
Present:

Councillor Bose, Chair
H. Dhillon
P. Harrison
W. Kim
S. Rai
R. Sihota
R. Tamis

Absent:

Councillor Bains, Vice Chair
D. Bondar
R. Brar
B. Favaro
S. Keulen
M. Schutzbank
R. Vanderende

Staff Present:

M. Kischnick, Senior Planner
R. Ordelheide, Planner
T. Sandstrom, Planner
S. Ward, Drainage Manager
S. Meng, Administrative Assistant

A. ADOPTIONS**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was

Moved by P. Harrison

Seconded by S. Rai

That the agenda of the Agricultural and Food

Policy Committee meeting of September 5, 2023, be adopted.

Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes – June 6, 2023

It was

Moved by H. Dhillon

Seconded by R. Sihota

That the minutes of the Agricultural and

Food Policy Committee meeting held June 6, 2023, be adopted.

Carried

B. DELEGATION**1. Dr. Woo Soo Kim**

Scientific Director, B.C. Centre for AgriTech Innovation (BCCAI)

**Professor & Associate Director, School of Mechatronic Systems Engineering,
Simon Fraser University**

The Scientific Director and Professor of Simon Fraser University (SFU) Mechatronics provided a brief introduction on SFU's British Columbia Centre for AgriTech Innovation (BCCAI). The following information was highlighted:

- British Columbia's (B.C.) agriculture sector is facing critical challenges such as:
 - climate change adaptation;
 - increasing competitiveness;
 - food security;
 - long-term sustainability; and
 - unfilled labour gaps.
- BCCAI was launched last September. The government initiated the idea of looking at how universities and academic members can help the small and medium enterprises (SME) in B.C.
- There is a sector gap impending growth for BCCAI. This is a centre for innovation who help SME connect to the industry and academic expertise. BCCAI co-design and co-create industrial projects with stakeholders together. The companies, farmers, and growers bring up their needs and the project idea where everyone designs and develops the projects together with SME.
- Government investment from PacificCan and Province of B.C. have invested together a total of \$16.5 million to BCCAI for the next three to five years to support generation of projects and training programs.
- Three primary functions in BCCAI:
 - AgriTech Projects
 - Education and Upskilling
 - B.C. AgriTech Network Building
- Funding structure of agritech projects occur when BCCAI and the sponsor has plans to build up a certain project. The sponsor brings 50% of the budget and BCCAI brings the remaining 50% of the budget to the industry product. The funds for education and up skills are 100% covered by BCCAI. For example, BCCAI launched two training programs: University of Fraser Valley's (UFV) vertical farming and Tea Creek Farm's drone technology. BCCAI funded about \$10,000 for the UFV's vertical farming training program and Tea Creek Farm, an Indigenous innovative farm, which provides drone technology for their land and crop mapping where BCCAI funded their training program.
- Within the next five years, BCCAI plans to collaborate with over 45 new technology projects, create 320 new jobs, support 70 BC businesses, train 1250 highly qualified personnel, including 35 Indigenous highly qualified personnel and invest \$13 million in agritech projects brought to commercialization.
- BCCAI focuses on SME and scale ups such as:
 - Specializing in the agritech sector and connecting relevant stakeholders in industry-driven projects,
 - Focusing on product development, testing and piloting solutions in simulated and real-world environments to be farm-ready and;
 - Providing access to leading stakeholders and end-to-end support throughout the project lifecycle.
- Project budget ranges from \$50,000 to \$500,000 for a year and then involves two to five partners. Proposals are submitted by the SME and have a short duration between 6 to 12 months. BCCAI will match SME's contribution in a one to one ratio. Technology Readiness Level (TRL) ranges from five to nine. Potential for product commercialization are within 24 months. This means in a year, the

project can be finished and then the following year the commercialization can happen.

- Benefits of Collaborating with BCCAI include:
 - co-creation and successful management of agritech projects;
 - increased connections (academia, industry, government, non-profits, associations and Indigenous communities);
 - increased awareness and marketability (BCCAI network, brand exposure, introductions, new potential markets); and
 - significant impact in the agritech sector and expansion of the industry across B.C.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Scientific Director and Professor of SFU provided the following information:

- The industrial project funding structure is 50/50. If there is a \$100,000 project, the total budget from the industry is \$50,000 and then another \$50,000 comes from BCCAI budget.
- Maximum project budget range is \$500,000.
- Initial projects include soil health related and organic fertilizer related. This kind of fertilizer comes from seaweed development and automation related projects like mushroom picker robot that is artificial intelligence related.
- BCCAI is not involved in the companies' technology management. They only engage with project management.
- The industry company who brought up the project owns the intellectual property.

C. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

1. Development Application 7923-0127-00

Robert Ordelheide, Planner

Address: 9280 and 9350 - 168 Street

The Planner summarized the report dated August 23, 2023, regarding Development Application No. 7923-0127-00 which proposes a development that is a 3,290 sq. m. funeral parlour and crematory building, with a 671 sq. m. accessory office building. The following information was highlighted:

- The subject property is designated 'Suburban' in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and designated 'Suburban Cluster,' 'Green Density Transfer,' and 'Riparian Area' in the Anniedale-Tynehead Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP). The current zone is General Agricultural Zone (A-1). The site is subject to Development Permit requirements for Hazard Lands (Flood Prone & Steep Slopes [DP2]), and for Sensitive Ecosystems (Streamside Areas & Green Infrastructure Areas [DP3]).
- Based on observations from nearby development applications, staff note that the five-year active floodplain boundary exceeds the top of bank for some portions of the Serpentine River. Based on this, staff extrapolate that there is a probability that the site's provincial streamside setback will exceed City of Surrey requirements. As part of the application, the applicant's Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) will be required to conduct further analysis in this regard.

- The requirement for a development permit under DP2 (Hazard Lands) will require the applicant to retain a Qualified Professional (Geotech) to evaluate the site and the proposed development from both a slope and a flood plain perspective. This work has yet to be completed by the applicant.
- The proposed development is fully situated within the 200-year floodplain of the Serpentine River, and therefore is subject to City Policy O-55, 'Development within the Nicomekl and Serpentine River Floodplains'. Policy O-55 was adopted by Council in 2008 and regulates development and associated filling within the floodplain.
- The development as currently proposed does not meet Policy O-55 as the proposed use does not align with the Anniedale-Tynehead NCP or OCP land use designations. The applicant is proposing the placement of a currently unknown volume of fill on the site, to depths in areas in excess of 2.0-metres to achieve the 7.0-metre geodetic flood control level required by the Province and City of Surrey.
- The associated filling of the property to support the proposed use would impact flood conveyance and storage capacity of the broader floodplain area, which could result in increased flood risk and hazards to other properties in the floodplain, many of which are in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). This development would also set a precedent for allowing new development to fill within the 200-year floodplain in contravention of Policy O-55.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Planner and Drainage Manager provided the following information:

- The City has a robust lowland drainage model which indicated that the area would be flooded in a 10-year storm event. With more severe storm events, this will activate flood storage. By filling this property in, there is significant flood storage that is lost and that water has to travel somewhere else. Currently in the NCP, it is a suburban cluster which is a very low-density form of development with much less fill required to support it. The proposal would result in much higher intense use and bigger area of fill with more significant impact on lowlands than the NCP designation would anticipate.
- Groundwater elevation is fairly high in this area therefore subsurface storage facilities (e.g., underground detention tanks) to hold stormwater are considered quite challenging at this location.
- Policy O-55 has been in place for over 15 years and is clear about the City's requirements for floodplain development. This application proposal does not abide with Policy O-55 and deviates from the policy. Approval of this application proposal would set a precedent for other future developments requesting significant fill within the floodplain.
- The surrounding environment consists of a mixture of current and future suburban residential neighbourhoods, parkland, and farmland. Staff note that the scale and form of the proposed funeral parlour building appears commercial/industrial in nature which is not congruent with the surrounding environment.

- The Anniedale-Tynehead NCP designates this site as 'suburban residential cluster' which is the lowest of residential densities (2 units per acre gross). This was done in recognition of the site's location in the 200-year floodplain, particularly to reduce environmental degradation and avoid the excessive use of fill required to support more intensive land uses.
- Five Rivers Community Services Society is the developer.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- Impact of filling this property is that it is a catch area for a flood. If filled in, the flood is going downstream. Be more curious to know the 20 or 50-year floodplain versus the 200-year floodplain.
- Perhaps consider lowering the average grade such that storage volume remains same instead of increasing it and having the building elevated. Also design it in a way that during a flood event, water will pass underneath the building and not damage the site with same storage volume.
- Challenge is the design has minimum basement elevation (MBE). The grade all the way up the MBE has fill restrictions. Consider designing them before footprint becomes larger with few restrictions. Consider implementing crawl spaces to make grade low as possible.
- One of the committee members expressed that this application is better if grades were kept low and have storage volume more or less similar as what it was before.
- City has the issue where they can't allow development in 200-year floodplain unless it is built up in order to stay dry and can't allow upstream fill as it will impact agriculture down below and it is determined by Supreme Court of B.C. and Canada.
- City of Surrey policy states you have to build above 200-year floodplain but MBE counts top of slab elevation for slab on grade structure and bottom of floor for crawl space structure. If site is built above crawl space and is above 200-year floodplain, it would qualify. If they allowed the parking lot on the flood plain where it was not filled and there is a flood event, the funeral would be cancelled.
- The site is high enough upstream so when we do have floods, we still have gravity drain which goes south towards 88 Avenue and pump is not needed there. The amount of water seen in the past years was just grassland pastures which affected productivity more by beaver dams and tree removal than the fill amount. The effect downstream is not as substantial where farms are at the bottom of 176 Street where the water ends up.
- The problem is they cannot allow upstream development to displace water all the way down.
- Consider building a big detention tank. The tank can go partially under the parking lot, so the fill does not come in. The tank will be waterproof and still have capacity once the flood comes.
- Concerns are the deviation from Policy O-55 and negative impact for the ALR lands downstream. Consider in 20 years where upstream will be developed. There will be a need on a regular basis for storage capacity. Do not think the storage facility should be located at this property and can be relocated elsewhere in Surrey.

- If the applicant wants to propose storage facility here, they have to explore other options and provide more storage volumes which will demonstrate if they can have the pre and post storage volumes currently. Currently, this does have negative impact for agricultural downstream.
- It does not fit with the surrounding environment. Recommend different architecture.
- This may not be a bad site for the funeral parlour if they resolve the issues stated and demonstrate a need for it.

It was

Moved by R. Sihota

Seconded by R. Tamis

That the Agricultural and Food Policy

Committee recommend that the General Manager of Planning and Development refer the Development Application 7923-0127-00 back to staff to work with the applicant in order to develop a plan to mitigate the impacts of displacing the storage capacity on this property and the 200-year floodplain and eliminate the damage that may occur to the agricultural lands downstream.

Carried

2. Development Application 7922-0381-00

Tanner Sandstrom, Planner

Address: 17188 - 48 Avenue

The Planner summarized the report dated August 28, 2023, regarding Development Application No. 7922-0381-00 which proposes a Development Variance Permit to reduce the front yard setbacks of the General Agricultural Zone (A-1) from 30 metres to 9 metres. The following information was highlighted:

- The existing barn has been used for storing farm equipment. The building permit was applied in 2003 and issued in 2004 which stated secondary use is prohibited. There is currently a caretaker suite inside the existing structure which was not recorded previously. The applicant divulge to the planner at the last minute which poses issues as it is non-conforming from 2004 up to present day with the property being converted to a livable space. The site also has code compliance issues as it was originally a farm building and now it is violating the building code with the addition of a caretaker suite. This issue needs to be resolved and rectified prior to the proposed variance moving forward.
- Owners are a family run business that has been operating for 20 years that primarily farm and sell blueberries over 18.5 acres of land. The applicant requires a Development Variance Permit (DVP), to reduce the minimum front yard setback for an agricultural building from 30 metres to 9 metres. The proposed variance will be protecting farmland by allowing the owner to retain more blueberry plants and not being forced to remove any with a smaller setback. The farm operation employs one full time employee and four part time employees, not including the owners, that farm and process the blueberries throughout the year.

- This application was brought forward to Environment and Climate Change Committee to inquire about the need of any additional environmental protection. It was shown through their site plan that the barn is located far away from the impact zone, so a QEP summary letter was not needed.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Planner and Senior Planner provided the following information:

- Red dotted line following the dyke in the subject site aerial photo is the streamside area.
- Existing building is little more than 9 metres setback.
- City of Surrey's requirement of having setbacks of 30 meters are bit outdated in terms of farm buildings.
- Initially the issue for this application was the setback variance then turned into an issue regarding usage of the property which could be either rezoning or an application to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for non-farm residential usage.
- The existing structure of the farms shed application came in 2003. The owner applied for DVP after the fact. Before construction, the applicant did a revision that warranted a DVP to reduce A1 zone from 30 meters to 12.2 meters.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- If the intended use is for produce storage, it does not need as much of a setback. Instead of having it under a barn, the applicant can put it under a Comprehensive Development Zone (CD), which designates the use as opposed to leaving it as a blanket barn where it could potentially be converted for poultry use later.
- Frontage of the existing building is 9 metres which is close to 27 feet. It used to be 50 feet and suggest it should be the minimum requirement if applicant is asking for that variance.
- There has to be a resolution to the existing building first. As the committee has now seen this application, a discussion to make a recommendation on the setback variance once outstanding issue is resolved is possible.
- One committee member expressed that they prefer not to have the committee police every non-conforming building and let staff resolve those applications and suggest the committee to only comment on new applications.
- The committee has approved smaller variances in the past to save farmland.
- Applicant can reduce the variance to a setback of 50 feet and make the barn smaller.
- Existing building is close to 11 metres.

It was

Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by R. Sihota

That the Agricultural and Food Policy

Committee recommend that the General Manager of Planning and Development support Development Application 7922-0381-00 on the condition of a minimum 10 metres front yard setback and for intended use of produce storage only upon resolution of outstanding issues on the property.

Carried

3. Surrey Major Zoning Bylaw Update Process
Markus Kischnick, Senior Planner, City of Surrey

Senior Planner provided a brief overview of the intent, scope, process, timelines, and key milestones of the Major Zoning Bylaw Update. Also, he went over the agricultural zone to gather input from the panel members in order to have this better align with the ALR/ALC Regulations which will form part of the Zoning Bylaw Update Process. The following information was highlighted:

- Surrey's current Zoning Bylaw No. 12000 was adopted in September 1993 and is now 30 years old. The bylaw is now overdue for a comprehensive review and update in keeping with directions of the forthcoming OCP update and to meet current and future needs.
- Ensure zoning bylaw is up to date within Surrey and to match provincial policies with other policies that are present.
- Three major objectives to be focused on when updating the zoning bylaw:
 - Align with directions of OCP, secondary plans and other city and provincial initiatives.
 - Modernize existing zones, create new zones and update regulations to reflect current and future needs of the city.
 - Improve effectiveness, clarity, and ease of interpretation through visualization.
- The five phase plan update process will be a multi-year plan with the initial step to clarify and clean up the bylaw. The phases following the pre-phase will be exploring ideas, drafting content, refining it, completing the review and implementing it. The expectation of the zoning bylaw was brought forward around the same time as the OCP. Those two should in terms of providing the overall objectives and zoning bylaws with the implementation OCP objective policies.
- The Zoning Bylaw Update objectives include:
 - Provide consistency with provincial regional legislation such as ALC, ALR and emerging best practices.
 - Update zones and zone regulations to increase responsiveness to industry needs and minimize the need for new Comprehensive Development (CD) zones.
 - Support emerging OCP goals, and align bylaw with relevant regional and City plans, policies, farm protection Development Permit Areas (DPAs) and strategies such as Surrey and Metro Vancouver Agricultural Strategies.
- At the current stage, a discussion of possible future policies with the committee can be made. Following this stage will be a discussion on topics that require committee feedback before the later stages of drafting, review and refinement, final review and adoption and monitoring.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- Include Temporary Farm Workers Housing Policy, Siting & Size of Farm Uses, and Agri-Tourism Use Review with addition of education on eco-dairy and Anderson's Milking Theatre to the section of Agricultural and Food Policy Committee (AFPC) Priorities For Review.
- Don't think community gardens and urban areas is a major topic for the committee to discuss on.
- Each item mentioned for policy zoning review is quite important. Maybe focus one policy at a time in every other meeting and the committee spend time to provide feedback.
- Add policy based items on the agenda as needed.
- Planning staff to provide further work plan items for the committee to discuss in the future.

4. Zoning Amendment for Primary Processing in the ALR

Markus Kischnick, Senior Planner, City of Surrey

Senior Planner discussed a potential text amendment to the Zoning Bylaw to extend the definition of "primary processing" on farms to include milk processing etc. in keeping with ALC regulations in the ALR.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- Should expand the definition of "primary processing" to include dairy.
- When on-farm processing was considered, for horticulture uses the ability of a dairy farm producing ice cream, yogurt and cheese was excluded from Surrey's zoning definition.
- It was recommended by a committee member that dairy processing be included while more intensive uses such as poultry processing plants be excluded from on-farm processing (at this time).
- It was noted that 50% on-farm product processing is a requirement in ALC regulations and avoids agricultural land to be turned into industrial or commercial land.
- Prefer to see less red tape as farmers are focused on delivering. Farmers are stranded between some legislation and the changing farming industry.
- Request to discuss future housekeeping amendments to the zoning bylaw related to further primary processing definition changes at the committee and do a more thorough dive into what should or should not be permitted as primary processing.

D. INFORMATION ITEM

1. Farm Use Structures in the ALR Guidelines

Markus Kischnick, Senior Planner, City of Surrey

Senior Planner provided a brief overview of the ALR guidelines pertaining to farm use structures as information.

E. OTHER BUSINESS**1. Surrey Farmers Institute Application**

Optional for committee members to apply and join the Surrey Farmers Institute.

2. 64th Avenue Approach to Two Bridges

Councillor Bose, Chair, advised the following:

- Consider the committee to have a discussion regarding road inspection and improving the approach bridges within farm roads particularly on 64th Avenue. It is a real problem for transportation of farm equipment.
- Challenge is the bridge was built on piles and the embankments are built on styrofoam which is still settling in.
- Should discuss a potential policy for maximum allowable displacement of the bridge and embankment.
- Suggest staff to invite transportation to the committee and discuss more in depth on this issue.

F. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agricultural and Food Policy Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, October 3, 2023 with proposed location in Meeting Room 125 A and B at Surrey Operations Centre.

G. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by R. Tamis
That the Agricultural and Food Policy

Committee meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The Agricultural and Food Policy Committee adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Bose, Chairperson