

Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

Present:

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

Regrets:

S. VanKeulen
T. Pellett, Agricultural Land
Commission
K. Zimmerman, Ministry of
Agriculture

Staff Present:

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

Environmental Advisory**Committee Representative:**

B. Stewart

Guest Observers:

Rick Ketcheson, Semiahmoo Food Network
Emily Robertson
Trudi Smith
Members of the Otter Flying Feathers 4H Club

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 April 11, 2013 meeting.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Kate McMaster**

At the Regular Council – Public Hearing meeting of May 6, 2013, Council passed a motion that Kate McMaster be heard as a delegation before the Committee. Accordingly, Ms. McMaster was in attendance to review the information that was provided regarding backyard hens and to seek the Committee's support to establish a by-law to re-integrate hens into Surrey's backyards in a responsible and healthy manner.

A PowerPoint presentation outlining the objectives of the proposed by-law (including suggested restrictions, maximum number of hens and minimum lot sizes) was provided. Common concerns were addressed and photos of coops, their location within the property and how securely they are built and set up (fully protected from rodents, etc.) were shown. Ms. McMaster noted the following:

- Backyard hens are a growing trend in many major cities.

- A survey of the proposal from the surrounding 2 ¾ acres to my property resulted in 9 support, 1 against and 1 unable to contact.
- The presentation sets out a one-quarter acre minimum property size, however I now feel that there shouldn't be a minimum and that any single family dwelling, not apartment or townhouse, should be an acceptable limitation.
- Smell is the result of mismanagement. If there were complaints of smell, there is a group of us that are willing to volunteer to help with any mismanagement by sharing our expertise.

The Committee commented as follows:

- The information that has been provided was very well done and very much appreciated by the Committee.
- Would like to see the number of hens limited to four.
- Recommending registration is a good idea. If there was ever an outbreak (such as 2004), to be able to locate backyard chickens in a timely manner to ensure that chicken farmers can return to full production as early as possible, could easily be done by having registration.
- They are legal over an acre right now. Permitting backyard hens on one-quarter acre properties would bring them all under an umbrella, easier to locate and know where they are so we can protect our industry and the economy of this city. Our production is vital to the economic industry to this city.

This can be addressed in the bylaw by saying the sale of eggs and manure is absolutely prohibited.

- The recommendation should be for a minimum one-quarter acre properties with a maximum of four hens (approximately 4-6 eggs per week, per hen). Anything over four hens can potentially cause commercial sales of the eggs, which is not the Committee's intention.

Emily Robertson: I think having four chickens to one-quarter acre is limiting for a family that is struggling to provide good food for their family is good. This contributes enormously to the quality of a child's nutrition and a child's life, especially among the families that need it most. I want to put a word in for allowing the option of chickens on smaller properties with all the same restrictions. They have to have a permit and proof that they are keeping them well.

- The regulations for COBC standards for organic production should also be reviewed.
- There needs to be some sort of minimum size.

Vancouver does this on 30 ft. lots. No limit of the number of hens in Vancouver, and only 100 families have applied for permits – on 30ft lots.

- What is the experience in other jurisdictions with unwanted chickens? Vancouver and Surrey have had 8 complaints since January. It is better to manage them and monitor them and know where they are, and have permits to offset some of the cost to the City.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory
Committee recommend that Council direct staff to draft a bylaw to allow backyard
hens, as outlined in the presentation materials received and presented by
Kate McMaster, with a maximum of four (4) backyard hens on minimum one-quarter
acre properties.

Carried

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**D. NEW BUSINESS**

- 1. Proposed Non-Farm Use (Private Sports & Recreation Club) and Transportation Use in the ALR**
3600 King George Boulevard
File No.: 7913-0097-00

R. Gill, Planner, was in attendance to review the memo from R. Hintsche, Current Planning Manager – South Division, dated May 30, 2013, regarding the above subject line. A background to the subject 16 acre property, designated “Agricultural” in the OCP and zoned a combination of A-1 (General Agriculture) and CPR (Commercial Recreation Zone), was provided noting that the property is within the ALR and currently occupied by a driving range and a 9-hole golf course.

Comments were as follows:

- The applicant proposes a non-farm use (approximately 178,000 sq. ft.) in order to develop a comprehensive private sports, recreation and family-oriented social club and associated parking, and whose lands, buildings and facilities will be eventually owned or controlled by a registered Not-For-Profit society.
- The buildings will be generally sited on the higher elevations found on the south portion of the property with the final configuration of the facilities intended to include 2 NHL sized ice rinks, an aquatic complex, court and gymnasium facilities, a wellness centre and various spaces for art, music and dance activities.
- A variety of dining, lounge, banquet and conference facilities, supported by approximately 350 parking spaces (the majority of which will be located in an underground parkade) are also proposed.
- Green initiatives include:
 - A dyke and nature trail along the Nicomekl River;
 - On-site gardens and a greenhouse;
 - Various fruit and nut trees; and
 - Sustainable building design and materials.

The Committee commented as follows:

- To put in complete perspective, the Committee is not looking at how the buildings are going to be. The discussion is land use and the non-farm use and what the net benefit to agriculture is in the proposal.
- Currently the whole site is enjoying non-farm use and the applicant is proposing to keep the land in the ALR.
- This application should actually be an exclusion not non-farm use because the land will be filled and built upon. To allow this as a non-farm use and keep in the ALR would set a precedent that would be ever reaching. There needs to be a net benefit to agriculture; something in exchange.
- Although the land has some of the best soil, it is isolated. Regardless, the application should not be supported as non-farm use. The proposal should be for an exclusion, preferably with the applicant looking at potential 2 for 1 exchange opportunities for consideration.

It was noted that as part of any redevelopment on the subject property, the City's Engineering Department is seeking a road extension to complete the connection of Winter Crescent/Crescent Road through to King George Boulevard. D. McLeod, Project Engineer, was in attendance to address any questions relating to the referenced road extension. A sketch, illustrating the proposed alignment of the road extension (72 ft. allowance) was reviewed. Comments continued:

- Without the support for non-farm use for this application, how would that road be achieved and is that road part of the necessary network in time?

Engineering will not move forward for approval with an application for transportation without there already being an initial application on the land by an applicant.

Ultimately the area identified will be a full moving intersection. Improvements to King George Boulevard are scheduled, however we will have to physically restrict access at Winter Crescent until a safer alternative can be created; there is a real concern for access to the lots if nothing happens with the golf course.

- The Committee understands and supports the transportation issues, however there needs to be the right application for consideration in the first place.
- As presented, the current application cannot be supported as non-farm use and as such, it is suggested that the applicant work with staff in determining if they wish to change their application to an exclusion from the ALR.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded K. Thiara

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

Committee recommends to the G.M. Planning and Development that Application No. 7913-0097-00 not be supported as non-farm use and that further options be examined as there is no net benefit to agriculture with in perpetuity buildings

Carried

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL**F. CORRESPONDENCE****G. INFORMATION ITEMS****1. Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) Update**

An update from the ESAC meetings of, April 24 and May 29, 2013 was provided as follows:

April 24, 2013:

Recommendations were made to Council based on the Surrey Environmental Partners presentation to the Finance Committee which was also referred to ESAC. After considerable discussion, ESAC passed a motion recommending that Council:

1. Proceed to obtain large tracts of land as part of development of the Green Infrastructure Network;
2. Explore various funding models to finance these acquisitions;
3. Work to maintain or enhance the number of natural areas within the city;
4. Commit to adequate staffing levels for environmental personnel, recognizing the pressures resulting from downloading of responsibilities by senior levels of government on to municipalities; and
5. Take a leading role in adopting best-in-class standards for tree replacement on City-owned lands.

May 29, 2013:

D. Luymes, Manager, Community Planning Division, provided an overview of the *Sensitive Urban Infill* study (Charrette report) prepared for the City by UBC Design Centre for Sustainability. The report proposes a long-term vision for accommodating future population and employment growth within existing neighbourhoods in an incremental and sensitive manner while:

- achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions
- improving energy efficiency
- supporting transit improvements
- strengthening community and neighbourhood centres, and
- enhancing parks and green spaces and improving environmental health.

With approximately one-third of projected growth likely to be accommodated by continued build-out and another one-third by densification in town centres, “sensitive urban infill” is one attempt to accommodate the other one-third.

2. **Corporate Report Ro76 – Surrey Agriculture Protection and Enhancement Strategy**
File No.: 6520-20 (AFSAC)

Council Resolution RES.R13-746. Full report available online at:
http://www.surrey.ca/bylawsandcouncilibrary/CR_2013-Ro76.pdf

H. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURE LAND

Discussion ensued with respect to normal farming practice as it relates to the movement of farm vehicles on and off the property and the dirt and/or fuel left on City roads, the fines incurred and the required time frame for washing the roads and the cost to the farmer to have to clean the wheels of the vehicles frequently throughout the day as opposed to once at the end of the day.

It was reported that much of the policy enforcement pertaining to dirty roads has to do with contamination with creeks. In response, it was suggested that the policy be examined for some relaxation (time of day, etc.) for farmers.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

1. 2013 Flavours of Surrey Event

An update of the preparations for the 2013 “Flavours of Surrey” agricultural awareness event, as part of the City’s two day Fusion Festival (July 20-21), was provided as follows:

- Still working on attracting more vendors. The deadline to confirm their participation is June 15th.
- Due to the tremendous success of the maze at the 2012 event, more straw has been ordered in order to accommodate a larger maze.
- Currently putting together the information for the agriculture booth (Farm Fresh Guide, etc.); really need to promote what the City of Surrey is doing to protect agriculture and encourage buy local. Will also be handing out new “Flavours of Surrey” shopping bags.
- Working on various interactive farm activities and trivia (specifically directed at learning about local agriculture) as well as children’s activities such as seed planting.
- The chickens and the BC Dairy Association’s “Dairy in the Classroom” have been confirmed.
- The Safeway “Celebrity Chef Stage” is getting organized. Confirmation of the chefs, including those members of Council that will be participating, is yet to be determined.
- Still need Committee members to confirm their availability to volunteer during the event, particularly for setting up.

J. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, July 4, 2013, in the Executive Boardroom.

K. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by P. Harrison

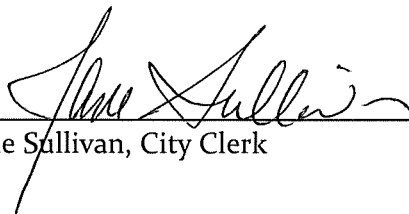
Seconded by B. Sandhu

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

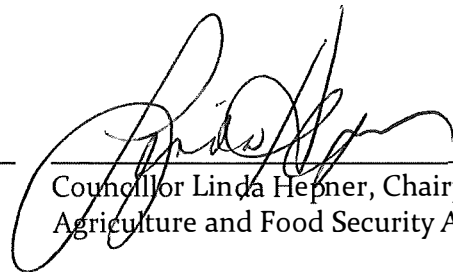
Committee do now adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 10:37 a.m.



Jane Sullivan, City Clerk



Councillor Linda Hepner, Chairperson
Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee