

Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2013
Time: 9:01 a.m.
File: 0540-20

Present:

Chairperson – Councillor Hepner
M. Bose
D. Arnold
P. Harrison
M. Hilmer
J. Sandhar
B. Sandhu
S. VanKeulen

Regrets:

K. Thiara
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 Representatives:

K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture

Guest Observers:

G. Rice

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded by P. Harrison

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

Committee adopt the minutes of the March 14, 2013 meeting.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. D. Luymes, Manager, Community Planning Division**

At the request of the Committee, D. Luymes, Manager, Community Planning Division, was in attendance to provide a follow-up on the Regional Agricultural Kwantlen Study that was reviewed by the Committee at the October 11, 2012 meeting.

It was reported that the City of Surrey had responded to the Kwantlen group noting that the Committee's endorsement of the study would be required prior to considering funding from the City. It was further noted that those recommendations outlined in the study that have merit for Surrey have already been covered off or will be under the City's Agriculture Strategy, expected to be received by Council, together with a corporate report, in May, 2013.

Accordingly, the Committee was advised that no further contact has been received from the Kwantlen group. The Committee noted that there would be merit in the City pursuing their own research as it relates to present issues such as pricing people off land because of house size; parcelization of agricultural land; and irrigation. These are issues that can be worked on through policy, etc. through the coming years.

2. K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture

K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the highlights of the Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) conducted in Surrey in 2010. The following was noted:

- Data for the survey was compiled using a windshield survey where researchers literally drove past every parcel in the ALR as well as parcels that were zoned as agriculture or assessed as Farm Class by BC Assessment. In many instances the ALR boundary does not follow the parcel lot lines, which was a challenge at times.
- The data is valuable information for both municipal and regional planning processes and policy development. It is also being used to develop an Irrigation Water Demand Model. Most importantly ALUIs can improve understanding of how agricultural land is used.
- Parcels can have numerous land covers (defined as the biophysical material at the surface of the earth) e.g. natural vegetation, cultivated crops, farm buildings, residential buildings, etc. and up to two land uses (how people utilize the land) including non-agricultural land uses such as residential, commercial or transportation.
- Based on some of the data collected, the ALR in Surrey consists of 9,290 ha of which 93% was surveyed: 53% was farmed (both actively and inactive), 15% was not farmed and anthropogenically modified (modified by humans), and 25% was in a natural or semi-natural state (e.g. trees, shrubs).
- In Surrey, the top three main crop types identified are:
 - forage and pasture (2,362 ha/25% of the ALR, plus another 304 ha outside of the ALR);
 - berries (1,407 ha/15% of the ALR, plus another 8 ha outside of the ALR); and
 - vegetables (585 ha/6% of the ALR plus 17 ha outside of the ALR).These three crop groups comprise 96% of all of the cultivated land in Surrey.
- Data on irrigation was collected and it was noted that 73% (3,636 ha) of the cultivated land was irrigated. Sprinklers were the most widely used system in Surrey, followed by trickle and giant guns. (A brief discussion ensued with respect to the source of the water.)
- Farms with livestock were identified from small to large scale. 254 livestock activities were recorded in Surrey: 40% were equine, followed by poultry (22%), beef (13%), dairy (7%) and llama, sheep, goats, and game birds made up the rest. Some of the livestock were located outside of the ALR. Knowing this information helps in case of emergency evacuation or infectious livestock disease outbreak.

S. Van Keulen joined the meeting at 9:35 am.

- It was noted that the majority of parcels that are less than 1 ha in size are not used for farming, which is typical of the results seen in other municipalities. Generally the smaller the parcel, the less likely it is to be used for farming. Metro Vancouver was interested in how much ALR is available for farming, it was determined that 27% is available and is not currently being farmed and that only one-quarter of available parcels are currently being farmed.

- Parcel size has an impact on the agricultural potential of farmland. Larger parcels usually allow farmers great flexibility on what to produce.
- In terms of land use in the ALR in Surrey, on a parcel basis 55% (5,065 ha) was defined as “used for farming” and had an average assessed value of \$53,500/ha, while properties in the ALR but “unavailable for farming” have an average assessed value of \$1,629,935/ha. This is typical of the results from other LUIs around the province, and indicate why non-farm uses in the ALR are generally not beneficial for agriculture.
- There are four house size categories. For large houses 60% are used for farming, and for estate houses 75% are used for farming. Cross referenced with the BC Assessment database, properties with large residences have higher property values making it less likely for farmers to acquire the land and use it for farming.
- There are 414 parcels in the ALR that do not yet have a residence. If all had a residence added, using the existing average residential footprint, an additional 71 ha of ALR land would be permanently removed from potential production.

Data was shown that highlights the benefits of Surrey's recent amendments for land zoning. ALUI data collected specific to Surrey can be summarized as follows:

- Surrey is already parcelized, and does not need further subdivision.
 - Smaller parcels are underutilized for farming.
 - There is a significant amount of land in the ALR that is not available for farming (approximately 20%) – are more non-farm uses needed?
 - Expansion of farming will require tree cutting and/or land draining (approximately 2,000 ha). Only 3,300 ha is irrigated which will be a challenge because the Province is not issuing any more water licenses in Surrey.
 - Only 3,344 hectares is irrigated, which leaves 1,210 ha of cultivated land, plus 2,465 ha of available land with potential for agriculture that potentially needs irrigation in the future – a total of 3,675 ha.
 - Houses are sometimes not associated with farming.
 - The larger the home, the higher the assessed land improvement value, and the less likely to be available for purchase for a farm in the future.
- Next steps:
 - Ministry of Agriculture will complete the ALUI reports for municipalities in the region and assist local governments in using the data for the benefit of agriculture. All of the completed reports will be available on the Ministry's website <http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/gis>.
 - Surrey will get a copy of the GIS database to use for their own needs.
 - Metro Vancouver will continue to identify parcels not farmed but available throughout the region and survey landowners to identify why the land is not farmed – this will help identify policy options or fiscal tools that can be used to increase actively farmed land. (This survey will soon be publicly released.)
 - MV will also conduct analysis on the regional data set to better understand the status of agricultural land in the region.

In closing, Ms. Zimmerman noted that it is important to remember that the data collected is a snapshot in time and represents what was seen on the properties on

particular dates. Crops change, livestock numbers and types change, etc., so anyone using the data for analysis for planning purposes has to keep this limitation in mind.

The Committee commented as follows:

- At the moment, when we talk about agriculture and if you look at the agricultural economy in the lower mainland or all of BC, every place has to achieve growth, the industry as a whole has to achieve that critical mass - we are not there yet. There are things we can do but enforcing protection of the ALR is critical for the future of agricultural growth.
- We have to make sure we cater to the people existing now. Even with all the studies, etc. that we hear of, the biggest growth we can make is to keep the agricultural industry that we have now.

The Committee thanked Ms. Zimmerman for the thorough presentation, noting that it would be beneficial for the presentation to be received by Council. The Chair requested that Council receive the presentation at the earliest convenience.

It was

Moved by P. Harrison

Seconded B. Stewart

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

Committee receive the presentation from K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture, with respect to the Agricultural Land Use Inventory conducted in Surrey in 2010.

Carried

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Proposed Rezoning and Subdivision Application near the ALR**
16577 Old Mclellan Road
 File No.: 7912-0356-00

D. Nip, Planner, was in attendance to review the memo from G. Gahr, Acting Current Planning Manager – North Division, dated March 26, 2013, regarding the above subject line. Comments were as follows:

- The subject property, which is approximately 150 m northeast of the ALR and currently zoned One-Acre Residential (RA), is located at the southwest corner of Old Mclellan Road and Bell Road in Cloverdale.
- The applicant is proposing to rezone the site from RA to Comprehensive Development (CD) based on the Half-Acre Residential Gross Density Zone (RH-G) to allow subdivision into six (6) half acre gross density lots (ranging from 850 m² to 1510 m²), similar in size to the existing lots to the west and south.
- The gross density of the proposed subdivision is approximately 9.1 units per hectare (3.7 units per acre).
- The proposed rezoning and subdivision complies with the OCP and the West Cloverdale South NCP and City Policy O-23.

- Engineering staff confirmed that the drainage is fine.

The Committee noted the development is within the buffer zone around the ALR and that this development finishes off the area.

It was Moved by M. Hilmer
 Seconded M. Bose
 That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory
 Committee recommends to the G.M. Planning and Development that Application
 No. 7912-0356-00, as presented, be supported.
Carried

2. **Proposed Subdivision**
17267, 17279 and 17243 – 64 Avenue
 File No.: 7913-0013-00

J. Denney, Planner, was in attendance to review the memo from G. Gahr, Acting Current Planning Manager – North Division, dated March 26, 2013, regarding the above subject line. Comments were as follows:

- The applicant proposes to subdivide the three parent lots into 14 single family lots, completing the pattern of development in the area.
- Four of the proposed lots back onto ALR land (Lots 1-4). The applicant proposes a 20 m landscape buffer at the rear of these lots, similar to the recently approved landscape buffer to the east. An additional 6 m "no-build" Restrictive Covenant, also consistent with the pattern of development to the east, is proposed for these lots to create further separation between the ALR and the future homes; City Policy O-23 requires the minimum setback between the ALR and the principal building for lots backing onto the ALR to be 37.5 m.
- In terms of compliance with Policy O-23, the proposal is consistent with nearby developments and generally complies with portions of the Policy, however the proposed lot sizes do not meet the minimum lot size for the outer ring transition area.
- Existing mature trees within the landscape buffer are proposed to be retained to increase the density of the buffer. A 1.8 m tall transparent fence is also proposed along the rear property line.

The Committee commented as follows:

- Buffering has been and continues to be a big problem with properties along the ALR boundary.
- It is recognized that there are Restrictive Covenants registered to the neighbouring properties to this application, however the landscape buffers for those properties have either been planted and taken out or not planted at all (confirmed through Cosmos aerial photographs 2003 to present). These issues have not been addressed. There must be something that can be done to ensure the landscape buffers are put in and stay in.
- It was noted in the past that once the buffering for this parcel and the one at the other end of the group of properties is done, there will no longer be access to

remediate the buffering issues with the properties in between. The remediation of the buffers on the other properties should be done first while there is still access.

- Having a chain link fence between the property and agricultural land is also extremely important.
- There should be a requirement for the buffering to be completed before the Building Permit is issued and that this requirement is conveyed to all departments.

Discussion ensued with respect to the landscape buffers being removed and the securities collected to ensure planting of the buffer is done.

It was

Moved by S. Van Keulen

Seconded M. Bose

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

Committee recommends to the G.M. Planning and Development approval of Application No. 7913-0013-00 with the requirement that the landscape buffer and a black chain link fence be installed prior to the issuance of the building permit.

Carried

3. **Proposed Rezoning and Subdivision Application**

16416 – 88 Avenue

File No.: 7912-0351-00

S. Long, Planner, was in attendance to review the memo from G. Gahr, Acting Current Planning Manager – North Division, dated April 4, 2013, regarding the above subject line. Comments were as follows:

- The subject site is located at the corner of 88 Avenue and 164 Street, within 250 m of the ALR and located within the Inner Transition Ring.
- The applicant is proposing to rezone from One Acre Residential (RA) to Comprehensive Development (CD), based on the Residential Half-Acre Gross Density Zone (RH-G), in order to subdivide into six suburban lots.
- The proposed development complies with the OCP and Fleetwood Town Centre Plan and is consistent with the development of the neighbouring properties.

It was

Moved by S. Van Keulen

Seconded M. Hilmer

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

Committee recommends to the G.M. Planning and Development that Application No. 7912-0351-00 be supported.

Carried

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

F. CORRESPONDENCE

G. INFORMATION ITEMS**H. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURE LAND**

- It was reported that the three properties noted at the March meeting are being actively addressed. An update will be provided to the Committee in due course.
- An email which had been sent out to many of the Committee members noting concerns with respect to the integrity of Surrey's agricultural lands and how non-compliance issues are being dealt with was discussed. A particular property (location provided to staff) was referenced, for which staff reported has been forwarded to Bylaws for investigation.
- Opportunities to report the work the Committee and the City are doing to protect Surrey's agricultural lands and promote local agriculture, including initiatives that may be available within the new Agricultural Policy Strategy, were also discussed.

I. OTHER BUSINESS**1. Flavours of Surrey 2013 Event**

A brief review of the planning that is already underway for the 2013 Flavours of Surrey, as part of the City's "Fusion Festival" July 21st and 22nd, was provided.

A number of ideas were discussed, noting that the hay maze is always popular and having a piece of farming equipment at the location would be ideal. An interactive display, perhaps pertaining to the dairy industry, was also suggested.

It was also noted that Matthew Stowe, a current "Top Chef Canada" finalist and graduate of Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary School, is prepared to attend the event and provide some of his culinary skills in the Chef Tent. He is from Cloverdale and familiar with the local produce for creating some fabulous menu ideas. He is sure to be a main attraction and it will also be a great opportunity to highlight Surrey's agriculture further.

Volunteers for the event were requested. Various shifts will be determined and provided at the next meeting.

M. Hilmer left the meeting at 10:37 am.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded P. Harrison

That the following items be added to the agenda

for discussion:

I.2 Bylaw Fines: Run-off from Rain Events

I.3 Landscape Buffer Considerations

Carried

2. Bylaw Fines: Run-off from Rain Events

A recent telephone call to express concerns regarding the visits received from bylaw officers and subsequent fines for run-off caused from various rain events, including the most recent fine of \$750 resulting from the last rain event, was reported.

The Committee noted that further detailed information was required with respect to the necessity for the on-going fines (e.g. where the run-off coming from, etc.). In response, staff reported that under the City's drainage bylaw, watercourses cannot be obstructed and that the bylaw officers routinely respond to complaints and known issues. Staff will follow up with the Manager, Bylaws, to find out more about the process and how that marries up with the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*, and update the Committee at the next meeting.

3. Landscape Buffer Considerations

Further to the discussion earlier in the meeting (Item D.2) regarding landscape buffers along the ALR boundary, K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture, circulated copies of an excerpt from the "Islands Trust Fund, Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) Annotated Covenant (Revised: January 2011)", pertaining to rent charges and its enforcement, for the Committee's information and consideration.

A brief overview of how the protection covenant is implemented and enforced (and how it would pertain to non-compliance issues with respect to buffers along the ALR edge) was provided.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded S. Van Keulen

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

Committee recommends to the G.M. Planning and Development that the "*Islands Trust Fund, Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) Annotated Covenant, Section 11 - Rent Charge and its Enforcement (Revised: January 2011)*", be referred to staff for consideration relative to agriculture buffering for policy development research; and that the document also be forwarded to the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee as information for potential biodiversity options.

Carried

J. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee will be held on **Thursday, May 9, 2013**, in the **Executive Boardroom**.

K. ADJOURNMENT

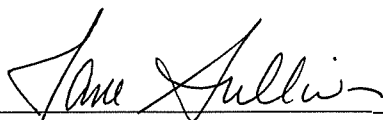
It was

Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

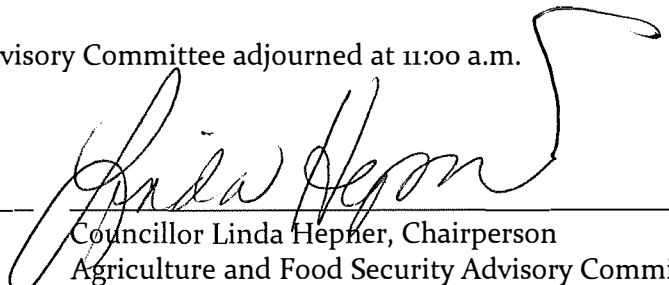
Committee do now adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:00 a.m.



Jane Sullivan, City Clerk



Councillor Linda Hepner, Chairperson
Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee