



Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

2E - Community Room A
City Hall
13450 - 104 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2014
Time: 9:00 a.m.
File: 0540-20

Present:

Councillor Hepner - Chair
M. Bose - Vice-Chair
K. Thiara
J. Sandhar
B. Sandhu
M. Hilmer

Regrets:

D. Arnold
P. Harrison
S. Van Keulen

**Environmental Sustainability Advisory
Committee Representative:**

B. Stewart

Ministry of Agriculture Representative:

C. Zabek, Ministry of Agriculture

Guests:

C. James, Tourism Surrey
J. Stark, Tourism Surrey
R. Urquhart, KPU
M. Papadopoulos, KPU
N. Ensing
N. Sekhon, Sekhon Farms

Staff Present:

M. Kischnick, Planning & Development
C. Stewart, Planning & Development
R. Dubé, Engineering
C. Craig, Legislative Services
J. Rehal, Bylaws & Licensing

Youth Representatives:

J. Gosal
S. Malhotra

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded by M. Hilmer

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the September 4, 2014 meeting.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Cathy James, Executive Director and Jane Stark, Marketing Manager,
Tourism Surrey, Food and Marketing Program and "Food with Thought"
Initiative**

File No.: 6980-01

In attendance before the Committee as a delegation to provide information on Tourism Surrey initiatives, including the recently launched "Food with Thought" program and the guide to eating local in Surrey, as well as discuss opportunities for collaboration with the Surrey farming community.

The Surrey "Food with Thought" program information is available at the website: <http://foodwiththought.ca>. The following was noted:

- 10 years ago the Circle Farm Tour program was developed by six (6) local communities. The program was also financed by the community as well as Vancouver Coast & Mountain (regional). The program encouraged farms and farm-related products to participate if they met certain prerequisites: have "farm charm", be open certain consistent hours (seasonal), an annual "buy-in", and increase revenues through farm visitations.

- Over four years ago, Tourism Surrey applied on behalf of the City to be part of the Circle Farm Tour program, but was ultimately turned away based on number of farms not meeting the Tour Prerequisites.
- As a result of strong Food and Farm industry in Surrey, as an alternative, the "Food with Thought" program developed. Food with Thought includes local restaurants, cafés, delis, etc.) in the style of a "buy local, eat local" initiative. The Food with Thought program celebrates Surrey's burgeoning culinary culture and its status as an emerging dining destination.
- Food with Thought is a blog-style website which highlights food-related events, partner profiles and recipe suggestions. Videos and storytelling are a main part of the blog. These videos serve to highlight what people experience when they come to Surrey.
- Agri-tourism is a major component of this as there are many farms that are supporting local restaurants. It is important to ask the question of local restaurants, vendors and dining partners: where do you get your food from?
- Local-grown food is a currently a trend. More than ever, there is a huge interest in people wanting to know where their food comes from. It is no longer just about the fancy dining experience but more holistic and experiential.
- The program is in the process of developing a print piece (magazine style with articles, suggested itineraries for visitors, etc.).
- The delegation asked how the Food with Thought program can work with local farmers and specifically the AFSAC. The suggestion of a separate brainstorming meeting, in order to explore more how to morph this program to include local Surrey farms, was discussed.

The Committee thanked the delegation for their presentation and acknowledged the importance of engaging local farmers in Surrey. This is a powerful tourism piece that the Food with Thought program is involved with; there is great opportunity for education (farmers markets, etc.) as well as opportunity to talk to individual farmers and tour local farms that are supplying Surrey's restaurants and cafés. Staff will plan to arrange a meeting with those who are interested in developing this initiative and partnership further.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

1. Bylaws Update

J. Rehal, Manager, Bylaws and Licensing Services, was in attendance to provide the Committee with an update on agricultural land issues discussed at the September 4, 2014 AFSAC meeting. Councillor Hepner asked that this item not be discussed and instead moved into a closed session at the adjournment of the meeting.

D. NEW BUSINESS**1. Proposed Development Variance Permit (DVP)****6661 - 168 Street**

File No: 7914-0240-00; 6880-75

S. Long, Planner, was in attendance to review the memo from R. Gill, Acting Current Planning Manager - North Division, dated September 18, 2014, regarding the above subject line. The following was noted:

- The Applicant would like to build a house on the west portion of the lot, and is requesting a variance to the setback provisions in the A-1 Zone to increase the maximum setback for a single family dwelling in the General Agriculture (A-1) Zone from 50 metres to 173 metres, as well as increase the maximum depth of the farm residential footprint from 60 metres to 183 metres.
- The unfarmed site is located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and is split east and west. The east portion is approximately 1.6 acres, and the west portion is approximately 2 acres.
- The driveway area is proposed to be included in the farm residential footprint calculation of 2,000 sq. metres. The driveway can be used for farm vehicle access to the west portion of the site.
- The western portion is inaccessible via 168 Street, and a watercourse crossing would be required to access this portion of the site. The Applicant will require approval for the proposed watercourse crossing from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.
- It would be unlikely that a crossing would be constructed solely for farm purposes, thereby precluding farming on the western portion of the property. Due to this unique site condition, the farm home plate policy will not increase the amount of farmable land on the subject site.
- The Applicant is seeking opportunities to partner with farmers and looking for different options for what they can do to bring the land into farming production. The u-pick production would be operated by a second party.

The Committee noted that the resulting farmable area would be significantly reduced. There is already a house site on the property that is further back than the existing bylaw would allow. Relocating the house at the back would make sense relative to farming the front.

It was

Moved by M. Bose

Seconded by B. Stewart

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee recommend to the G.M. of Planning and Development that Application No. 7914-0240-00 be supported as proposed in order to increase future farm operation efficiency, and to increase future farm development and access to all portions of the lot across the parcel splitting watercourse.

Carried

2. Proposed Development Variance Permit (DVP)**17325 - 48 Avenue**

File No.: 7914-0211-00; 6880-75

S. Long, Planner, was in attendance to review the memo from R. Gill, Acting Current Planning Manager - North Division, dated September 22, 2014, regarding the above subject line. The following was noted:

- The Applicant is requesting a DVP to increase the maximum setback for a single family dwelling in the General Agricultural (A-1) Zone from 50 metres to 60 metres, and increase the maximum depth for the farm residential footprint in the General Agricultural (A-1) Zone from 60 metres to 65 metres.
- The site is located in the ALR and within the 200 year floodplain, and is currently a blueberry farm with a single family house located at the southwest portion of the site.
- The Applicant would like to build a house on the southeast portion of the lot. However, due to the location of a water well (used for irrigation and not residential) and the expense to relocate that well (approximately \$175,000), the Applicant would like to locate the house *behind* the well. As the house cannot be built on top of the well, with the addition of a 10 metre setback, the new house can be built behind the well. The current driveway will be kept intact. The Applicant is not proposing to vary the farm residential footprint.
- The Applicant would live in the current house while the new house is under construction.
- The increased setback will not negatively impact the existing area being farmed.

The Committee commented as follows:

- There is concern that if the relaxed setbacks are allowed, there is no guarantee that the old house will be demolished. The City would collect a bond and or letter of credit to guarantee that the house will be removed after the new house is built.
- It is evident that due to the an existing septic field that is currently in use and located on the west side of the property, a new house cannot be built behind the existing house without first moving the septic tank and lines. There are clear locational difficulties with moving the house into any other configuration.
- There is no benefit to agriculture in anyway by relaxing the requirements. It is suggested that it will instead, increase the eventual residential footprint to that area.
- As the site is within the 200 year floodplain, they would have to put in appropriate floodplain measures and increased fill.

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by B. Sandhu
That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee recommend to the G.M. of Planning and Development that Application No. 7914-0211-00 not be supported as proposed, as any new single family dwelling could be accommodated on the site without imposing any undue or unreasonable burden, in accordance with the A-1 Zone; and that the variance would provide no net benefit to agriculture.

Carried

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

F. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Ministry of Agriculture

File No.: 0410-20

Letter, dated September 16, 2014, from B. van Dalssen, PEng, Ministry of Agriculture, regarding Regulating Medical Marihuana Production Facilities in the Agriculture Land Reserve (Attachment: Discussion Paper and Proposed Minister's Bylaw Standards), was reviewed.

C. Zabek, Ministry of Agriculture, was in attendance to provide the Committee with additional information. The following was noted:

- The discussion paper contains a draft set of criteria for developing local government bylaws regarding medical marihuana production in the ALR. The criteria describe what is considered a permitted use in the ALR by the Ministry of Agriculture. The criteria can also be modified by local governments to be made less restrictive to meet local agricultural needs. It was noted that local government zoning bylaws should permit medical marihuana production facilities in the ALR.
- The Medical Marihuana Production Regulations (MMPR) change the parameters for medical marihuana production in Canada from a system of home-based production licenses for personal use, to a system of more tightly regulated, commercial-scale production licenses supplying authorized medical marihuana patients.
- Highlighted issues presented in this paper include: minimum lot size, lot coverage (35% coverage) and stormwater and agricultural liquid waste management plans, local government business licenses, height limitations and setbacks. Applying these criteria to medical marihuana production will assist in bringing this type of farm-use into a well-established framework of existing standards.
- With regard to business licenses, it was noted that historically, municipalities have not required business licenses for traditional farming operations in BC. Given the relatively atypical nature of this type of farming and hesitancy by many communities to embrace this sector, establishing a municipal business license requirement bylaw standard for medical marihuana production could

assist in easing these concerns and provide greater confidence for local governments in accepting them into their communities.

- The Ministry of Agriculture is interested in receiving input and comments from the City of Surrey on the outlined criteria (Part 4), but welcome suggestions on all sections of the paper. Input should be received by October 26, 2014 (via mail, fax or email).

The Committee commented as follows:

- Five (5) licenses have been issued in BC (Saanich, Maple Ridge, Whistler, Nanaimo, and the Okanogan). A total of 13 licenses have been issued in Canada. It would be helpful to know from the federal and provincial government how many future licenses they plan to allow across the country. There are currently no guidelines for how many licenses each individual province will receive.
- MMPR include the conformity of standards for facilities (security, quality assurance and compliance).
- Discussion ensued with regard to the challenge of large commercial buildings, designated for farm-use marihuana production, on ALR land. A suggestion was given to limit the size of the lot as it will change the nature of agriculture when large commercial farm-use buildings are allowed to operate in the middle of ALR lands.
- MMPR allows for 35% coverage of the lot in relation to lot size. If production facilities are going to be such a size, in order to get that 35% coverage, marihuana growers will begin to look for larger lots, which will cut further into productive agriculture land.
- The Committee noted that they are appreciative of the standards and regulations the federal and provincial governments are bringing in as this will bring medical marihuana production under control. However, it is a struggle to protect the high-quality land that Surrey has. This will be a challenge as these regulations move forward.
- Reflecting on the safety of these neighborhoods and site locations, MMPR require applicants for a commercial license to notify the local government, fire and police officials of the location of their facilities, and to comply with all federal, provincial and local government laws and bylaws, including zoning bylaws. It was noted that there is currently only one (1) known site in Surrey.
- The commercial medical marihuana production facility would be taxed at a commercial rate, not a farm tax.

Councillor Hepner thanked C. Zabek, Ministry of Agriculture, for coming to the meeting and spearheading the discussion on medical marihuana production regulations. City Staff will be in contact with Ministry Staff and provide comments, and /or a Council endorsed report to the Ministry with any suggested changes and draft input.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS**1. Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) Update**

An update from the ESAC meeting of September 17, 2014 was provided as follows:

- J. Boan, Transportation Manager, provided the Committee with information on the proposed Light Rail Transit (LRT) and the potential environmental impacts in Surrey. LRT in Surrey is considered critical to a livable region. By 2041 Surrey will have 300,000 new residents and 150,000 new jobs (50% more than today). Over the same period, it is expected to expand the road network by about 12% - LRT is necessary to manage future congestion. Three (3) different lines were proposed which included the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Rail Rapid Transit (RRT). It was noted that Green Timbers will be the greatest environmental concern. Options will continue to be explored; meetings have been held with Green Timbers Heritage Society to discuss concerns.
- J. Gibeau, President, Honeybee Centres, provided the Committee with information about local honeybee populations and on the harmful effects of pesticides on honeybees. In particular, neonicotinoids is a pesticide that comes from nicotine and is applied to fields through coating of various fruits and vegetables seeds such as corn which is relatively safe. Developed in the 1990's, it is used widely across North America on crops such as corn, fruit, berry, vegetable and flowers. Blowing dust from seeding (with pesticide covered seeds) kills the bees and pesticides absorbed through the soil, which then is absorbed by the plants can make bees sick. The delegation noted that a ban on all pesticides would be welcomed, but only if based on science, and executed with the cooperation from the growers.
- N. Aven, Urban Forestry and Environmental Programs Manager, presented the draft Shade Tree Management Plan. The purpose of the Shade Tree Management Plan is to provide direction for sustainable public property shade tree management, including a clear, meaningful, and achievable framework to plan, develop, maintain, and enhance street, park, and civic property shade trees over the long-term. Challenges while pruning trees are being presented as roadways have to be kept clear and the trees need to be pruned back to ensure space is available for clear truck passage. It was noted that many areas have trees that have been pruned where canopies have been ruined and the esthetics are now damaged.
- South Campbell Heights Special Study Area - Corporate Report R152 adopted by Council on September 8 2014 - the Environmental Study was the only item in the report that was approved. There is land within the area that could/should be designated ALR.

It was

Moved by M. Hilmer

Seconded by B. Stewart

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee receive as information, the update from the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee on September 17, 2014.

Carried

2. **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Website and Application Portal Enhancements**

File No.: 6880-75

Staff provided the Committee with a brief viewing of the new and rebranded ALC website and provided update on the future ALC Application Portal program.

It was

Moved by J. Sandhar

Seconded by B. Stewart

That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee receive as information, the memo, dated September 17, 2014, on changes to the Agricultural Land Commission website and Application Portal enhancements.

Carried

H. **INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURE LAND**

I. **OTHER BUSINESS**

J. **MOTION TO HOLD A MEETING IN A CLOSED SESSION**

It is in order for the Committee to pass a resolution to close the meeting to the public pursuant to Section 90 (1) (f) (g) and (i) of the *Community Charter*, which states:

"A part of a meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to or is one or more of the following:

- (f) law enforcement, if the council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the conduct of an investigation under or enforcement of an enactment;
- (g) litigation or potential litigation affecting the municipality;
- (i) the receipt of advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose."

It was

Moved by J. Sandhar

Seconded by M. Hilmer

That the Committee close the meeting to the public pursuant to Section 90 (1) (f) (g) and (i) of the *Community Charter*, which states:

"A part of a meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to or is one or more of the following:

- (f) law enforcement, if the council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the conduct of an investigation under or enforcement of an enactment;
- (g) litigation or potential litigation affecting the municipality;

- (i) the receipt of advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose.”
Carried


J. NEXT MEETING

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

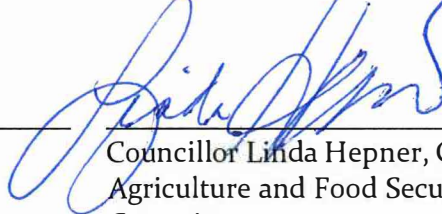
K. ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by M. Hilmer
Seconded by K. Thiara
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee do now adjourn.
Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 10:43 a.m.



Jane Sullivan, City Clerk



Councillor Linda Hepner, Chairperson
Agriculture and Food Security Advisory
Committee