



MINUTES of the Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting held on Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. via video conference.

PRESENT:

Voting Members:

J. Bachmann
M. Banns *
S. Howkins
L. Kemper *
D. Kosicki
P. Robinson
W. Wisselink

Council Liaisons:

Councillor MacDonald *
Councillor Simpson

Guests:

Dr. H. Bears, Zoetica Environmental Consulting Services
C. Begg (Applicant 1)
T. Elliot (Consultant for Applicant 1)
C. Keyes (Consultant for Applicant 1)
M. Sanderson (Consultant for Applicant 1)
D. Zbettnoff (Consultant for Applicant 1)

Other Council Members:

Councillor O'Connell
Councillor Hayes

Staff:

A. Berry, Director of Planning & Development (Chair)
A. Dominelli, Development Services Technician
C. O'Byrne, Project Manager, Community Development
D. Parr, Planner II
A. Wallace, Manager of Community Development

Regrets:

H. Bitter
M. Manion
N. Mori, Ministry of Agriculture

Secretary:

T. McCaw, Committee Clerk II

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. LATE ITEMS

None.

**M. Banns joined the meeting at 10:05 a.m.*

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was **MOVED** and **SECONED** THAT the October 8, 2020 agenda for the Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting be approved.

CARRIED.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was **MOVED** and **SECONED** THAT the Minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting held on September 10, 2020 be adopted.

CARRIED.

5. NEW BUSINESS**(1) Environmental Inventory Management Strategy Project Update & Discussion**

C. O'Byrne, Project Manager, Community Development, provided an update on the Environmental Inventory and Management Strategy through a PowerPoint Presentation, which is included in the minutes as **Attachment 1**.

Questions and comments from the Committee included:

- Importance of the ALR remaining for farming and agriculture;
- The question was raised as to or why the City was completing this study? (*Staff response: This is a project in order to develop a fuller of our natural assets like ditches. Additionally, the City was looking to gather an inventory to determine economic benefits from such natural assets.*);
- There was consensus that the AAC supports the letter written by J. Bachman to Dr. H. Bears, Zoetica Environmental Consulting Services which is included in the minutes as **Attachment 2**;
- All additional feedback is to be sent by the Committee to cobyne@pittmeadows.ca by the end of October 2020;
- Members of the AAC stressed the importance of the soils in Pitt Meadows and the importance they remain the same as the City has a very unique soil composition;

- Members stated they currently experience conflict with bears, beavers, geese, ducks, the European grey squirrel, and swans which can take a significant amount of crop each year;
- Alouette River parking concerns were raised as vehicles are blocking access to fields;
- Signage is not preventing trespassers on farmland and many farms are experiencing theft of copper from farm houses and sprinklers;
- Food safety and unauthorized vehicles driving down private roads are raising concerns for farmers,
- Competing interests of the salmon in the ditches;
- The question was raised to see if there was an opportunity to look into more education for the public in areas such as food safety and trespassing;
- The possibility of a management plan for wildlife and invasive species in ditches;
- Farmers would like to see reimbursements from the City for their lost crops;
- A recommendation was made that areas within the ALR, should be left natural for conservation to avoid erosion;
- Important to have no contamination of water and water supply in the ditches as this can in turn affect the farms harvest;
- Members would like to see a management plans for ditches;
- Planting wild flowers in areas of the ditches that the City mows is a good space for bees and other pollinators;
- Important that farms have access to water courses that are easily accessible yearly and invasive species are restricting water flow in ditches;
- Diking and pumping stations need to be prioritized in order to keep farmers farming;
- Important that the Environmental Inventory Management Strategy reflects the priorities of farming;
- Would like to see the ditches dug deeper as they could become storage; and
- Request has been made that the AAC be kept up to date with The Environmental Inventory Management Strategy as the project progresses

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** that the Agricultural Advisory Committee present the said letter (**Attachment 2**) to Council supporting that ALR land remains for farming additionally stressing the importance of the City's soil structure.

CARRIED.

(2) **Exclusion Application – 11898, 11848, 11834 and 11782 Baynes Rd**
(File 6635-20-2020-05)

A. Dominelli, Development Services Technician, presented an ALC exclusion

applications for 11898, 11848, 11834, 11782 Baynes Road through a PowerPoint presentation, which is included in the minutes as **Attachment 3**.

Questions and comments from the Committee included:

- Recommendation was made for increasing drainage or soil improvements as drainage is a concern on these properties;
- Recommendation was made that the application be dealt with as one single application; *(Staff responded: The ALC stated it needs to be submitted as four application as it is four separate parcels; however, Council can consider it as one large application).*
- Recommendation was given that this land be changed to a non-soil based farm and use a greenhouse approach;
- Concerns were raised that once these lands are removed from the ALR, they will never go back;
- If the proposed development is approved and the land is raised, this will cause more problems for other farmers on the west;
- Concerns were raised around ALR lands being in close proximity to a subdivision making it is difficult to perform farming duties such as spraying;
- Concerns were raised around the proposed development by the applicant and the City not supporting this level of density;
- Members would like to see an increase in tax base should these lands be removed from the ALR;
- Feedback was noted that Port Coquitlam is currently experiencing a storm water management problem as a result of a similar situation;
- Members would like to see these properties remain in the ALR with a low tax base;
- A request was made to see a clear direction from the City regarding expansion plans over the next 5 – 100 years. *(Staff responded: We are currently in the process of reviewing the OCP, and it has an outlook of 20 years. This group of properties is noted as agricultural in the draft OCP and Staff has not received any direction from Council to change this designation into residential. This area is currently designated as a special study area.);*
- A \$30,000 grant application was made for the City to look holistically at the housing needs for the community which is set to be completed by April 2022; and
- In terms of the regional growth strategy, is it recognized that the City needs to add a specific number of homes in the City over the next 20 years? *(Staff will provide this data and exact numbers when the application is presented to Council).*

* L. Kemper left the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

The applicant provided comments to the Committee, highlights included

- T. Elliot, Madrone Environmental Services Ltd. noted the land is low lying and very wet and although the soils are nutrient rich, these lots pose major drainage concerns;
- Efforts to rectify the above noted problems may in turn lead to compliance issues due to the newly passed Agricultural Environmental Management Code of Practice (AEMCoP) Division 4 (Section 48 – 60);
- The applicant noted on the City's website that OCP Residential policy review, dating back to Jan 21, 2020 states these lands were identified as being able to be accommodate 445 units; and
- The applicant noted that there are concerns with over spraying on neighboring properties which has caused a decline in production of harvest.

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** THAT the Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends the comments from this meeting be forwarded to Council for consideration as a part of the application.

CARRIED.

**C. MacDonald left the meeting 12:03 p.m.*

**M. Banns left the meeting at 12:05 p.m.*

(3) **Update on the North Lougheed Study Area**

C. O'Byrne, Project Manager, Community Development, provided an update on the North Lougheed Study Area through a PowerPoint Presentation, which is included in the minutes as **Attachment 4**.

Questions and comments from the Committee included:

- Thanks was given to Staff for the update; in the interest of time, members recommended we move forward to the Round Table.

6. ROUND TABLE

The group participated in a round table of discussions. Highlights included:

- Vehicle parking on the north side of Lougheed near the Alouette River caused major problems for machinery and farmers during the peak of the lockdown during COVID-19;
- Great to see progress on the McKechnie Road pump station;
- Thanks was given to the City for listening to the farmers;

- Local business is working towards moving forward with a meat packing plant here in Pitt Meadows which will provide a great outlet for anyone with cattle; and
- Appreciation was given to the members of the AAC for their transparent and direct comments during these meetings.

7. SUMMARY OF TODAY'S ACTION ITEMS

1. Request has been made that the AAC be kept up to date with The Environmental Inventory Management Strategy as the project progresses.
2. Staff to forward letter from the AAC, **Attachment 2**, to Council.
3. The Application Tracker & the Action Item Tracker update were postponed to the November 12th meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

*The next meeting for the **Agricultural Advisory Committee** is set for **November 12, 2020** at 10:00 a.m.*