

NO: R011

COUNCIL DATE: January 11, 2021

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **January 7, 2021**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering** FILE: **0360-20**  
**General Manager, Planning & Development**

SUBJECT: **Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee Terms of Reference**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department and Planning & Development Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Endorse the attached Terms of Reference (Appendix “I”) to support the Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee, as described in this report.

## INTENT

The intent of this report is to seek Council’s endorsement of the Terms of Reference (“TOR”) for the new Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee.

## BACKGROUND

On December 7, 2020, the Mayor set up a new standing committee establishing a new Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee (“AEIAC”) and appointed Councillor Patton as the Chair, with Councillor Nagra as Vice-Chair and Councillor Hundial as the third member of Council. Upon establishment of this new committee, the Mayor also announced that a TOR would be drafted.

## DISCUSSION

The AEIAC will provide advice to Council on agricultural and food security issues and the implication of climate change on environment and agricultural land. The committee will also advise and assist City Council in developing proactive plans for investment opportunities on agricultural sectors where current non-productive farm lands can be converted to be productive farms, thus addressing food security while making sure the impact of climate change on the environment and agricultural lands is being addressed. The committee will work on issues referred by Council, promote increased access to healthy, local food for residents, proposed changes to by-laws that affect the agriculture and environment, and other topics where comments are requested.

This new committee will be composed of three Councillors, three members of the public, senior City staff, and two observers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Agriculture Land Commission. An internal staff working group, led by the Engineering Department, will provide support and resources. The Legislative Services Division will provide administrative support and coordination. The AEIAC will be convened at the call of the chair.

The TOR (Appendix “I”) outline the scope, structure, and membership of the AEIAC.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The work of the AEIAC meets the objectives of the City’s Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this work relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Green Infrastructure, Energy and Climate. Specifically, the initiative supports the following Desired Outcomes (“DO”):

- Green Infrastructure DO12: Surrey protects ecosystem services and manages natural assets in order to create resiliency to adapt and thrive in a changing climate; and
- Energy and Climate DO6: The City anticipates changing weather patterns and sea level rise as a result of climate change, and implements appropriate infrastructure, land use planning and emergency response solutions that will be resilient over the long term; and
- Economy DO4: Surrey’s economy is diversified with a mix of service, industrial, agricultural, and innovation-based businesses; and
- Economy DO12: Food production and food enterprises of all scales are an integral part of the local economy.

## **CONCLUSION**

A new Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee will provide an opportunity to ensure policies are aligned to enhance food security by properly utilizing agricultural land and safeguarding the environment by addressing the impending climate changes. The committee will endeavor to achieve this through collaborative work with the community and subject matter experts.

Scott Neuman, P.Eng.  
General Manager, Engineering

Jean Lamontagne  
General Manager, Planning &  
Development

SBN/YY/jb/cc

Appendix “I” - Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

### AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, AND INVESTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### 1. Mandate

The purpose of the Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Committee (the “Committee”) is to advise Council on strategic and policy issues pertaining to the City’s agricultural, environment and investment goals including but not limited to:

- Increasing food security and investment;
- Improving availability of agricultural land;
- Enhancing City wide response to climate change; and
- Protecting the City’s environment.

#### 2. Role

The Committee will:

- a) Focus on four agriculture, environment and investment related priorities that represent challenges for our community in achieving our goals:
  - I. **Agriculture Lands:** Ensuring the Agricultural Land Reserve is maintained and agricultural practices are sustainable. This includes advising and making recommendations to Council on current and proposed policies and land use plans, development applications that directly impact agricultural lands and require referrals to the Agricultural Land Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture.
  - II. **Enhance Agricultural Productivity:** Developing a proactive plan to enhance the agricultural communities, enhance agricultural viability and increase economic investments through increased food production and processing. Advise City Council in developing a proactive plan to sustain the agricultural community and improve agricultural viability within Surrey with assistance from the Agricultural Land Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture.
  - III. **Climate Change:** Advise council on policies and actions in support of the Climate Change Action Strategy as it relates to community and corporate emission reductions, improving the health and resilience of our community, and mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

**IV. Protect the Environment:** Advise and make recommendations to Council on policies, procedures and bylaws as they may affect our rich, natural environment. This priority will focus on desired outcomes and strategic directions of our Sustainability Charter 2.0 and advancement of the City's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

- b) Consider and make recommendations to Council on any other matters referred to the Committee by Council.
- c) Liaise, on behalf of Council, with public and private agencies, including senior governments, to encourage the provision of sustainable agricultural and environmental processes and the creation of a positive and constructive climate for changes in the community that will be mutually beneficial for Surrey and its residents.

### **3. Membership**

The Committee is a standing committee appointed by the Mayor until October 2022.

- a) The Committee will consist of six voting members as follows:
  - Three members of City Council, appointed by the Mayor, with one designated as Chair and one designated as Vice-Chair of the Committee;
  - Three Volunteer members will be appointed or re-appointed to the Committee for a term of two years, except as otherwise determined by the Mayor. One volunteer must be an active member of agricultural community and one volunteer from environmental community; and
  - Up to one observer from each of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agriculture Land Commission. Observers will have no voting privilege.
- b) Volunteer members may serve for up to three terms on the Committee, except as otherwise determined by the Mayor.
- c) The Vice-Chairperson will preside at any meeting where the chair is absent.

### **4. General Terms and Code of Conduct**

- a) **Decorum and Debate:** Committee members must devote the necessary time and effort to prepare for meetings, arrive at meetings on time, provide feedback in keeping with the Committee mandate, and be respectful of others' thoughts and opinions.

- b) **Authority and Reporting:** The Committee and its members will not represent themselves as having any authority beyond that delegated in the Terms of Reference ("TOR") endorsed by Mayor and Council.
- c) **Media/Social Media:** Members of the Committee are not permitted to speak to the media as representatives of the Committee. Committee members must strive to convey the public interest and remember that they represent the City of Surrey; this means that they must be consistent with the City's position on specific issues. It is the policy of the City of Surrey to encourage clear and effective communication with all Committee members, stakeholders, and members of the public. Any use of social media must, as with all other forms of communication, meet tests of credibility, privacy, authority, and accountability.
- d) **Professionalism:** Committee members who engage in activities regarding the City of Surrey or Committee initiatives/projects and promotions are expected to maintain a respectful, constructive, and professional tone that maintains the brand consistency of the City of Surrey.
- e) **Confidentiality:** All new Committee members are required to sign a copy of the "Volunteer Services Confidentiality Agreement" as part as their general orientation. All returning Committee members have previously signed a copy of the agreement and are expected to honour and uphold the provisions as outlined within the Agreement.
- f) **Surrey Residency Requirement:** All Committee volunteers must reside in the City of Surrey. If a Committee member's primary place of residence changes to another municipality during the term of an appointment, the member must notify the Chair and Administrative Assistant regarding change of address. Vacancies will be filled through advertisement on social media and on the City website; applications received will be reviewed by the Mayor.
- g) **Conflict of Interest:** City policy regarding conflict of interest applies to all Committee members. A conflict of interest exists if a Committee member is a director, member, or employee of an organization seeking to benefit from the City, or if the Committee member has a direct or indirect pecuniary (financial) interest in the outcome of committee deliberations. Committee members who have a conflict of interest with a topic being discussed must declare that they have a conflict of interest, describe the nature of the conflict, and leave the room prior to any discussions, and must refrain from voting thereon. Committee members are not permitted to directly or indirectly benefit from their participation on the Committee during their tenure and for a period of twelve (12) months following the completion of their term(s).

## **5. Meetings**

- a) Meetings will generally meet monthly and be held at the call of the Chair.
- b) Meetings will be held at least four times a year.

- c) Quorum for a meeting of the Committee is one half of the voting members, which includes the Chair or Vice-Chair. Any member who is absent from three or more meetings of the Committee per year without reason satisfactory to the Committee Chair may be removed from the Committee by the Mayor.
- d) Minutes of meetings of the Committee will be recorded by the Legislative Services Department and be forwarded by the City Clerk to a Regular Council meeting as information and, where recommendations are included in the minutes, for consideration by City Council.

## **6. Annual Work Plan**

- a) From a strategic approach, select Committees are expected to identify a concise set of annual targets and objectives to be submitted to Council for endorsement each November for the following calendar year. The Annual Work Plan must be in line with the TOR and must outline specific targets as to what the Committee plans to achieve while supporting the work, priorities, and underlying principles of the City of Surrey.
- b) The agreed upon Work Plan will be executed by the Committee, with the reasonable assistance of support staff, and must contribute to the overarching goals of the City of Surrey.

## **7. Administration**

Staff assistance will be provided to the Committee, as necessary, by:

- a) The General Manager, Engineering and other staff as required.

## **8. Authority**

- a) Section 141 (1) of the Community Charter states that “The Mayor must establish standing committees for matters the Mayor considers would be better dealt with by a committee and must appoint persons to those committees.”.
- b) This Committee is standing committee appointed by the Mayor.
- c) The proceedings of the Committee are to be conducted in public unless the subject matter being considered falls within an applicable subsection of Section 90 of the Community Charter.