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Minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting

April 10, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Meadows Room

12007 Harris Road, Pitt Meadows, BC V3Y 2B5

Voting Members: J. Bachmann
H. Bitter
T. Hopcott
S. Howkins
L. Kemper
D. Kosicki
T. Vader
D. Captein
J. Johal

Council Liaisons: Councillor Meachen (Alternate)

Regrets: A. Aquilini
D. Bondar, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Non-Voting Member)
W. Jack
Councillor Manion

Staff: M. Baski, Manager of Agriculture and Environment (Chair)
A. Dominelli, Planner
C. Reimer, Manager of Operations

Recording Clerk: T. McCaw, Administrative Services Supervisor

1. CALL TO ORDER

M. Baski, Manager of Agriculture and 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 10:04 AM.

2. LATE ITEMS

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There was general consent amongst the committee to approve the April 10, 2025 Agricultural Advisory Committee agenda.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

There was general consent amongst the Committee to approve the minutes from the March 6, 2025 Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting as circulated.

5. NEW BUSINESS

**T. Hopcott joined the meeting at 10:15 AM*

5.1 Roundtable of Introductions

Committee members and staff participated in a roundtable of introductions.

5.2 Roles & Responsibilities of a Committee Member

T. McCaw, Administrative Services Supervisor, presented an overview of the roles and responsibilities of a City committee member. Some of the highlights included:

- A review of expectations for members such as preparing for meetings, participating in voting and engaging with fellow members in an honest and respectful manner;
- The importance of privacy and the protection of personal information was discussed; and
- Staff recommended everyone read and review the Committee Training manual in preparation for their role on the committee.

5.3 Ditch Maintenance Program Update

C. Reimer, Manager of Operations, provided an overview on the City's Ditch Maintenance Program. Some of the highlights included:

- The City is working on a program which includes setting up annual permitting process for ditch maintenance;
- Ditch maintenance and the responsibilities of the City and property owners were discussed;

- Staff confirmed the direction of the City operating in accordance with the [Drainage System Protection Bylaw No 2266](#) which identifies ditch maintenance responsibilities for the City, as well as the property owner;
- The City will continue maintaining the majority of ditches and sloughs and ensure this is maintained.

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

- A question was raised around the permitting process and whether the costs of the permits would be paid for through the drainage levy (*Staff confirmed the permitting process is not new; however, the City is moving into a more holistic approach. Staff confirmed the costs are from the drainage levy*);
- The question was asked what a monitoring transducer was (*Staff confirmed these transducers were installed to monitor the elevation of water in the waterways in order to see how water moves and reacts during storm events as well as the use of the drainage/ditch network as a whole*);
- A recommendation was made to replace the ditch markers that identify water levels as they are deteriorating (*Staff requested the committee member email the location details so staff can replace*);
- Comments were made around the nuisance of the parrot feather in the ditches;
- A question was raised whether property owners were responsible for maintaining ditches on their land;
- A question was asked requesting Staff to elaborate on the permitting process (*Staff confirmed the Province has different types of permit requirements under the Water Sustainability Act , different categories of watercourse and different types of work require different permits*);
- A question was raised around how many years the permits are valid for (*Staff confirmed they would only be valid for the season*); and
- Climate change and ditch maintenance was discussed.

5.4 Development Variance Permit Application for 17612 Ford Rd Detour

A. Dominelli, Planner, presented an application for a development variance permit (DVP) to vary the minimum lot area and maximum gross floor area for a home-based business at 17612 Ford Rd Detour (PID: 012-021-067).

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

- A question was raised around taxation rates for businesses operating on agricultural land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (*Staff confirmed that BC Assessment would identify the property as split classification and the City would tax the land in conjunction with the direction of BC Assessment*);
- A comment was made that a business like this could be competition for a company that could be renting a unit in the industrial area where taxes are higher;
- A question was raised around how the City classifies tax rates (*Staff confirmed the City will tax in conjunction with what has been identified by BC Assessment*); and
- Comments were made supporting the DVP as the applicant is a quiet single operator who is a good neighbour and keeps his farm clean.

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee:

- A. Recommends that Council issue Development Variance Permit No. 2025-002 to vary the minimum lot area and maximum gross floor area for a home-based business at 17612 Ford Rd Detour.

CARRIED

5.5 Farmer's Market Nutrition Coupon Program

M. Baski, Manager of Agriculture & Environment, shared the request for a letter of support for the Farmer's Market Nutrition Coupon Program and whether there was any concerns with a letter of support being provided.

There were no comments made in opposition of this suggestion.

5.6 Farmers Market Vendor Participation - Fraser North Farmers Market Society & Pitt Meadows Farmers Market

M. Baski, Manager of Agriculture & Environment along with S. Ferrer and S. Daskis, Fraser North Farmers Market Society & Pitt Meadows Farmers Market lead a discussion on the Farmers Market and Pitt Meadows vendors.

S. Ferrer and S. Daskis, provided a verbal presentation on ways to gain new customers, engage new vendors. Some of the highlights included:

- Pitt Meadows is a young establishing market;
- Looking for ways to entice local farmers as there are a lot of larger local farms in Pitt Meadows;
- The Market is continuing to grow each year with an increased engagement from farmers and vendors this year;
- Mentorship programs were discussed; and
- Prioritizing local farmers from the community was discussed.

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

- A comment was made that the Saturday or Sunday farmers markets bring in more business than a market on a Tuesday;
- A question was raised around whether there were any rules/regulations for a hobby farmer to become a vendor (*Farmers Market staff confirmed there would be some requirements based on the category of vendor*);
- A question was raised around details regarding the location of the Pitt Meadows Farmers Market and how far people travel to attend (*Farmers Market staff confirmed that the Haney Farmers Market regularly has visitors come from Vancouver where as Pitt Meadows is more localized*);
- The question as raised around whether the addition of a food hub in the industrial area would support or combat the Farmers Market (*Farmers Market staff confirmed this would not be a concern*);
- A question around whether social media advertising efforts were going to be made this year (*Farmers Market staff confirmed yes*);
- A comment was made stating 82% of the land in the ALR in Maple Ridge is not farmed noting there are farming opportunities in Maple Ridge;

- The importance of social media promotions for the Pitt Meadows Farmers Market was discussed;
- The question was asked about the value of nutritional coupons used (*Farmers Market staff confirmed over \$75k worth of coupons were utilized at all three markets with \$3k used in Pitt Meadows alone*);

** D. Captein left the meeting 11:07 AM;*

- The question was raised whether there was any funding that has been made available yet (*Staff confirmed emailing larger farmers markets and Buy BC and will follow-up*);
- A suggestion was made for local larger farmer to potentially sponsor a booth at the local Pitt Meadows Farmers Market to help support the smaller operations; and
- Discussions were held around the amount of work vs. profit made a farmers market for farms that are large operations.

** D. Captein rejoined the meeting 11:12 AM;*

- **5.7 AAC Application Tracker**

M. Baski, Manager of Agriculture and Environment, provided update on the Application Tracker attached in today's agenda.

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

- **5.8 AAC Action Items**

M. Baski, Manager of Agriculture and Environment, provided an update on the 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 formal motions or recommendations put forward. Items regarding staff action and takeaways have been added to the Action Item Tracker.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM.

The next **Agricultural Advisory Committee** meeting is scheduled for **May 15, 2025** at
10:00 AM.

Certified as correct:

Tatiana McCaw,

Administrative Services Supervisor