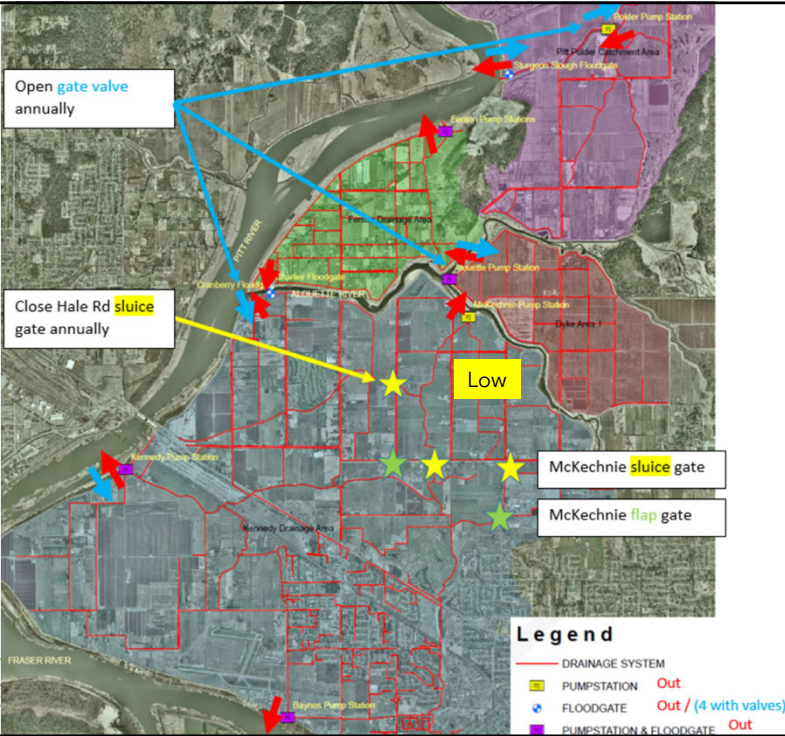
- Old Dewdney Trunk – leave open unless flooding occurs in lowlands
- Hale Road - partially open and continue to monitor
- 203rd – partially open and continue to monitor

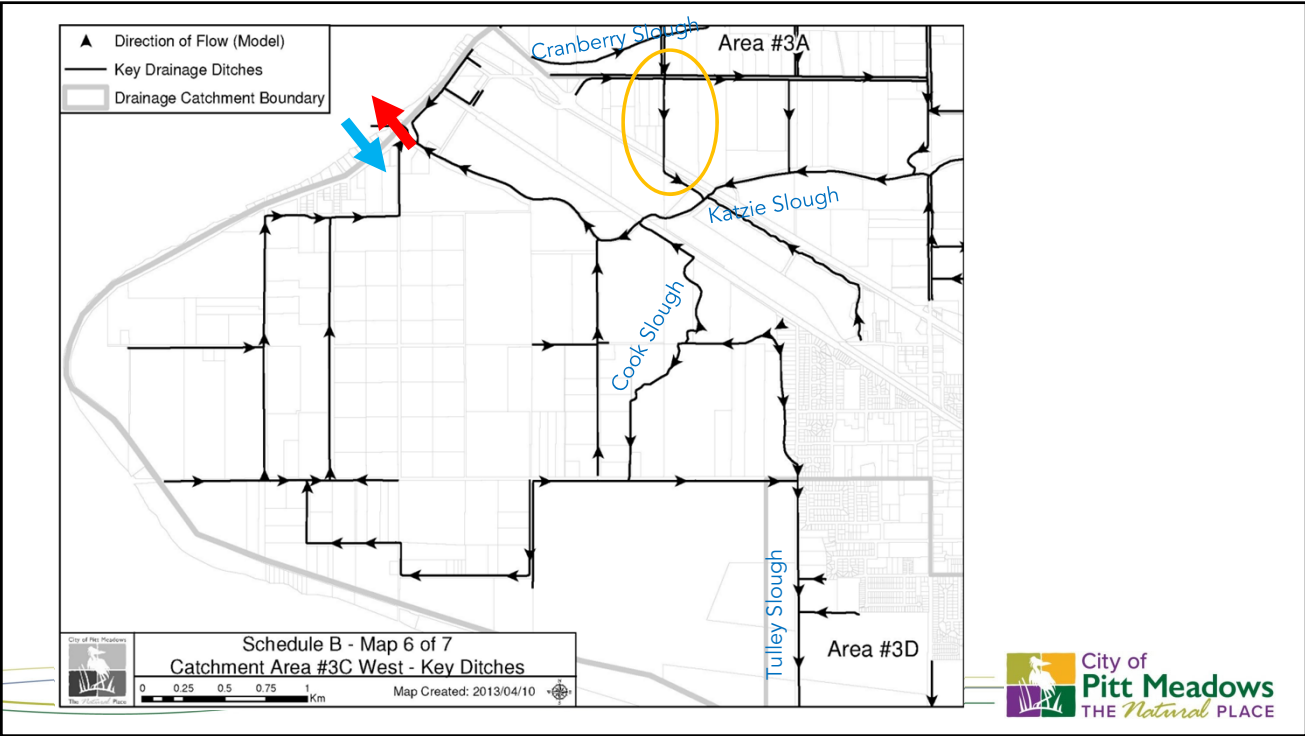
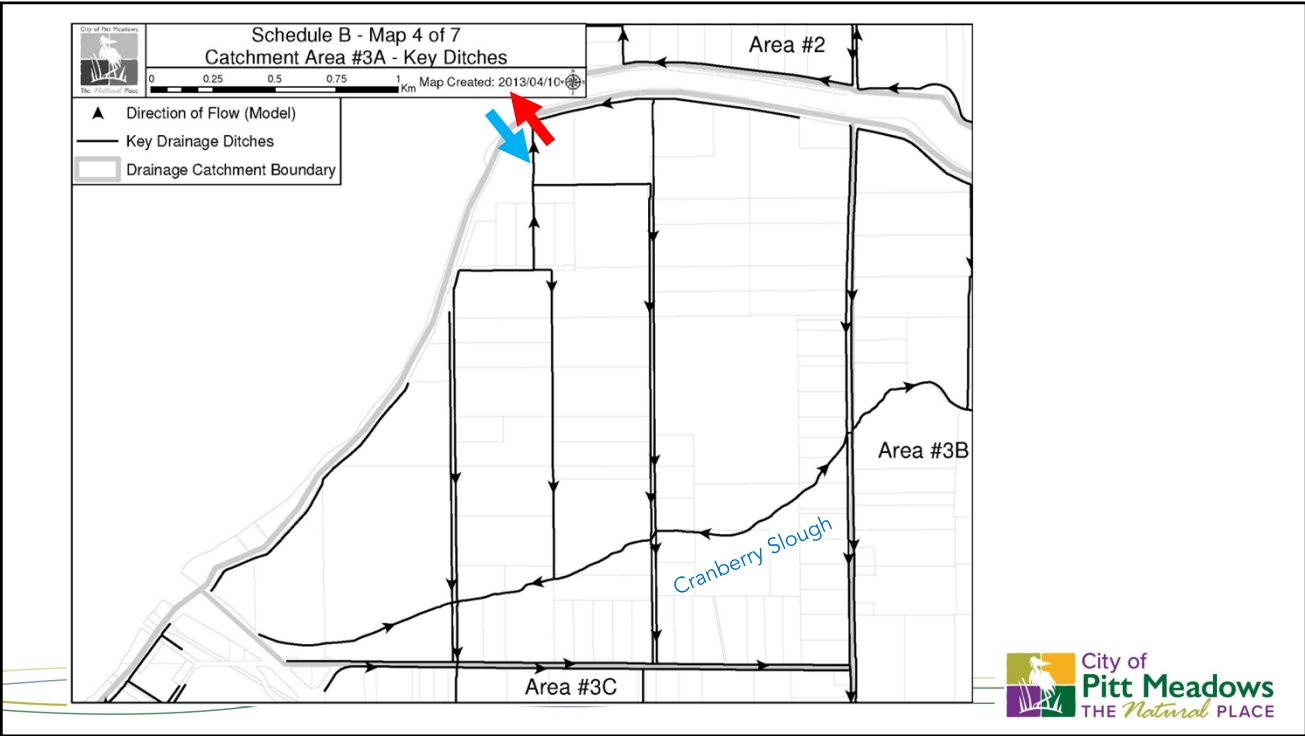
8. Area 3 Frost Protection – Open control gate and install stop logs as required at the Marina Flood Box for the Spring and Fall months.



How the System Works

-  **Water Out (main purpose)**
 - Pump stations (6)
 - Floodboxes (tide - 7)
-  **Water In (gate valves)**
 - Only at 4 points (3 regularly used)
 - Tide dependant
- **Confine water within the system with:**
 - Stop plates (fixed - 1 at marina)
 - Sluice gates (fixed - 3)
 - Flap gates (gravity - 2)







Marina Floodbox (Cranberry)



Stop plates at Marina Culvert

Sluice gate on Hale Rd





Concerns we have heard:

- City is operating drainage system and pumps different than before
 - In general, no. Pumps could come on if set-points in specific area reached (ex: Mckechnie)
 - City did implement summer (higher) set-points early
 - Other than that, planning to operate the same – marina gate, stop logs, hale sluice gate
- City is not interested or focused on addressing irrigation/water issues
 - Ag Plan → Detailed Irrigation Study (complete next year)
 - Wealth of staff and consultant knowledge
 - Variety of solutions – needs to be something realistic
 - Wells installed, modelling updates, input and considerations from Ministry
 - Draft will have AAC input
 - Applied for grant for data loggers throughout network
 - Temporary, short-term license (will submit, but not going to help for this summer)
 - Submit in coming weeks
 - Will include pumping into system in select points
 - Environmental considerations, first nation consultation



Ongoing Initiatives

- Monitoring grant options – IAF Agricultural Water Infrastructure Program – Streams 1 to 4

Stream 1: Producer Projects
Full details available soon

Stream 2: Community Projects
Full details available soon

Stream 3: Assessments, Engineering Studies or Plans

This stream will fund assessments, engineering studies, or plans that:

- Are required, often by law, before implementing on-ground infrastructure work.
- Will enhance the understanding of the operational and developmental limitations to the water supplies in the regions and/or watersheds, which enable applicants to determine the appropriate type and scale of infrastructure required to achieve their project goals.
- Will help ensure funding will be allocated to projects that will remain viable, valuable, and resilient into the future underpredicted climate change scenarios.

Within Stream 3 there are seven eligible activities:

1. Water supply assessments or feasibility studies.
2. Engineering studies or plans.
3. Dam engineering assessments.
4. Dam Emergency Plans.
5. Dam Safety Reviews.
6. Other Professional consultative services as required under the Dam Safety Regulation (DSR).
7. Drainage master plans, dike engineering studies or design plans.

May 30, 2024: Stream 3 Applications Open

June 20, 2024: Stream 3 Application Submissions Accepted

Stream 4: Strategic Projects
Full details available soon

- Also the Beneficial Management Practices Program (\$200k for on farm infrastructure), but need an Environmental Farm Plan



Ongoing Initiatives

- UBCM Requests – Ministry of Ag and Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
 - As recommended in Ag Plan
- Ongoing discussions with Ministry staff
- Long-term license and drought set-points
 - To be revisited following completion of study
- Repair of motor at 203/ODTR sluice gate
- Invasives Species Management
 - Losing ground and more fulsome plan to be developed



Things that would help the City:

- Look into on-site options
- Shared water needs information
- Discuss with farming community and determine point person
 - Help to minimize opposing requests
 - Even if just for specific drainage area (1 to 4)
- Watch for debris build-up, beaver dams, etc
- Keep City informed if you spot an issue
 - Operational item, so contact staff

We know the conditions are going to get worse, and can't guarantee water, but we will do what we can and seek long-term solutions

