Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

2E - Community Room A
City Hall
13450 - 104 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2015
Time: 9:04 a.m.
File: 0540-20

Present:
Councillor Starchuk - Chair
M. Bose - Vice-Chair
D. Arnold
H. Dhillon
G. Hahn
P. Harrison
M. Hilmer
J. Sandhar
B. Sandhu
B. Seed

Agency Representative:
D. Geesing

Regrets:

Staff Present:
M. Kischnick, Planning & Development
C. Stewart, Planning & Development
R. Dube, Engineering
C. Bejtovic, Legislative Services

Environmental Advisory Committee Representative:
S. VanKeulen

The agenda is varied with the addition of the following items:

B.2 Virtual Incubator Farm and AgOneStop Project; and
I.1 AFSAC 2015 Work Plan

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. The committee is requested to pass a motion adopting the minutes of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee meeting of April 2, 2015.

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the minutes of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee held April 2, 2015 be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. **West Clayton NCP Stage II Drainage Plan Update** (C. Baron)

In attendance before the Committee to provide an update on the West Clayton NCP Stage II Drainage Plan.

The following comments were made:

- Stage II of the West Clayton NCP Drainage Plan discusses transportation, sewer and water.

- Stage I servicing showed where all the creeks would flow, where the ponds were located. Development will be similar to East Clayton, recognizing the need for larger scale facilities to protect creeks from erosion.

- A detention pond proposed in the NCP, which was previously located near the southwest corner of the plan near Fraser Highway and 72 Avenue, has moved and is now located in a triangular piece of land, owned by the City of Surrey as parkland, within the ALR. The contours of the original site were such that the pond sat on the side of a hill which would create difficulties for detention pond facilities. The new location of the stormwater pond now identified in Stage II, is better suited to topography to ensure realistic development and drainage.

- The triangle of land the detention pond is proposed in is 2.4 hectares, and within the ALR. The pond is intended to provide stormwater storage and in addition will be designed to provide a recreational amenity feature for the park and trail network.

- Staff are proposing a pond on the ALR land and are seeking feedback from AFSAC as this Non-Farm (Utility) use would need future ALC approval.

Discussion

- If the project moves forward, the ALC will need an application for non-farm and recreational use. In early Stage I, recreational use was proposed for the park; with the pond in the application, recreational use may be impacted. A recommendation from this committee would go to Council then to the ALC for recommendations on recreation and utility uses if Council chooses to proceed.

- C. Baron noted that the drainage corridors must cross ALR lands to the south and the application is for approval for non-farm/utility corridor use.

- Discussions were held about the development touching the ALR. The pond being adjacent to the properties, three of the parcels are landlocked. The Planning Department had indicated they would need to address this potential access issue.

- Staff advised that some parcels of land are both in and out of the ALR. Panhandle lots are proposed for access off the road; this is not shown in this portion of the plan. The issue was addressed on the citizen advisory committee and the NCP was adjusted to allow access to ALR portions of the property north of this site through panhandle lots.

- Under the ALC a pond can be dug as long as soil is not removed. Preference would be for a design that keeps any recreational use of property away from farmland, possibly with fencing. The pond will have to be accessible for maintenance.

2. **Virtual Incubator Farm and AgOneStop Project** (S. Wu)
In attendance to provide an overview of the Virtual Incubator Farm and AgOneStop Project.

The following comments were made:

- As part of the Economic Diversification Strategy, staff are proposing an interesting new initiative, the creation of a virtual incubator farm, for which they are seeking endorsement from AFSAC.

- Many young people, including grads from UFV and KPU, do not have access to affordable land to farm as a living. They lack the relevant information to get started and may not have the skill sets to run a proper business. The Ministry of Agriculture has that information and the South Fraser Community Futures has written a report documenting how young people can get into the industry.

- S. Wu spoke of creating an on-line listing service of people who have excess agricultural land or space who would like to rent it out to young people to operate.

- The objective of this project is to support programs that connect farmers with business expertise in developing business plans for new or innovative ideas. Consideration is being given to implementing an "AgOneStop" system that provides information and assistance to farmers and prospective farmers seeking to start or grow their business.

- In terms of a timeline, identification of stakeholders and project champions will be ongoing. Stakeholder consultation will take place in summer 2015. An inventory of existing assets will be established in order to avoid reinventing the wheel. The RFP process to create the online platform will be done in fall/winter 2015.

<u>Discussion</u>

- Staff advised that they will contact Metro Vancouver as they have done considerable work in this regard. It was noted that the project came out of the BC Agricultural Centre of Excellence.

- The aim is to have Surrey as the pilot but eventually go further into the Fraser Valley, i.e. Chilliwack; discussions are being held around a regional and provincial exercise. Staff are looking for feedback from this Committee in terms of who should be involved in the stakeholder process.

- If the project is successful and we get to the point of an incubator farm, it would be necessary to design it in such a way as to be able to acquire more land. Staff noted that starting out with smaller parcels allows young farmers to become engaged with the aim of pursuing larger parcels in the future.

- The average age of farmers in Canada is nearing 70. There is a national push to find a way to bring the average age down and get young people into farming. As such, there could potentially be federal and provincial funding in the future.

- Staff stated that the online platform allows for creativity, case studies and demographics, and the ability to contact young farmers and engage as to how they succeeded.

- Staff will be moving forward with connecting with the agriculture farm community and other stakeholders. Staff invited anyone at table who wants to get involved, or who knows of someone who may want to get involved, to contact Carla Stewart.

- Staff are seeking endorsement to proceed on the concept and get to the stage of submitting a proposal to funders.

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by M. Hilmer
That:

1) The Agriculture and Food Security Committee endorse the Virtual Incubator Farm and AgOneStop Project; and

2) The Agriculture and Food Security Committee be involved in the project on an ongoing basis.

Carried

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

1. Nominations for AFSAC Representative to Metro Vancouver's Agriculture Advisory Committee

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by J. Sandhar
That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee appoint Pat Harrison as the Committee's representative to the Metro Vancouver Agriculture Advisory Committee for the 2015 calendar year.

Carried

2. **Flavours of Surrey** (C. Stewart)

The following comments were made:

- Staff advised that the cow display will not be available for this year's Flavours of Surrey; this display has been a big draw in previous years. Staff would like to brainstorm about bringing in new and different vendors.

- Staff reviewed the layout for this year's event and discussed specific sites for different vendors. Discussion was held around potential for rearranging some of the displays.

- Volunteers are needed to set up the straw maze on Friday, July 17 in the afternoon. Once the volunteers have been identified, Carla will set a date to meet and coordinate.

- Historically, 60,000 people have come through over the weekend. Every demo at the cooking stage usually has standing room only.

- It was suggested that equipment vendors have a display. The Fraser Valley farming community may be interested in having a display of antique equipment.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Surrey Farm to Food Festival** (C. Stewart)
Seeking endorsement from the Committee to move forward with developing a feasibility study on adjusting or replacing Flavours of Surrey with a larger festival focused specifically on agriculture and food in Surrey and/or the Region.

The following comments were made:

- The Flavours of Surrey event originally began at Stewart Farm and was focused around local food. There were problems in terms of the cost, specifically around the poor turnout.

- An Agricultural Festival of some kind was the idea with more of a focus on regionally grown food, some agricultural awareness, and perhaps a keynote speaker.

- Staff would like to move forward exploring new ideas for a project. They would need to look at budget, staff capacity, goals, timing, opportunities for financial and in-kind sponsorship, and what elements of Flavours of Surrey would be incorporated. Ultimately the decision may be made to discontinue Flavours of Surrey and move to a Farm and Food Festival.

- Staff is preparing a report to Council asking for permission to move forward and would like to advise Council that the Agriculture and Food Security Committee endorses the project.

- A potential title for the event is "Farm to Food"; it seems to speak to the whole project.

Discussion

- The comment was made that, although the name "Surrey Farm to Food Festival" is a good concept, there is a disconnect between farm to food.

- There was some discussion and differing views around the potential to move beyond Surrey to be more of a regional event. There were proponents of this idea while others preferred to promote what exists in Surrey to the people who live here rather than expanding to the east.

It was Moved by S. VanKeulen
Seconded by M. Bose
That the Agriculture and Food Security Committee recommend staff move forward with developing a feasibility study, including a marketing component for a festival name.
Carried

2. **Duplexes in the ALR** (M. Kischnick)
Staff gave a brief overview of the regulations surrounding duplexes in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

The following comments were made:

- Currently the Surrey zoning bylaws identify duplexes as a permitted use on lots greater than 10 Acres within the A-1 and A-2 Zones. In addition the bylaw stipulates that the *Agriculture Land Commission Act* applies to those lands within the ALR.

- A memo is being written to remind staff that ALC regulations restrict non-farm uses in the ALR; and more specifically that a duplex is non-farm use no matter who lives in it and there must be a non-farm use application approved by the ALC in order for the city to permit construction of a Duplex in the ALR.

- Staff provided the Committee with the ALR Application Process Guide and identified that a bulletin is being created outlining the regulations pertaining to duplexes and other non-farm uses in the ALR.

- The Committee is requested to make recommendations to Council regarding non-farm use applications; Council may or may not choose to forward those applications to the ALC for approval.

Discussion

- Under the *Local Government Act*, the ALC may not approve a secondary dwelling unless it is for farm use. In terms of size, there are bylaw standards and size guidelines which dictate the required number of workers based on farm type. The Ministry of Agriculture will consider a secondary dwelling necessary in two cases:

  1) Temporary farm worker housing; or,

  2) In certain cases, for livestock.

- D. Geesing provided a further overview of regulations under the *ALC Act*.

3. **Application for non-farm use to construct a duplex as a second residence for farm workers.** (E. MacGregor)
File: 15-0110-00

The following comments were made:

- The subject property is 19.7 acres in the A-1 Zone in the ALR and is an active blueberry farm.

- The applicant is proposing to construct a duplex, 4,326 square feet in size. One existing residence is to be retained.

- A-1 zone permits a second single family dwelling or duplex for an operating farm but requires approval from the ALC for the duplex building as a non-farm use.

- A soil permit was received in 2012 and the pre-load fill has been deposited on the site. Permits were issued prior to the home plate zoning bylaws and therefore was sent to the BOV to deal with any siting variances.

- The applicant appealed to the Board of Variance (BOV) in November 2014 to adjust the setbacks to permit the construction of a duplex; the BOV allowed the appeal to extend the setbacks in line with the pre-approved fill permit.

- Following the BOV approval, the applicant submitted a building permit application which is currently on hold pending an application to the ALC for non-farm use to construct a duplex.

<u>Discussion</u>

- The request is for three dwellings: one single family dwelling and one duplex. Adding a duplex where a single family dwelling already exists would constitute three dwellings on the property. Staff advised that the zoning bylaw states one additional single family or duplex; which is interpreted as allowing a single family dwelling and additional single family dwelling or duplex building.

- When questioned about past cases of this nature, staff advised that there have been a few instances in the City when the City building division has issued permits for duplexes without applications being brought to this Committee/Council or being forwarded to the ALC. The ALC has requested that the city must see the application before city building approval.

- It was pointed out that the fill application stated it was for construction of a duplex, leading the applicant to believe that construction of a duplex would be permitted.

- Staff noted that the *ALC Act* and ALR regulations supersede zoning and the ALC will make the final decision, provided that Council recommends the application be forwarded to the ALC in the first place.

- The applicant has been forthright from the beginning when applying for the fill permit, stating that it was for construction of a duplex. Moving forward, issues like this will be captured with building permits and zoning review. If the Committee so chooses, the recommendation can be that duplexes are not supported by this Committee but recommend that this one move forward for ALC Consideration.

- Concern was expressed that recommending approval of this application would set a precedent going forward.

- It was suggested clarification be requested from the ALC regarding definitions around the issue of duplexes.

It was Moved by S. VanKeulen
Seconded by P. Harrison
That:

1) The Agriculture and Food Security Committee recommend that the GM of Planning and Development recommend that Council forward this application to the ALC; and

2) Further discussion and review by the City is required into the issue of duplexes as a second dwelling.

Carried

4. **Application for ALR Exclusion** (D. Sturgeon)
File: 15-0078-00

The following comments were made:

- The subject property is a 23 acre parcel zoned CPG - Golf Course Zone. It is designated agriculture in the OCP and is zoned A-1 in the ALR. A large part of the site is within the floodplain, and the City does not support development of non-farm uses with the floodplain.

- The site is currently used for the operation of a family golf centre. The applicant proposes to exclude the subject parcel from the ALR and develop the site as an industrial business park.

- The applicant provided an agrologist report classifying soils on site. The report indicates that poor drainage is the major limitation, and that the soil itself does not appear to be a crucial issue.

Discussion

- There is a restricted covenant in place which prohibits the subject property from being used for any purpose other than a golf course, subject to terms and conditions set out by the ALC. Nothing has changed since the last time this application was brought forward.

- Under Surrey's current no net loss (Policy O-51) in the ALR, the applicant is not offering any compensation. The Compensation Policy for a 2:1 compensation for ALR lands has now been embedded into the OCP/ bylaw as a requirement for considering ALR exclusion applications.

- The comment was made that a business park would not likely be any more successful than the current operation due to transportation in and out.

M. Hilmer left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

- Given that there is a restrictive covenant in place and the fact that nothing has changed since the previous application, it was felt that any further discussion was unnecessary.

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by D. Arnold
That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee recommend that the GM of Planning and Development not support this application.

Carried

5. Variances to the A-1 Zone to Permit a New Dwelling (S. Long)
File: 15-0081-00

The following comments were made:

- The subject property is 72 acres in the ALR located at 8307 188 Street. It is designated agriculture in the OCP and zoned A-1. The site is actively farmed.

- The applicant proposes to construct a new dwelling on the southeast portion of the site behind one of the existing dwellings which would be removed following construction. The existing dwelling conforms to the maximum setback requirement of the A-1 Zone but is disconnected from the Farm Residential footprint. The proposed new dwelling does not comply with provisions of the A-1 Zone in terms of maximum setback requirement and because it is not part of a separate farm residential footprint.

- There are currently three houses on the existing site. It is proposed that House #1 be demolished and the land restored to farm use. House #2 would be retained, and the applicant would live in house #3 while the

new dwelling is under construction, after which house #3 would be demolished.

- The variances include:
  - increasing the allowable area of the farm residential footprint from 3,000 square metres to 4,750 square metres; and
  - increasing the maximum setback from 50 meters to 115 meters and the maximum depth of the footprint to 134 meters.

Discussion

- Retaining house #3 while the new dwelling is under construction would increase the footprint for no gain. However, there is some support for variance on house #2 to allow the existing non-conforming siting to be amended to conform.

- It was noted that removal of house #1 would result in a reduction in the farm residential footprint from what exists currently.

- If house #1 is demolished, the applicant would then need to conform to the A-1 zone requirement of only being allowed two dwellings (one for farm help); the applicant would not be permitted to apply for a third dwelling which is existing non-conforming use. If this application is approved, the applicant would vary the bylaw to conform, and be required under the existing bylaw to have only 2,000 square meters of farm residential footprint for one dwelling and an additional 1,000 square meters for the second dwelling.

- Concern was expressed that, according to farming analysis, there would be no benefit to increasing the setback and doing so would set a new precedent to allow setback variances and to allow homes on two separate residential home plates.

- Discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of building in close proximity to house #3 from an engineering perspective, and it was suggested house #1 be retained while the new dwelling is under construction.

- It was noted that a second dwelling in the ALR must only be used for full-time bona-fide farm help, and that rentals for non-farm help is not permitted in the ALR.

- An option was put forth to consider tearing down house #1 and locate the new dwelling at that site, as it would be close to the road and contiguous to the remaining house #2, and the applicant would then remove house #3 as planned and return land to farm potential. With this option there would be no need for a variance.

It was Moved by H. Dhillon
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security Committee recommend the GM of Planning and Development:

1) Support retention of house #1, and house #2 to remain during construction of additional dwelling at the location of house #3 within current setback limitations of the A-1 Zone, given that house #1 will eventually be torn down but could house the farm workers; and

2) House #3 should not be retained during construction as it would require additional farmland to be removed from production.

Carried

6. Proposed Duplex (non-farm use) in the ALR (J. Denney)
File: 15-0086-00

The following comments were made:

- The applicant intends to expand onsite farming operations and proposes to construct a duplex as a second residence for farm workers on the subject site. Duplexes are considered non-farm use under the *ALC Act* and ALR regulations.

- Applicant has indicated that immediate family members would occupy one half of the duplex and farm workers would occupy the second half.

- Although the A-1 zone does not limit the maximum size of dwellings, they must fall within the farm residential footprint. The allowable area of the farm residential footprint for the subject site is 3,000 square metres (2,000 square meters for principle dwelling and a potential additional 1,000 square meters for a second dwelling for farm help).

- The existing single family dwelling will be demolished and the applicant's intent is to construct a new single family dwelling near the proposed duplex.

- The fill permit application pre-dated zoning bylaw changes for the farm residential footprint.

Discussion

- Assurances must be made that applications for a second dwelling would be used for full-time farm workers; and if that is not the case, an ALC application may be in order to get approval.

- One Committee member noted that there is good reason for having workers on site, and more in depth discussion is required around the issue of additional housing.

- This application is virtually the same as Item D.3 of this agenda, and it is important that the Committee remain consistent in its decisions. The only difference is that this application is for the construction of two buildings.

It was Moved by B. Sandhu
Seconded by H. Dhillon
That:

1) The Agriculture and Food Security Committee recommend that the GM of Planning and Development move this application forward to the ALC with AFSAC comments; and

2) Further discussion and review by the City is required into the issue of duplexes as a second dwelling.

Carried

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

F. CORRESPONDENCE

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

H. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURE LAND

Staff advised that a hearing has not yet been scheduled in relation to the application for the site on Highway #10 and 168 Street.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

1. AFSAC 2015 Work Plan

Committee members were asked to bring their top three items for discussion.

Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

2. K. Mullinex, KPU, request to appear for a second time as delegation.

The Committee felt that any additional information Mr. Mullinex wishes to present to the Committee can be done in writing. The Committee will not support another delegation from this party.

3. D. Geesing has been approached by Tourism Surrey to determine if any farmers would be interested in working together to promote agri-tourism or to showcase their farms. Members are asked to contact D. Geesing if interested.

4. H. Dhillon expressed concern that multiple pre-loads have failed because fill has gone in too fast, and questioned the feasibility of creating a bylaw which would require that the fill process be monitored. Staff stated that the City relies strictly on professionals to be knowledgeable in this area.

5. B. Seed would like to work with staff to discuss an appropriate place on the agenda for food security and policy, as well as the sustainability charter.

   A brief discussion was held around the definition of food security; how do we want to define it; where does it exist in the City; and where is its role in this group. This discussion was tentatively scheduled for the September meeting.

6. The Committee was advised that the two youth representatives initially appointed to AFSAC have both found full-time employment and are unable to continue in this capacity. The Committee will be kept informed as to the continuation of this project as soon as the information becomes available.

   There is a desire on the part of the Committee to continue to have youth involved, especially with the advent of the Virtual Incubator project.

J. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee is scheduled for Thursday, **June 4, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. in 2E Community Room A.**

K. ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by M. Bose
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee meeting do now adjourn.
Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

Councillor Mike Starchuk, Chair