

Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee Minutes

Location: Virtual
Tuesday, May 12, 2021
Time: 6:00 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Patton, Chair
Councillor Hundial
M. Lamont
S. Rai
S. Van Keulen

Agency Representative:

Mikayla Roberts, Ministry of Agriculture

Regrets:

Councillor Nagra, Vice-Chair

Staff Present:

S. Johal, Planning Technician
S. Ward, Drainage Manager
Y. Yohannes, Manager, Utilities
C. Eagles, Administrative Assistant

A. ADOPTIONS

1. Adoption of the Agenda

It was Moved by S. VanKeulen
Seconded by S. Rai
That the agenda of the Agriculture,
Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee be adopted, as amended:
Move Item C.3 to C.1
Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes

It was Moved by S. VanKeulen
Seconded by S. Rai
That the minutes of the Agriculture,
Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee meeting held April 14, 2021 be
adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

This section has no items to consider.

Councillor Hundial joined the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Serpentine and Nicomekl Lowlands

Yonatan Yohannes, Manager, Utilities and Samantha Ward, Drainage Manager,
Engineering

Staff provided a presentation on the Serpentine and Nicomekl lowlands drainage system and highlighted some of the drainage infrastructure and other assets that are present in the floodplain.

- The Serpentine and Nicomekl river flood plain areas comprise of roughly 20% of the total land area in the City. There are significant assets in the floodplain area, other than flood control, including major municipal and Provincial roads such as 152 Street, King George Boulevard and Highway 99, and underground utilities including major sanitary sewers, water distribution mains, Fortis gas mains, BC hydro lines and other telecoms. There are approximately 5,600 hectares of land in the 200 Year flood plain of the two rivers, and these lands are within the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- In 1997, the City developed the Nicomekl and Serpentine Integrated Watershed Study Strategic Plan for Lowlands Flood Control. The overall flood control approach was to raise the dykes along the rivers to contain up to the 200 year return period storm event. The approach on its own would result in excessive dyke heights; therefore, a controlled spill approach was implemented where a series of spillways along the dykes would allow for controlled overtopping at strategic locations above a 15-year event.
- The City will be updating the 1997 Strategic Plan and will include a summary of work completed and outstanding, an evaluation for outstanding works and identification of new approaches, flood protection considerations, clarity to drainage level of service objectives, implementation, phasing and financing strategy, and recommendations for future studies and functional plan updates.
- In response to a question from a member, staff advised that they are noticing changes in sea level rise. Staff noted that once the DMAF designs are finalized, if requested, staff can present the information to the Committee.
- Members of the Committee expressed concerns on the inability to irrigate from the Serpentine River. In response, staff clarified that the water licenses are granted by the Province. Members of the Committee noted that new farmers are having poor luck in obtaining these water licenses.
- In response to a question from a member, staff advised that Statutory Right of Ways over the dykes are for access for operations and maintenance purposes and not intended for public use, such as for public trails.
- The Ministry of Agriculture representative noted that the Ministry put out an “Agro-Service Newsletter” and information on the Lowlands Strategic Plan could be included.

2. **Development Application 7921-0042-00**

Sharon Johal, Planning Technician

File: 7921-0042-00

The proposal is for a Development Variance Permit to vary the side yard setback from 15 metres to 7.3 metres for an additional to an existing agricultural barn.

The following comments were made:

- The subject property is 3.04 hectares in size, designated Agricultural in the Official Community Plan (OCP), zoned General Agriculture Zone (A-1), and located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The subject site is classified as farmland under the *Assessment Act*. There is a red-coded Class A watercourse located at the rear of the site.
- There is an existing single family dwelling and agricultural barn on site that were subject to Development Application 7914-0318-00 to vary the farm residential Homeplate and setbacks for both structures. The applicant is now proposing an addition to the farm use building that requires a setback variance.
- The applicant is requesting to vary the minimum allowable setback from the side yard from 15.0 metres to 7.3 metres of a building for uses permitted in Section B.1 of the A-1 Zone (Agriculture & Horticulture).

A member of the Committee expressed that the setback is pre-existing and non-conforming because the new regulations were enacted after the structure was built.

It was

Moved by S. VanKeulen

Seconded by Councillor Hundial

That the Agriculture, Environment, and

Investment Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager of Planning and Development to support Development Application 7921-0042-00.

Carried

3. Development Application 7919-0231-00
Sharon Johal, Planning Technician
File: 7919-0231-00

The proposal is for Non-Adhering Residential Use to construct a principal residence with a total floor area that exceeds 500 square metres.

The following comments were made:

- The subject site is approximately 13.3 hectares in area, designated "Agricultural" in the Official Community Plan (OCP), zoned "General Agriculture Zone (A-1)" and located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The subject site is classified as farmland under the BC *Assessment Act*.
- The applicant has applied under section 20.1(2) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA)* to allow the construction of an 805.5 square metre dwelling and farm building adjacent to the house to store farm equipment for agricultural operations. There are currently no permanent buildings or structures on the property.

- The Committee expressed concerns on the precedent the application would set for an over-sized dwelling on ALR lands. The Committees also expressed concerns that ALR lands are limited. Staff clarified that the applicant has the right to apply to the Agricultural Land Commission for a Non-Adhering Residential Use. Under the legislation, once received at the ALC, the application must go to the Local Municipality for comment. It is sent to the Committee and then Council for comment before the application is returned to the ALC, who ultimately makes the decision on supporting the proposed dwelling.

The Committee, in general, expressed non-support for the application.

It was
Investment Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager of Planning and Development to not support Development Application 7919-0231-00.
Moved by Councillor Hundial
Seconded by S. VanKeulen
That the Agriculture, Environment, and
Carried

D. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

1. Verbal Updates

- The Chair expressed interest for ways the City could promote local farms and to ensure that Surrey farmers receive priority at local farmers markets.
- The Chair expressed the need for a local blueberry juice manufacturing site. Members of the Committee expressed concerns on the length of time it takes for local farmers to receive appropriate permits for manufacturing/ processing plants on farmland. Members noted that is it difficult and expensive to purchase industrial lands to accommodate manufacturing plants; a shorter application process within the City may assist in on-site production.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

This section has no items to consider.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

This section has no items to consider.

G. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee is scheduled Virtually for Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

H. ADJOURNMENT

It was
Investment Advisory Committee meeting adjourn.
Moved by S. VanKeulen
Seconded by M. Lamont
That the Agriculture, Environment, and
Carried

The Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Allison Patton, Chair