

Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

Present:

M. Bose – Vice Chair
D. Arnold
P. Harrison
M. Hilmer
J. Sandhar
B. Sandhu
K. Thiara
S. VanKeulen

Regrets:

Councillor Hepner
T. Pellett, Agricultural Land Commission

Staff Present:

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

**Environmental Advisory Committee
Representative:**

B. Stewart

Agency Representative:

K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture

It was requested that the agenda be varied to move Other Business item H.2, Flavours of Surrey Update, to Outstanding Business item C.1.

It was

Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by D. Arnold. Hilmer
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee Agenda for the May 10, 2012 meeting be amended, as requested.
Carried

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was

Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by M. Hilmer
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the April 5, 2012 meeting, as amended.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Grant Rice**

Grant Rice was in attendance to speak on the subject of siting and size of residential uses in the ALR. A PowerPoint presentation, which included photographs of the current ALR landscape, was provided. Comments were as follows:

- It is felt that the recommendations that the City is contemplating may not go far enough to ensure the future sustainability of our farmland.
- With limited or no local government bylaw regulation on residence size and placement of residences in the ALR, future farming capability of the land may be minimized.

- By making farms unaffordable for future generations we have done a disservice to ourselves. Can a new farmer afford to buy a property that has a multi-million dollar house on it? (Examples of allowing no restrictions on house sizes and the impact on affordability were shown.)
- The Delta land use inventory (LUI) demonstrated that 20% of the farms that have large estate type homes on those properties were not being farmed.
- Criteria should be established to minimize the impact of residential uses on the current and future farming capability of land in the ALR while not unduly limiting the residential needs of farmers. These criteria include:
 - Do not restrict agricultural activities;
 - Direct the largest residential uses in a community to non farming areas; and
 - Minimize the impact of residential uses on farm practices and farming potential.

In closing, Mr. Grant commended the Committee for the work done in establishing the siting and footprint size and highly recommended a further review of the bylaw to look at residential house sizes in the ALR be considered and that the issue be taken to the public through random surveys, educational seminars and web surveys, to gauge wider community support.

Staff noted that a report recommending Level 2 Criteria of the Ministry of Agriculture Bylaw Guidelines, to form the proposed Agricultural (A-1 and A-2) Zoning Bylaw amendments which regulate the siting of residential uses and restrict the size of the farm residential footprint, has been drafted for Council and is expected to move forward soon.

The Committee commented as follows:

- The presentation is much appreciated and the information will be kept at the forefront going forward.
- Moving forward with the proposed residential dwelling setbacks and footprint size is a great first step; a starting point to build from. Protecting the agricultural land is the primary goal.
- The issue itself was clear that we had to limit the footprint and location. Location was everything. There is too much of a desire to have large estate like homes located right in the centre of the property.
- When you get right down to the Ministry of Agriculture regulations, it is about planning for future agriculture crops. 40 years ago it was lettuce, now it is blueberries, 20 years from now it will be something else.
- We know that there are homes out there that were permitted with fill, etc. and don't have final residency because they don't remove the fill. It destroys the City's drainage plan if they don't remove the fill. This is another reason why the footprint becomes very important.
- With respect to preserving the land for future generations, it is important to keep the land affordable and viable today to ensure there is enough of an incentive for farmers in the future to maintain a vibrant and strong agricultural community.
- In order to be profitable, agriculture needs a lot of investment in infrastructure. Yes, many of those purchasing agricultural land are building larger houses than there has been in the past, and there is a need to put

restrictions on where the house is located, etc., but they are also making substantial investments into rehabilitating the land.

- BC is an expensive place to live. That is the way it is and as part of that, farm land is also expensive.

2. Carrie Baron, Drainage and Environment Manager

Carrie Baron, Drainage and Environment Manager, was in attendance to respond to questions the Committee had with regard to the *Water Act* and water rights. A PowerPoint presentation was provided to review as follows:

- The *Water Act* is the principal law for managing the diversion and use of provincial water resources. Established in 1909, B.C.'s *Water Act* is the primary piece of water management legislation and plays a key role in the sustainability of B.C.'s water.
- The province understands much has changed since 1909 from demand management, flood control, changes in weather, fisheries and groundwater. To identify the overall direction of Water management in the province, they developed the "Living Water Smart" plan.
- Living Water Smart: B.C.'s Water Plan commits to change the way water is governed and managed in B.C. Through Living Water Smart, government committed that by 2012:
 - Water laws will improve the protection of ecological values, provide for more community involvement, and provide incentives to be water efficient;
 - Legislation will recognize water flow requirements for ecosystems and species;
 - New approaches to water management will address the impacts from a changing water cycle, increased drought risk and other impacts on water caused by climate change; and,
 - Government will regulate groundwater use in priority areas and large groundwater withdrawals.
- Modernization of the *Water Act* is seen by government, and others, as an essential part of delivering the *Living Water Smart* vision. It is about making our water laws simpler to understand, communicate, administer and enforce as we respond to current and future challenges.
- The four goals of *Water Act* Modernization are to:
 - Protect stream health and aquatic environments
 - Improve water governance arrangements
 - Introduce more flexibility and efficiency in the water allocation system
 - Regulate ground water use in priority areas and for large withdrawals
- Throughout much of the Province's history, ground water has gone unlegislated or regulated. This situation was improved by the *Drinking Water Protection Act* and *Water Act* amendments in 2001 and the Ground Water Protection Regulation (GWPR) in 2004. The GWPR established standards for drilling, alteration, maintenance, and closure of wells, addressed well identification and required qualified well drillers and qualified well pump installers to register with the Province.
- B.C. is the only jurisdiction in Canada that doesn't regulate ground water use, even where surface water is heavily allocated; regulating extraction and use of ground water is a key to hydrologic sustainability. The *Water Act*

modernization project provides an opportunity to better integrate surface and ground water planning, allocation, and decision making.

- Surface water use:
 - The Province grants water licenses as per the *Water Act*. A Water License does not assure that water will always be available. The License authorizes the diversion and use of a specified quantity of water, if available.
 - In many areas, there is an increased demand for water use and also conflicting needs for the available water whether for drinking water, irrigation, washing, industry or environmental considerations.
 - In Surrey, there are a few homes using surface water as their drinking water source. Most water licenses are for agricultural purposes or historic agricultural purposes.
 - With changing temperatures and changing agricultural crops, there is an increased demand but not necessarily an increased supply of surface waters for irrigation.
 - The province is responsible to follow-up with water licenses and also to investigate potential illegal extractors.
- In 2003, the Surrey Farmers Institute together with the City of Surrey and BCMAFF sponsored a water use survey of lowland farms lands in the Nicomekl and Serpentine river systems.
- This report included assessing surface and groundwater sources for irrigation, crop washing, diversion of Fraser River water, existing water allocations and water quality.
- Of the 15,948 acres of land in the ALR floodplain, 3397 acres being irrigated representing 80% of the 4246 acres having lowland irrigation licenses. 2508 acres (74%) of the irrigated lands consisted of berries and vegetables.
- Irrigation issues:
 - With the improvements to the drainage infrastructure since 2003, many more acres have been planted with berries and vegetables generally requiring more irrigation.
 - MAFF is currently trying to link irrigation with crops based on the 2011 assessment.
 - Irrigation practices are a concern as well. Recently it was found that many farms are irrigating only on weekend causing potential water shortage issues.
 - Water allocation restrictions note that both the Nicomekl and Serpentine watersheds are fully recorded. This was verified in the Golder report which showed the existing 7 day low flow values could not support the currently licensed rates let alone any expansion
 - At this time, no new water licenses are being granted along the Serpentine and Nicomekl Rivers.
- The water below the high tide line is Crown land for which the Province is supposed to manage.
- There have been many problems with derelict systems causing debris or pollution problems in the waterways.
- From the City's point of view, the real concern is the erosion of river banks and from poorly designed systems, which also provides potential hazards to other river users.
- Changes to dyke management and impact on water issues:

- By 2013, the City will take over the maintenance and operation of most dike infrastructure in Surrey. This may have an impact on some past practices in dike rights-of-way and infrastructure installation.
- Potential impacts may include:
 - Irrigation pump houses and proximity to dikes
 - Installation of irrigation pipes through dikes
 - Construction of docks etc adjacent to dikes
- The City will be making sure construction practices meet provincial standards and dikes are being maintained to these standards also.
- Golder consulting has been hired to do an inventory along the dikes to look for things through the dikes that are not known about or not supposed to be there to begin with. Trying to get an inventory of where all these other things are and to ensure there aren't any pump houses on the dike right-of-way.
- Provincial Government reports predict sea level changes for BC. Key factors included in these reports are:
 - Sea level rise projections
 - 2100 and 2200
 - Ocean surge
 - Wave run-up
 - Vertical Land Movement
 - Land Subsidence
- Predictions are 100 years in the future but as the community redevelops and infrastructure is renewed, these factors need to be considered in designs.
- A 1 to 2 meter sea level rise in Boundary Bay may be felt throughout the Serpentine, Nicomekl and Little Campbell River floodplains and into historic urban development areas.
- The City has hired Northwest Hydraulics to look at what the actual potential for sea level rise for Surrey including impact on the river system (will the flood gates be closed more often, etc.). Looking at where the first areas and time frame will be; want to know now in order to concentrate on which areas for upgrades, etc. as a huge part of Surrey could be impacted. The study should be completed later this year.

A brief discussion ensued with respect to a study that was done by Kwantlen University noting that a fairly crucial part of their analysis would likely be regarding the lack of irrigation. It was further noted that the Ministry of Agriculture will soon be providing information on the agricultural water demand, which will be circulated to the Committee.

3. **Stephen Godwin, Environmental Coordinator**

Stephen Godwin, Environmental Coordinator, was in attendance to present on the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS). A brief history of the City's Ecosystem Management Study (EMS) mapping was given and a PowerPoint presentation, reviewing the integration of ecological processes with land use, was provided. Additional comments were as follows:

- EMS link to BCS:
 - Finalized EMS provides:
 - inventory of environmental features/assets;
 - inventory of vegetation structures which support biodiversity;

- delineation of Green Infrastructure Network (GIN); and
- GIN ecosystem valuation analysis.
- Based on EMS inventory, BCS may:
 - identify and quantify biodiversity and wildlife habitat resources;
 - set objectives for species and populations of wildlife(targets);
 - determine habitat criteria such as corridor widths, sites and hubs to maintain biodiversity;
 - ensure target levels of biodiversity conserved; and
 - provide indicators to monitor progress of the Strategy.
- Generally for the ALR it is acknowledged being farmed and that there are vegetation types in the ALR. If there was a forest in the ALR it was mapped as an area of interest.
- It is anticipated there will be a number of proposed infrastructure changes/upgrades.
- Understanding the regional context is critical for effective conservation. Connections to areas outside of Surrey: Langley, Delta and Whatcom County.
- There are a variety of tools and techniques for implementation of the BCS:
 - Private land:
 - Planning tools (e.g. transfer/bonus density, cluster development, DPs)
 - Regulations (e.g. Tree protection bylaw, covenants, permits)
 - Information, education and stewardship
 - Acquisition/dedication
 - Land trusts, eco gifts
 - Public land (City and other)
 - Land Management Policy
 - Negotiations and discussions
 - Parks planning and operations
 - Landscape guidelines
 - Contractor qualifications
 - Both
 - Specifics in neighbourhood plans and zoning
 - Policy in OCP
- Everyone has the responsibility to manage for biodiversity as best as they can. There will be outreach towards members of the farming community to see what they can do for biodiversity (examples were given).
- The selection criteria is underway to select a consultant and then to go forward with a full consultation with everyone (including various committees) and to seek a member from certain committees to be the key point person to represent their committee in developing the BCS. There will also be Shirtsleeve sessions with Council.
- Stewardship initiatives on privately owned ALR land will be voluntary.
- Completion of a draft Strategy report is anticipated for October 2012 with the final Strategy completed December 2012.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**1. 2012 Flavours of Surrey**

Staff reported that funding of \$22,000 for the 2012 Flavours of Surrey event was approved by Council on May 7, 2012. In response, the Committee expressed concern regarding the late confirmation of the funding and, as a result, they may have difficulty securing sufficient vendors for the event.

Although the Committee is keen to continue with the Flavours of Surrey, given the limited time now available to plan accordingly, the Flavours subcommittee will need to meet quickly to reconvene to discuss next steps.

K. Thiara left the meeting at 10:55 am

Staff noted that there is still time to move forward, the City's website is being updated to reflect the Fusion Festival (including the addition of the Flavours of Surrey element) and that agriculture awareness marketing materials are ready for production.

It was
Moved by S. VanKeulen
Seconded by D. Arnold
That, given the late receipt of funding, the Flavours of Surrey subcommittee meet to discuss the future participation with the Fusion Festival event.

Carried.

P. Harrison and J. Sandhar left the meeting at 11:03 am

D. NEW BUSINESS**1. Proposed Rezoning, Subdivision and General Development Permit
19353 - 16 Avenue
File No. 7912-0080-00**

Heather Kamitakahara, Planning Technician, was in attendance to review her memo, dated April 27, 2012, regarding the above subject line. Comments were as follows:

- The site of the subject (37 acre) property is the "Brooksdale Estate", located at the northeast corner of 192 Street and 16 Avenue.
- The property, not located in the ALR, is zoned General Agriculture (A-1) and designated "Agricultural" in the OCP.
- The applicant proposes to subdivide the lot into two lots: proposed Lot 1, 20 acres and proposed Lot 2, 17 acres, which meet the requirements of the zone.
- There are numerous buildings on the property dating back to the early 1930s, including three registered heritage buildings and several other buildings with potential heritage value.

- All of the existing buildings on the site are proposed to be retained on Lot 2. The owners are in the process of retaining a heritage consultant to develop a conservation plan for the buildings.
- The purpose of the subdivision is to allow the Estate to gift the buildings and naturalized lands (proposed Lot 2) to A Rocha, offset through the sale of the remainder of the property (proposed Lot 1).
- The Little Campbell River traverses the southeast portion of the site, and the riparian area located around the Little Campbell River is within the Campbell Heights Southeast Terrestrial Hub, that has been identified in the Ecological Management Study (EMS).
- All of the watercourses and features have fish habitat.

The Committee commented as follows:

- The environmental value and buildings will go to A Rocha, who also have some community shared agriculture on that property (proposed Lot 2).
- There doesn't appear to be any negative impact to this.
- The subdivision for gifting purposes is not contingent on any approval or potential approval for the remainder.
- The proposal is for all of the property to remain A-1 zoned.
- The property is 400m from the ALR.
- Given the seemingly good potential for agriculture, and looking at this property as a potential candidate for inclusion into the ALR as part of the net loss compensation policy for ALR exclusions, the question is would it have the potential to be included in the ALR in the future? The answer would be yes.
- Certainly there may be an opportunity here for Lot 1 to be purchased as an exchange. It is a beautiful piece of property.
- It was noted at a recent EAC meeting that Surrey is falling short of park land, as such, proposed Lot 1 could/should be considered for the City to acquire.
- In the new OCP, these lands in Campbell Valley will reinforce the agricultural designation.

It was

Moved by S. VanKeulen

Seconded by B. Stewart

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee recommends to the General Manager, Planning and

Development, approval of Application No. 7912-0080-00, with the recommendation

to Council that the City purchase proposed Lot 1, to be managed in conjunction with A Rocha of proposed Lot 2, to maintain the current A-1 designation and availability

for future agricultural use.

Carried, with B. Sandhu opposed.

It was

Moved by B. Stewart

Seconded by M. Hilmer

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee refer item D.1, Application No. 7912-0080-00, to the

Environmental Advisory Committee, as information.

Carried

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL**F. CORRESPONDENCE****1. Ban the Cannon - Cloverdale**

E-correspondence dated April 11, 2012, regarding the "Ban the Cannon" request, from Perry and Rene Haddock.

It was

Moved by B. Sandhu

Seconded by S. VanKeulen

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee receive the letter from Perry and Rene Haddock, dated April 11, 2012, as information.

Carried

K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture, reported that the Minister did not agree to ban the canons when he spoke to the group. A letter advising that there needs to be some edge planting work done in the District of Saanich will be sent from the Minister.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS**1. Integrity of the Agriculture Land**

Issues of concern were discussed with Engineering staff prior to the start of the meeting.

H. OTHER BUSINESS**1. Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Update**

An update from the EAC meetings of April 4 and April 18, 2012 were provided as follows:

- **April 4, 2012** - In response to the request from the Intergovernmental Committee to review the issue papers that were deemed to be relevant to the EAC, members reviewed three issue papers:
 1. Establishment of an Energy Systems Engineering program at SFU Surrey in support of a clean energy hub in Surrey;
 2. Pesticide use control; and
 3. Establishment of an Organics Biofuel Production Facility in Surrey.
- **April 18, 2012** - A delegation from the Surrey/White Rock Pesticide Free Coalition, to report that violations of the cosmetic pesticide by-law are not being enforced, was received. It was alleged the wording of the by-law is too

vague, in particular the definition of an “infestation”, and it was requested that certain sections of the by-law be removed.

- A delegation from Deb Jack, Surrey Environmental Partners, was also received. Ms. Jack was invited to speak to the EAC to review the presentation she had made previously to the Finance Committee. Recommendations included:
 1. The City should not accept degraded lands into the inventory under Parks’ jurisdiction, as it costs \$4.50/sq.m. to improve said lands to a useable state.
 2. As current funding for natural areas maintenance is only 15% of what is required, every effort should be made to increase this funding.
 3. The City should set a goal of establishing three more “very large parks” similar to Green Timbers and Sunnyside, starting with a park in the Campbell Heights/Stokes Pit area (Phase 2 of Campbell Heights).
 4. The City should create the position of Environmental Planner, to be filled by a Registered Professional Biologist, to oversee actions and proposals that would have an impact on the City’s natural assets.

It was Moved by M. Hilmer
Seconded by B. Sandhu
That the update of the April 4 and April 18,
2012 EAC meetings be received as information.
Carried

2. 2012 Flavours of Surrey

This item was moved to Outstanding Business item C.1.

At 11:31 a.m. M. Hilmer advised he was leaving the meeting; quorum would be lost.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, May 10, 2012, in the Executive Boardroom.

J. ADJOURNMENT

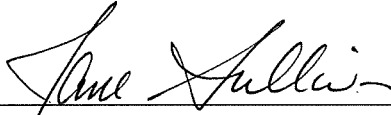
It was

Moved by M. Hilmer
Seconded by S. VanKeulen
That the Agriculture and Food Security

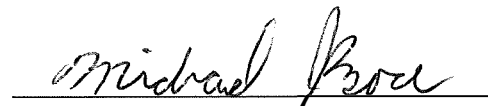
Advisory Committee do now adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:31 a.m.



Jane Sullivan, City Clerk



Mike Bose, Vice Chair
Surrey Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee