

Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2012
Time: 8:58 a.m.
File: 0540-20

Present:

Cllr. Linda Hepner - Chair
D. Arnold
M. Bose
P. Harrison
M. Hilmer
J. Sandhar
B. Sandhu
K. Thiara
S. VanKeulen

Regrets:

T. Pellett, Agricultural Land
Commission

Staff Present:

R. Dubé, Engineering
C. Stewart, Planning & Development
M. Kischnick, Planning & Development
L. Anderson, Legislative Services

Environmental Advisory

Committee Representative:

B. Stewart

Agency Representative:

K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture

Guest Observers:

Mike Lalonde, President, Blue Pine Enterprises
Bruce McTavish, McTavish Resource & Management Consultants
Grant Rice
Michael Steele

INTRODUCTIONS

ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

It was Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by B. Sandhu
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee appoint Mike Bose as Vice-Chair for the 2012 calendar year.
Carried

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee appoint Stan Van Keulen as the Agriculture and Food Security
Representative to the Environmental Advisory Committee for the 2012 calendar year.
Carried

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was Moved by S. Van Keulen
Seconded by M. Bose
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the December 1, 2011 meeting.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Anniedale-Tynehead NCP - Buffers Adjacent to ALR**

Preet Heer, Planner, was in attendance to provide an update on the development of the Anniedale-Tynehead NCP and to report the results of the recent Public Open House.

Background information pertaining to Policy O-23 and the enforcement of ALR buffering throughout the city was reviewed. A PowerPoint presentation, with detailed drawings of the proposed densities and alternate ALR buffers for the Anniedale-Tynehead NCP area, was provided. Comments were as follows:

- The highest densities will be along 96 Avenue because it will be along a future transit route, and in addition, have good access to highways, and regional shopping.
- Key is to keep the ownership of the buffer in a strata or park like form rather than a single family residence. If it is strata it is part of their landscape, if a minimum 20-metre buffer, then the Parks' department will maintain it.
- As noted at the recent buffer workshop (which included the Committee) Parks' staff reported that for any buffers 20-metres or wider they would look at making those areas a habitat corridor.
- In addition to buffering adjacent to ALR, the plan also looks to preserving the ridge line where there are large stands of beautiful trees.
- Further to the last presentation to the Committee, we have been looking particularly at the area south of 92 Avenue where, because of the steep grades, the intended road would need to be moved to follow the contour of the hill and moved closer to the bottom.
- One advantage to moving the road is that it would take away the need for one of the proposed pump stations. However, moving the road further to the south means there will be some development closer to the ALR edge. The plan would recommend that units closer to the ALR be larger units (to keep densities down), and units closer to 92 Avenue be smaller. Overall the site density would remain at 10-15 units per acre (gross).
- It is important to note that the future buffer area, at 30-metres wide, would be twice as wide compared to the standard 15-metre buffer currently required with lower densities.
- An analysis was done to look at the depth of area and whether two rows of townhouses could be accommodated (a cross-section with a comparative to the other edge and the varying buffers was shown).
- The buffer will range between 30-metre and 130-metre moving east to its widest point.
- If there is the minimum 20-metre buffer given to parks, it is likely that it will need to tie in to something at either end. There is a trail system that runs along the top, and there may be a pond and/or walking trail.
- Although there is a definite increase in densities for this NCP with more multi-family than any other NCP, the servicing and infrastructure costs will also be the highest, which means the DCCs will likely be 150% higher than anywhere else in Surrey. These costs make it challenging for immediate development.

Concerns were expressed with regard to complaints of noise such as canons and/or wind machines, etc., as well as odours that will come from the farms below and travel upward. It was reported that triple glazing would be required by way of a restrictive covenant and that odours are very much a perception issue that may be calmed by way of the significant buffering that will be in place. Comments continued:

- There is still the question of densities and the trail(s), etc. It is certainly preferable that a trail so close to the ALR lands be prohibited.
- It has been noted that the main trail will be within the top portion of the lands and that the buffer area below be stipulated to remain as passive recreation.
- Even for the townhouse area, it would be preferable not to have a path there as there will still be the spray drift issue and the perception caused from that.

2. **Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Program - Panorama Ridge At-Grade Crossings Elimination**

Staff provided information regarding the proposed twinning of Colebrook Road from King George Boulevard to approximately 132 Street. The works are part of the RBRC Program and will improve safety and capacity for movement of goods. A PowerPoint presentation, which included a number of diagrams and photos, was provided and comments were as follows:

- The Roberts Bank Rail Corridor is a 70 km rail line connecting Deltaport (Canada's largest container facility and major coal terminal) with the North American rail network.
- The Panorama Ridge project will twin Colebrook Road from 131A Street to King George Boulevard include upgrades/removal of 10 at-grade railway crossings.
- Benefits of Panorama Ridge improvements:
 - improve traffic safety;
 - eliminate the necessity for train whistling;
 - increase efficiency and safety of rail operations; and
 - accommodate the anticipated growth in trade-related traffic.
- The impact to the ALR will be the removal of approximately 15 ha of ALR land north of the existing Colebrook Road. Essentially looking at a 50m swath (which includes the ditch) taken out of the ALR to create the road and relocate the ditch.
- Most of the proposed twinned Colebrook Road is on land owned by City of Surrey Parks. The new road will be much like the existing Colebrook Road, a rural collector standard section through the ALR.
- Traffic on Colebrook Road south of the tracks will be unable to travel west past 131A Street. Vehicles must travel west towards King George Boulevard to connect to the new Colebrook Road (north of the rail tracks).
- The meandering in the channel is part of DFO's work.
- Nothing, at this stage, is finalized.
- The P.ag. for the project has pointed out that discussion with the affected property owners will be necessary in coordinating the work carefully.

Comments from the Committee were requested for inclusion with the application to the ALC. The Committee commented as follows:

- As there will be a lot of agricultural land lost out of production, mitigation measures from the City for the loss of that land should be considered.
- The ditch relocation may offer opportunities for irrigation and for improved drainage.
- Look at how this can help potential incubator farms on Park lands north of Colebrook Road.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded by D. Arnold

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee recommends to the G.M. Engineering that mitigation opportunities should be considered such as better drainage/irrigation and that someone be hired to ensure the disruption to farm traffic on the agricultural lands along Colebrook Road is eliminated, or at the very least minimized during construction.

Carried

- The main concern is that some of the residents, unaware of what is going on, received correspondence regarding the project directing them to contact the ALC with their comments. It was felt that the public information meetings were not well publicized.
- It would be good if there was some form of more direct consultation for the property owners.
- These farmers are concerned that they are going to lose the sales from their stands. They are raising real concerns of what the loss of revenue from their business will be. This project does have a very serious effect, not just on agricultural land, but on the framework of what those people have along that road and the lifestyle that arrives from that.

Discussion ensued with respect to the Chair and Vice Chair documenting the comments made in a letter to the ALC for their review and consideration. It was suggested that the letter note that there will be a further public consultation opportunity for the landowners affected by the project of which additional comments may be received. It was further suggested that the attendance of an ALC representative to the public consultation meeting would be beneficial.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Proposed Temporary Use Permit (TUP) and Non-Farm Use Within the ALR 19070 51B Avenue**
File No. 7911-0213-00

S. Long, Associate Planner, was in attendance to review her memo, dated January 6, 2012, regarding the above subject application and to receive feedback from the Committee. Comments were as follows:

- The land is located within the ALR in Cloverdale on 51B Avenue, west of 192 Street, and designated Agricultural in the OCP.
- The OCP designation surrounding the property is also Agricultural to the south, west and east and Canadian Pacific Railway and Industrial use to the north.
- The subject site is 4.9 acres, of which the front 3.5 acres are currently dedicated to a landscape construction and fencing business, operating since 2006 (initially under a home based business license), and predominantly occupied by surface parking, outdoor storage and farm buildings that have been converted to industrial and office use. The remaining 1.2 acres were recently converted from fallow land to a gravel pad for a nursery operation.
- The operation expanded quite quickly and as a result, since 2009, both the City and the ALC have been aware of the current non-farm use on the site and have begun by-law enforcement.
- The applicant has applied for a TUP and Non-Farm Use in order to continue their landscaping business for up to 3 years while they find a suitable site to relocate their business.
- The applicant hired an agrologist to make recommendations on how to convert the site back to agricultural use (attached to the information provided to the Committee) over a 3-year period. Two recommended options were to convert the site into a nursery operation, or to convert the site into a u-pick blueberry farm. Of the two options, the nursery appears to be most feasible.
- The intent of this application is for a nursery, with retention of the existing buildings.

The business plan for the conversion of the site to a nursery, as prepared by the consultant, McTavish Resource & Management Consultants, was reviewed. It was noted that the applicant has begun to convert the rear 1.2 acre portion of the site and intends to convert the eastern portion of the site by spring 2012. Staff further noted that the applicant recently submitted a revised plan to accelerate the original full conversion to a nursery operation from 2016 to 2014 and that an earlier timeline for the company to vacate, find a new site and convert the land faster than this, without severe financial hardship, would be difficult.

The Committee commented as follows:

- The business is non-conforming and seeking approval after the fact.
- To convert the site to a container nursery means there will be gravel brought in. It is important, if approved, that proper geotextile barrier material be used under the gravel in order to facilitate the remediation of the land when taking gravel out to reclaim.
- Potential options could be:
 - Recommend denial of the application and request there be a significant financial bond held until the gravel, etc. is removed and the property has been returned to a farmable state; or
 - Recommend conditional approval of the TUP to include any/all of the following:
 - a legal survey, a copy of which to be provided to the City and neighbouring properties (to help reduce any conflict);
 - a financial bond posted to the City to cover the cost of the removal of any gravel and asphalt that hasn't been removed;

- notification to the City's Licensing department that there be no additional business licenses issued for the business unless it is on land outside of the ALR;
- to meet the criteria, as provided in the information to the Committee, to use the same sand and gravel materials to convert the lands as that which was used for the portion done in 2011, including a geotextile barrier under the gravel.
- a fill permit, possibly to include monthly reports submitted from a P.Ag. to confirm meeting the standards as identified in the plan; and
- a cedar hedge along the property line.
- The intention is to grow potted plants, etc., and sell any excess to trade retailers, not the public.
- Not opposed to the transition time and allowing time to clean up the site and find a new move to a new site, but not in favour of a TUP as that allows another 3 years, which could lead to an extension for a further 3 years, etc. It is tricky because there needs to be time allowed for the transition. This is a business that has to continue, they just need time.
- At the same time, it is a business that didn't follow the proper steps. A bond should be in place to ensure remediation of the land.
- There should be testing of the soils beneath the existing asphalt to make sure there isn't any contamination.
- The ALC have the mechanism for substantial bonding in this regard.

It was

Moved by D. Arnold

Seconded by S. Van Keulen

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee recommends to the G.M. Planning and Development that instead of a Temporary Use Permit for Application No. 7911-0213-00, the Applicant apply for the development of a ground based nursery and be granted:

1. an extension of time, with sufficient financial bonding to remediate the land (including ground water testing), so as to make the land suitable for a nursery business; or
2. transitional time, without interference from By-law Enforcement, to allow, under the ALC guidelines for bonding, for the placement of a nursery business.

Discussion ensued:

- The nursery is an agricultural business. Anything trucked in requires an ALC permit. The placing of the gravel for an ALC application requires a permit.
- The information received doesn't suggest there is any need to go to the ALC other than an application for the gravel. Using the TUP allows the City to control the use of the site more and monitor requirements of the Permit.
- Without the issuance of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP), the site would remain in contravention of the bylaw for the non-conforming (non-farm) use of the Site.
- The mechanism of the TUP is the optimal method to allow the City to set the time frame for business to move to another site (up to 3 years), allow the collection of securities, and specify the conditions under which the existing non-farm use will be transitioned off the site.

- Part of the AFSAC recommendation should be that Council that no extensions to the TUP will be granted. Council can take this recommendation into consideration and decide which way they want to proceed. If the applicant does come back, it will be noted already that an extension was not recommended.
- We want to provide the application enough time to transition smoothly so as not to interrupt the viable, operating business that is currently there.
- It is a positive move for agriculture, reclaiming land and turning it into something viable.

Before the motion was put:

It was Moved by M. Hilmer
 Seconded by M. Bose
 That the Agriculture and Food Security
 Advisory Committee recommend that Council approve the Temporary Use Permit for Application No. 7911-0213-00, without an option for extension or renewal, and that Council recommend to the Agricultural Land Commission that suitable bonding be imposed to ensure the land remediation process is carried through in an appropriate time frame.

Carried

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

F. CORRESPONDENCE

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

It was Moved by M. Bose
 Seconded by P. Harrison
 That the Agriculture and Food Security
 Advisory Committee receive information items G.1, G.2 and G.3.
Carried

- 1. Rezoning in ALR**
1122 & 1144 – 184 Street
 File No. 7910-0135-00

Memo from Natalie Androsoff, Planning Technician, dated January 3, 2012, regarding the above subject line.

- 2. Anaerobic Digestion Discussion Paper - Local Government Stakeholders**

Ministry of Agriculture discussion paper, dated December 15, 2011, regarding Draft Minister's Bylaw Standard on Anaerobic Digestion.

3. Cogeneration Discussion Paper - Local Government Stakeholders

Ministry of Agriculture discussion paper, dated December 15, 2011, regarding Draft Minister's Bylaw Standard on Combined Heat and Power (Cogeneration).

4. Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Update

A brief update from the EAC meeting of November 23, 2011 was provided. Of note, a presentation from Yalda Asadian, Parks Partnership Coordinator, on community gardens in Surrey, was received. It was reported that there are currently 11 community gardens in Surrey, five of which are on Parks' lands. At present the City is providing funding for the initial capital costs, which allows for one new garden per year. A motion was passed by the EAC requesting that Council set aside a pool of funds to assist with start-up costs of new community gardens.

It was Moved by M. Hilmer
Seconded by D. Arnold
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee receive the Environmental Advisory Committee update.
Carried

H. OTHER BUSINESS

The Agenda was varied.

2. Industrial Use of ALR Lands

Concerns relating to the industrial use of ALR lands at specific locations were noted. A follow-up from staff will be provided in due course.

M. Hilmer left the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

1. 2012 AAC Work Plan

The 2012 Work Plan was provided for review and/or update.

It was noted that one of the 2012 goals for the Committee is to establish a food security policy which, among other things, will include a review of the Metro Vancouver Regional Food Strategy as it relates to Surrey, and help to provide a clear definition of what food security is.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee will be held on **Thursday, February 9, 2012, in Executive Boardroom.**

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by D. Arnold

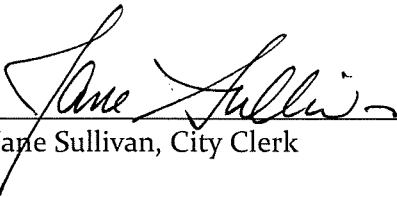
Seconded by M. Bose

That the Agriculture and Food Security

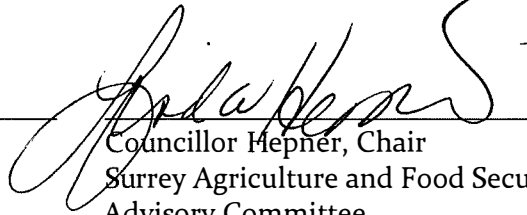
Advisory Committee do now adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:20 a.m.



Jane Sullivan, City Clerk



Councillor Hepner, Chair
Surrey Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee