

# *Agriculture and Food Security*

## *Advisory Committee*

### *Minutes*

**Present:**

Councillor L. Hepner - Chairperson  
M. Bose  
D. Arnold  
M. Hilmer  
J. Sandhar  
B. Sandhu  
S. VanKeulen

**Regrets:**

P. Harrison  
K. Thiara  
T. Pellett, Agricultural Land  
Commission

**Staff Present:**

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

**Guest Observers:**

Nav Sekhon

**Agency Representatives:**

K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture

**A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

It was

Moved by M. Hilmer

Seconded by J. Sandhar

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

Committee adopt the minutes of the January 9, 2014 meeting.

Carried

**B. DELEGATIONS****1. Carrie Baron, Drainage and Environment Manager**

Carrie Baron, Drainage and Environment Manager, provided an update on the significant rainfall event that was experienced over the five day period from January 8 - 12, 2014. The presentation included an update on the lowland implementation progress and work plan for 2014. The following was noted:

- During the five day period the rainfall recording system went down and didn't come back on until the second peak of the event.
- Lowlands are designed to flood (photos demonstrating controlled flooding were shown). A number of key flooded areas were surveyed lasting varying amounts of time to flood (Southwest Cloverdale - 30 hours; Grey Creek - 3 days; Fry's Corner - 2 days; upper Serpentine - 2 days; Hookbrook - 3 days), accelerating the areas that staff need to look at again quickly and change strategies to address.
- The bridges are in the process of being upgraded. Spillways were raised considerably in 2009 and more are on hold while Southern Railway replaces a 100-year old trestle. Completing this requires four phases over two seasons. Until all spillways have been raised, the rivers will continue to spill into farmlands earlier than the ultimate Lowland Plan.

- The Serpentine/Nicomekl Lowlands strategy includes controlled flooding locations. These have changed as construction advanced and infrastructure was upgraded. There are still a number of works remaining, including six spillways to be decommissioned, five spillways to be raised considerably, seven spillways completed and two ultimate spillways to be constructed. The hours of spilling are quite a bit less, reducing from 246 to 13. The controlled spilling is still controlled.
- As part of the river modelling, problems were discovered with upstream provincial monitoring values on the Nicomekl River. It is possible that the Nicomekl River is not calibrated correctly. The City has been conducting its own monitoring to calibrate the level gauges with actual river flows. Consultants and Surrey staff were hired to conduct this field work during the rainfall event. As a result of this monitoring process, the City now has more useful information and data from which to work.
- This was the first year for Surrey to maintain the old Surrey dyking district assets. With the mowing program, works included over 90 kilometers of dyke mowed and over 50 trees removed.
- There have been a number of improvements and work put into new signs and gates for the dykes. The dykes are built on private property and maintained by the City of Surrey. Signs clearly labelling "City of Surrey", "No Trespassing" and "No Public Access" have been erected; since January 1, 2013, the City dyking staff has erected 81 access signs, installed four gates, repaired six gates, and removed one fence.
- A seadam maintenance program is underway, which ensures that the seadam gates are working correctly. The last gate that was replaced was in 1979. The new gate installed opens up wider and has better water flow. One other gate was also restored as it was badly twisted.
- The annual maintenance costs reflect about \$0.5 million (photos of pre-cleaning and post-cleaning were shown). It is estimated that approximately 2500 cubic meters of material has been removed.
- A number of planning studies have been done including Fleetwood Drainage, Hookbrook Drainage and Seadam Replacement Feasibility. Some seadams are over 100 years old. At some point, pumps may have to be added to address the rise in sea level. There is a replacement design ready to go when the funding is made available.
- Improving conveyance is also important in order to efficiently get water from the fields to the pump station
- We are also looking at water preservation; looking at ways in the summer to artificially raise the water level to get more water for irrigation.
- When in discussion with senior levels of government some of the issues discussed include sea level rise and the impact to agriculture lands; the economic value: agricultural lands vs. flooding due to sea level rise.
- The irrigation that has been done in the lowlands to improve the lands has resulted in more utilization of the lands.

The 2013 low water conditions experienced in the Nicomekl and Serpentine River systems, and the resultant discussions City staff had with Ministry staff with respect to water licenses, was discussed. It was noted that the number of water licenses allowed has not changed and that illegal activity to access water continues, especially in the areas close to the Serpentine River. Comments continued:

- Looking at producing a brochure for the farming community that outlines how to get a water license properly. Responsible irrigation - to inform that a water license is needed, how to put it through the dykes, etc., and then to tie that information into a resource, e.g. the SHARP program. Efforts will be made to explain the requirement of the water license. The City will not be responsible for policing the water licenses. The City's position is to advise the Ministry when a property has been identified as having illegally sourced the water; it will then be up to the Ministry (MoE) to follow-up. The City is simply looking at the irrigation that goes over the dykes (because that is what makes them fail) and then talking with the farmers about what the options would look like at that time.
- In response, Committee members asked if there was a process or plan to get input from the farmers regarding their specific land requirements. Staff noted that there is quite a lot of discussion, trying to get the information out to the farmers and having individual conversations, e.g. if they need a lot of irrigation water, they may need to accommodate on their own land (dug out to hold water, etc.).
- Ultimately farming should be encouraged. There are many property owners that have a water license but don't use the water, and vice versa. There are lots of farms that need water. It is doubtful that there is any farmer that irrigates for the fun of it; it is a lot of work. In terms of the amount of water they use, it is likely the majority of farmers are very conscious of the water they use; most are on drip irrigation. It is important to provide solutions for the farmers as well.
- It will be important to locate the holders of water licenses that may not be needed anymore.
- The Committee expressed their appreciation to staff for the responsive work that they have been doing, and continue to do, with respect to the dyking system in Surrey. It has been beneficial to have dyking and irrigation together.

## C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

## D. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Proposed Local Area Plan Amendment, Rezoning, Subdivision and Development Permit in Campbell Heights Adjacent to the ALR  
18810 - 24 Avenue  
File No.: 7913-0127-00**

Catherina Lisiak, Planner, was in attendance to review the memo from R. Hintsche, Current Planning Manger - South, dated January 20, 2014, regarding the above subject line. Comments were as follows:

- The applicant wishes to develop the site into two multi-tenant industrial buildings. The following applications are required for this proposal:
  - Campbell Heights LAP Amendment to remove the Open Space Corridors/ Buffers on 24 Avenue;
  - Rezoning from General Agriculture Zone (A-1) to Business Park 2 Zone (IB-2); and
  - Subdivision and Development Permit.
- The West side of the site is located adjacent to the ALR.
- An environmental report indicates that the open space corridor on 24 Avenue would have little or no ecological benefit to wildlife movement in the area, and therefore supports the removal of the buffer on 24 Avenue. The applicant will be required to provide compensation for the loss of the open space corridor on 24 Avenue and is currently exploring compensation options.
- In accordance with the requirement of the OCP and the Campbell Heights LAP, the applicant is proposing to dedicate 20m (66 ft.) of land on the west side of the site adjacent to the ALR.
- The 20m wide buffer will include a 15m (49 ft.) wide landscaped buffer and, at the request of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department, a 5m (16.4 ft.) area outside of the buffer containing a meandering gravel walkway.
- A building setback of 34.4m (113 ft.), which exceeds the City's minimum requirements, is also proposed.

As the drawings were somewhat unclear, the Committee clarified the buffer meets the requirements and that the proposed trail is in addition (and extends beyond) the buffer.

A brief discussion ensued with respect to the fencing between the ALR edge and the trail, noting that a chain-link fence between the ALR edge and the buffer, although preferable, would require equipment brought in that would result in the disruption of some existing natural buffer. It was suggested that a chain-link fence between the trail and the buffer would suffice. In response, staff confirmed there will be a barrier between the proposed trail and the buffer.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded by D. Arnold

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee recommend to the GM Planning and Development that

Application No. 7913-0127-00, as presented, be supported with the reinforcement that the proper buffering will take place early in the development process.

Carried

2. **Proposed OCP Amendment, LAP Amendment, Rezoning, Subdivision and Development Permit Adjacent to the ALR within the King George Highway Corridor Local Area Plan (LAP)**  
14605 Winter Crescent  
File No.: 7911-0165-00

Catherina Lisiak, Planner, was in attendance to review the memo from R. Hintsche, Current Planning Manger - South, dated January 20, 2014, regarding the above subject line. Comments were as follows:

- The proposal is to develop the site into 66 townhouses and 73 apartment units and will require the following applications:
  - OCP Amendment from “Suburban” to “Urban”;
  - King George Highway Corridor LAP Amendment to permit multi-family development;
  - Rezoning from “General Agriculture Zone (A-1)” to “Comprehensive Development Zone”; and
  - Subdivision and Development Permit.
- The west side of the site is located directly adjacent to the ALR and the ALR is also located across the Nicomekl River on the north side of the site.
- The majority of the site is located within the 200m “Outer Ring Transition Area” as identified in the City's Policy 0-23. Although the proposed development does not conform to this policy, on the north side of the site the ALR is separated from the site by the Nicomekl River and the applicant is proposing a 30m (100 ft.) average setback from the edge of the river, thus providing a minimum 70m (230 ft.) separation from the nearest agricultural uses.
- In the ALR on the west side of the site is an existing golf course, which is currently under application for a proposed non-farm use to permit a private sports, recreation and family oriented social club.
- The lands to the east were developed in 2007 as a single family subdivision with similar average setbacks of houses of approximately 30m (100 ft.) from the Nicomekl River.
- The OCP requires a minimum 30m (100 ft.) building setback and a minimum 15m (49 ft.) buffer adjacent to the ALR. In accordance with the requirements of the OCP, the applicant is proposing to locate the buildings greater than 70m (230 ft.) from existing agricultural land within the ALR on the north side of the river, and is dedicating an average of 30m (100 ft.) of land along the river to provide an adequate buffer. The proposed landscaping in the buffer area will be finalized in consultation with the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department prior to the final approval of this project.
- While the proposed development is an in-fill site with site constraints, the requirement to avoid or reduce the number of doors, windows or outdoor patios facing agricultural land, as specified in the guideline, is not being met.

- The Regional Growth Strategy for the Region requires density along transit routes. One of the objectives is to concentrate density along/near King George Boulevard to support park and ride.
- The riparian areas are being addressed by both the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the Ministry of Environment.

Engineering staff noted that concern had been raised with respect to the drainage impacts of this application when it was first reviewed. A thorough study of the site was done and it was found that by raising the lands and tight-lining to the river there was a net benefit.

The Committee commented as follows:

- This application contradicts all of the work the Committee has done to protect agricultural land with respect to densification, buffering, development within the flood plain areas, etc.; it would have a negative impact on agriculture and does not comply with Policy 0-23 or existing development permit guidelines.
- There should be some flood mitigation for this property for the ALR section.
- The plans indicate a row of trees that is a pathway. The trees selected should be beneficial enough to provide a barrier from noise (e.g. canons, etc.).
- The western edge of the development does not meet the development permit guidelines for building setbacks.
- The new draft OCP, which is currently at second reading, has proposed development permit guidelines (DPAs) and policy that allocates larger landscape buffers which are proportional to any increases in density. These DPA guidelines are in keeping with recommendations of the AFSAC, and should be considered for use with this application.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded S. Van Keulen

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee recommend to the GM Planning and Development that Application No. 7911-0165-00 not be supported, as presented, as the application does not meet the City's Agriculture Development Permit Guideline Policy.

Carried

### 3. Ministry of Agriculture Bylaw Standard for Cogeneration at Greenhouses

Further to the delegation from the BC Greenhouse Growers Association that appeared before Council at the November 25, 2013 Council-in-Committee meeting, M. Kischnick, Planning Technician, updated the Committee on the steps that have been taken as a result of Council's action item to the General Manager, Planning and Development, to "*undertake all necessary actions to prepare a report complete with recommendations for consideration by Council regarding the request of the BC Greenhouse Growers Association delegation.*" A brief PowerPoint presentation, which provided an overview of the required steps for the proposed streamlined permitting process and zoning bylaw amendment, was given and the following was noted:

- In May 2013 the Committee expressed general agreement with the concept of cogeneration based on Ministry Bylaw Standards, however a level of concern was expressed regarding these combined heat and power facilities becoming stand-alone operations.
- Surrey is home to a productive greenhouse industry, currently having approximately 44 greenhouses, containing nearly 450,000 square meters of production capacity. With only one inquiry received to-date, the demand for cogeneration facilities is essentially unknown.
- The proposed recommendation is to amend the A-1 "General Agriculture" Zone and A-2 "Intensive Agriculture" Zone to allow for the installation and use of natural gas fuelled cogeneration facilities accessory to greenhouses on all agricultural zoned land.
- The current permitting process was reviewed noting that by removing the zoning portion out of the process would provide a quicker course of action to the ALC, and streamline the procedure so that the applicant can continue directly to Metro Vancouver and BC Hydro for the business licensing and building permits.
- In order to maintain the bylaw with respect to having no stand-alone facilities, some of the standards applied would be: accessory use to agricultural or horticultural greenhouses only; must have farm classification; fuel type must be natural gas; and it should be operating at the maximum combined heat and power.
- A certain amount of setbacks will be required including a 15m (49 ft.) side and rear yard setback and a 30m (100 ft.) setback from front and side yard of flanking street, Note: If the side yard or rear yard abut a Residential lot, any machinery must be located at least 24m (80 ft.) from any lot line and emit a noise level no greater than 60 dB(A) at the perimeter of any lot (this is consistent with existing zoning requirements for other types of generators and machinery in the agricultural zones).
- Following AFSAC review, staff will provide a report to Council, to include a summary of proposed zoning bylaw amendments to permit cogeneration facilities on agriculturally zoned lots in Surrey, for Council's consideration. It is anticipated that the report will receive Council's consideration in March.

The Committee commented as follows:

- The Province is encouraging cogeneration and combined heat and power facilities.

- The ALC naturally will create a policy that allows for cogeneration to fit with greenhouse production, as long as it is tied to the policy that it is cogeneration with a functioning greenhouse.
- Looking at the new permitting process it is possible that Metro Vancouver will want to see this at the building permit stage; air quality and producing emission reports to Metro Vancouver is an important factor in all of this.
- Committee discussed definitions of a functioning greenhouse operation and how to ensure that it is a producing farm. It is up to the *Local Government Act* to define when an operation has ceased or when it is empty for a few months at a time.
- When expanding a business, it is usually done in stages rather than all at once. Cogeneration facilities sound expensive; wouldn't want to see the farmer in any difficulty as the term *temporary* could be more than a week or a month. If the greenhouse or farm were to be shut down for that reason, the farmer likely wouldn't be doing cogeneration as it would not be cost effective; the deciding factor will be economics. Only if the cogeneration continues would there be a problem as it would then be the primary use, which would be a non-conforming use, which is not permitted.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded M. Hilmer

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee recommend to the GM of Planning and Development to bring forward to Council a Zoning Bylaw Amendment to the A-1 and A-2 Zones to permit and regulate Cogeneration Facilities as an accessory use to a greenhouse in Agricultural areas of the City; but without the need for registration of a 219 Covenant associated with the facility or additional Business License applications as part of approval process, in order to reduce obstacles to greenhouse growers when implementing energy efficient technologies, in accordance with *the '2013 Ministry Bylaw Standards for Cogeneration Facilities'*.

Carried

## E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

## F. CORRESPONDENCE

## G. INFORMATION ITEMS

### 1. Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) Update

An update from the ESAC meeting of January 22, 2014 was provided as follows:

- ESAC were unsuccessful in appointing a member of their committee to serve on the Agriculture and Food Security Committee, as the meeting time conflicts with many of the members' work schedules.



- An update was received from the Acting Operations Manager, Engineering, with respect to construction waste (demolition and re-use). It was noted that Metro Vancouver has produced a template bylaw for local governments to adopt for developers and demolition companies to comply with. A draft bylaw for Surrey is expected to be considered by Council in the second quarter of 2014.
- R. Costanzo, Deputy Manager, Engineering Operations, provided an update on City Waste Management initiatives:
  - *Rethink Waste Program* - 2013 was a very successful year for Surrey achieving an increase in recycling as well as a 43% reduction in garbage collection, drawing the attention of other local governments.
  - *Biofuel Facility Procurement Project* - The Federal Government will provide 25% of the capital cost of the proposed recycling facility in Port Kells. The property, adjacent to the transfer station, will have a 25 year lease period. Gas will be produced as well as nutrient compost and fertilizer. The RFP process to three shortlisted proposals is anticipated during February, with a goal to having the facility ready for processing by 2016.
  - *Surrey Residential Drop Off (RDO)* - Surrey's regional facility was a project with Metro Vancouver. The goal now is to have one facility in Metro Vancouver and one facility in Surrey by the end of 2016. Information/location for the potential sites has not been shared at this time.
- The multi-unit organic waste diversion program, designed to shift the cost of recycling to producers, is just starting in the City. A high level stewardship plan created by Multi-Material BC (MMBC), detailing how waste will be dealt with and available options, was presented to local governments. The purpose of the program is not to have to pay for recycling; the producers pay MMBC who in turn pay local governments. The MMBC program commences on May 19, 2014, however key unresolved issues for the City remain, in particular the scope of which materials will not be recycled through MMBC (e.g. glass). There is concern that MMBC and the other producers (not the local governments) will get the economic benefits and that MMBC will have sole control.

## H. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURE LAND

- Concern was expressed with respect to the ongoing vacancy for an ESAC appointed member to the Committee.
- (Location provided to staff) – It appears that a new house is being constructed with more fill than what is allowed for the farm home plate. The fill extends from the road along the side to the back of the property. The building is only partially built, however there appears to be a number of trucks there at any given time (24 hours). The property is located along a non-truck route.
- Copies of a Vancouver Sun article “California drought lifts food prices as we ponder how to share water”, dated February 6, 2014, was circulated.
- With respect to the presentation provided earlier (item B.1 above) from C. Baron, Manager, Drainage and Environment Manager, some discussion ensued regarding the integrity of the dykes, noting that the farming industry will need to deal directly with the

Province in this regard. As such, K. Zimmerman, Ministry of Agriculture, suggested a subset of the Committee can set aside time to discuss an agenda item around irrigation and drought. Interested Committee members will confirm their availability to Ms. Zimmerman.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

J. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee will be held on **Thursday, March 6, 2014**, in **City Hall, 2E – Community Room A**, 13450 – 104 Avenue.

K. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by M. Bose

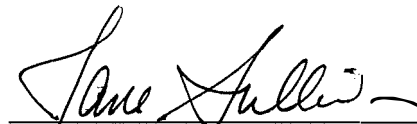
Seconded by D. Arnold


That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory

Committee do now adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

  
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Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

  
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Councillor Linda Hepner, Chairperson  
Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee